

Recriminations mar Islamic Center's image

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Prosecutors say the business manager of the Islamic Center of Washington stole \$430,000 from a high-profile U.S. mosque in a complex financial scam.

After a D.C. Superior Court trial jury deadlocked last year on the charges against Iranian-born Farzad Darui, U.S. prosecutors are seeking to retry him in a case that has harmed the reputation of the center as a prominent symbol of Islam in the United States, The Washington Post reported Tuesday.

The key witness against Darui is Abdullah Khouj, the Islamic Center's director and imam, a Saudi who told police he discovered the alleged crime when he noticed too many checks being written to a gardener.

Recriminations have mounted as Darui fired back, saying Khouj committed perjury and obstructed justice.

The Post said a federal judge will to rule soon on whether to drop the charges against Darui or prevent Khouj from testifying.

Khouj didn't respond to interview requests and Darui declined to comment, the newspaper said.

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