



# EEOC News

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## **SWIFT AVIATION TO PAY \$50,000 TO SETTLE EEOC NATIONAL ORIGIN AND RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT** *Company Subjected Muslim Employee to Hateful and Derogatory Harassment, Federal Agency Charged*

PHOENIX – Swift Aviation Services, Inc., a Phoenix aeronautical services company, will pay \$50,000 and furnish other relief in order to settle a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today.

The EEOC claimed in its suit that Swift Aviation violated federal law when it subjected former employee Adam Donmez to unlawful harassment because of his Turkish/Palestinian national origin and because he is Muslim. The alleged harassment included statements from supervisors such as, “I don’t know why we don’t just kill all them towelheads”; asking Donmez why he was “dressed like [he was] gonna blow up the World Trade Center”; and derogatory jokes about Arabs. The EEOC also claimed that Donmez reported the harassment to another supervisor, but Swift Aviation failed to stop the harassment. Ultimately, the harassment was so bad that Donmez was forced to resign his employment, according to the EEOC.

Harassment based on national origin or religion violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC filed suit (*EEOC v. Swift Aviation Group, et al*, Case No. 2:12-cv-01867-MHB in U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona) after first attempting to reach a voluntary settlement through its conciliation process. The consent decree settling this case, which was entered on July 24, 2013, requires Swift Aviation to provide \$50,000 in monetary relief to Donmez, including back wages and compensatory damages. The decree also permanently prohibits Swift Aviation from subjecting any employee to harassment or retaliation based on national origin or religion, and requires the

company to provide training to its managers and employees and to notify the EEOC about future harassment complaints.

“Today’s settlement serves as a message to employers that national origin and religious discrimination is a violation of federal law and will not be tolerated,” said Regional Attorney Mary Jo O’Neill of the EEOC’s Phoenix District Office. “Employers have obligations to their employees, and when employers choose not to meet those obligations, the EEOC is prepared to pursue all appropriate means to hold them accountable.”

Rayford O. Irvin, director of the EEOC’s Phoenix District Office, added, “This action shows the EEOC’s unwavering commitment to eradicating national origin and religious discrimination in the workplace. We are pleased that an agreement could be reached this early in the litigation.”

Swift Aviation is a commercial business at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport that provides aeronautical services such as the fueling and hangaring of aircraft and aircraft maintenance. The company is incorporated in Arizona.

The EEOC’s Phoenix District has jurisdiction over Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and part of New Mexico (including Albuquerque). The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws against employment discrimination. Further information is available at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

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