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“He’s being black-balled,” Abdul-Rauf said. “I’m not surprised. The same thing happened to me.”

Years before Colin Kaepernick kneeled during the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner, former NBA point guard Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf, a Muslim, made headlines in 1996 when he sat during the Star Spangled Banner. He stated that the American flag was a symbol of oppression and went against his religion.

Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf is no longer in the NBA, but continued his protest of the national anthem.

Before the start of the first-ever Big3 professional 3-On-3 league, Abdul-Rauf, the first face of anthem protest, placed his hands out, palms up, in prayer just as the ballad rang out.

Abdul-Rauf received death threats and hate mail for his stance and was out of the league by 1998.

“It’s disturbing to me that teams take back players that have been physically abusive or brought up on charges,” Abdul-Rauf said. “And (Kaepernick) was speaking his conscience.”

<http://www.nydailynews.com/sports/basketball/abdul-rauf-continues-anthem-protest-ice-cube-big3-league-article-1.3276775>