

**PRACTICE OF LAW BOARD
STATE OF WASHINGTON**

1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600, Seattle, WA 98101-2539
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Members

Stephen Crossland
Chairperson
Cashmere

May 8, 2008

Hon. Paul A. Bastine
Vice-Chairperson
Spokane

Ibrahim Muhindo (or Mzee)

██████████
Tacoma, WA ██████████

Rita L. Bender
Seattle

Re: File No. 07-28 Unauthorized Practice of Law Complaint
Against Ibrahim Muhindo (or Mzee)

Margaret Bridewell
Walla Walla

Dear Sir:

Brian J. Dano
Moses Lake

The Practice of Law Board was created by order of the Washington State Supreme Court, General Rule (GR) 25. The Board is charged with the investigation of allegations of unauthorized practice of law in Washington. Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 2.48.180 states that a non-lawyer practicing law or holding himself out as entitled to practice law constitutes the unauthorized practice of law. Court rule GR 24 defines the practice of law. The unauthorized practice of law is a crime in Washington.

Jeanne J. Dawes
Spokane

Stephanie Delaney
Seattle

Nancy C. Ivarinen
Burlington

Cheryl D. Kringle
Seattle

As you are aware, L██████ M██████ filed a complaint against you alleging that you engaged in the unauthorized practice of law by drafting immigration documents for her. Ms. M██████ is an immigrant from Kenya seeking asylum in the United States. You told Ms. M██████ that you could handle her immigration application because you had experience in preparing immigration documents. According to Ms. M██████, you agreed to prepare an application for her to sign in return for \$1,000, which she paid to you. You requested that Ms. M██████ sign her name at the bottom of a blank page and she gave you copies of her passport and identification. You told Ms. M██████ that you did not need to know why she was seeking asylum, because you had done so many of these before. After that first meeting, you did not meet with Ms. M██████ again, she never reviewed any documents or applications prepared by you, and she never received a written contract from you. You continued to call Ms. M██████ requesting more money for various fees and costs. Ms. M██████ subsequently paid you \$300.

Howard H. Marshack
Vancouver

Daniel Pérez
Seattle

Hon. Jane M. Smith
Nespelem

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Administrator
Julie Shankland

Investigator
Sandra Schilling

In November 2003, Ms. M██████ received a letter from your "para Legal" notifying her that she qualified for a green card and requesting more money to process the green card. This letter identifies you as a

Legal Consultant. In 2007, Ms. M■■■■ received a notice for an immigration interview. In October 2007, after having filed an unauthorized practice of law complaint against you, Ms. M■■■■ received from you a package containing a copy of her immigration application for asylum with her signature. Ms. M■■■■ states that she did not sign the application. The application lists "M■■■■" as her first name and "L■■■■ W■■■■" as her last name. It is hard to believe that Ms. M■■■■ would have signed the application without correcting this error. This fact corroborates Ms. M■■■■'s version of events. Immigration authorities denied Ms. M■■■■'s application for asylum because it was not submitted within the one-year deadline after her entrance into the United States.

According to your October 2007 response letter to the Practice of Law Board, you admit that you assisted Ms. M■■■■ in preparing the application, but state that you merely offered a typing service. The Washington Immigration Assistant Practices Act prohibits a non-attorney from offering legal services when assisting in an immigration application. RCW 19.154. Assistance is limited to transcribing responses to a form selected by the customer, or translating a person's answers to questions posed on the form. RCW 19.154.020. The Act requires the assistant to be registered with the Secretary of the State and to submit to the customer a written contract of the terms of service. 19.154.040 et al. According to P■■■■ F■■■■, the Deputy Director for Corporations for the Secretary of State, there has never been a Mr. Muhindo/Mzee registered as an immigration assistant. It appears that you are not a registered immigration assistant. It also appears that you chose the form, filled out the form and obtained a fraudulent signature on the form for Ms. M■■■■.

You are not a lawyer. RCW 2.48.180(2)(a) states that a non-lawyer practicing law or holding himself out as entitled to do so constitutes the unauthorized practice of law. Selecting, drafting or completing legal documents which affect the legal rights of others is included in the GR 24 definition of the practice of law. By accepting money from Ms. M■■■■ to select and prepare immigration documents for her, you engaged in the unauthorized practice of law.

At this time, pursuant to GR 25(f)(4)(B), we request that you enter into a written agreement with this Board, to refrain from the following conduct:

- ◆ Holding yourself out as authorized to select, draft or complete legal documents or pleadings for others;
- ◆ Any activity which is defined as the practice of law in GR 24.

The Board has also ordered that this matter be referred to the County Prosecutor's Office and the Attorney General's Office for investigation of possible consumer fraud. In addition, the Board has ordered that this cease and desist is copied to the Red Cross Language Bank and NW Immigration Rights Project.

We are hopeful that we will be able to resolve these matters by stipulation. If you are willing to so stipulate, please sign and date your signature and have your signature witnessed by a person over the age of eighteen, who will also sign as the witness.

The signed letter should be returned to the Board within 15 days.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Crossland', written in a cursive style.

Steve Crossland, Chair
Practice of Law Board

JS:as

cc: A [REDACTED] K [REDACTED], L [REDACTED] M [REDACTED] (without encl.)

Encl