

# American Muslims:

## ONE YEAR AFTER 9-11



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**CAIR**

**Council on American-Islamic Relations  
Research Center**

CAIR Research Center publishes educational pamphlets, reports, and papers on the Muslim experience in America. Dr. Mohamed Nimer is the director of research.

To obtain copies of this report, contact:  
**Council on American-Islamic Relations**  
453 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Tel: 202-488-8787

Fax: 202-488-0833

E-mail: [cair@cair-net.org](mailto:cair@cair-net.org)

URL: <http://www.cair-net.org>

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## Executive Summary

Viewed through the American Muslim experience, here are the facts of 9-11 and its aftermath:

- Muslims have taken a decisive stand against the senseless violence of extremists. They have unequivocally and repeatedly condemned the attacks on the nation. They have communicated their convictions in many forums at various levels. They have met their responsibilities as citizens of this country, participating the nation's healing after the attacks and lending support to government efforts to thwart and punish terrorists.
- To many Muslims, 9-11 also represented a turning point in how America is struggling to accept them as a community with a distinct religious identity. In that regard, Muslims have witnessed the good, the bad and the ugly. Not only did Muslims die in the attacks, but they also had to cope immediately with a violent backlash and lingering anti-Muslim agitation. Islamaphobes came out strongly in favor of placing the guilt on the religion of Islam and the worldwide community of Muslims. Racist elements exacted vengeance on anyone who looked Muslim (or Arab). Politically influential anti-Muslim elements have worked relentlessly to push this country in favor of a policy of confrontation with the Muslim world.
- Attacks against Muslims tapered off eight weeks after 9-11, but generally anti-Muslim incidents remained higher throughout the year than in previous years.
- Despite the fear and stress that Muslims suffered in the wake of the attacks, many things have changed for the better in the life of Muslims as a community. As this report details, interfaith communication has now become part and parcel of ordinary Muslim activity, even in communities where such functions had not even been considered in the past.
- Public opinion polls varied in their assessment, but overall they indicated that the majority of Americans appreciated the strong stance of Muslims, and showed tolerance and kindness toward them in the wake of anti-Muslim hate crimes.

- Local and federal authorities have taken a decisive position against hate crimes. However, anti-Muslim sentiment continues to be harbored and tolerated even within sensitive governmental bodies.
- The U.S. government has hardly found the right balance between security and civil liberty. The hysteria, and perhaps the lack of Muslim political clout, led Congress to acquiesce to government moves sacrificing the civil rights of Arabs and Muslims in the name of fighting terrorism.
- The wave of anti-Muslim hate crimes after 9-11 was the worst in the nation's history. Although it has tapered off since the early weeks of the crisis, anti-Muslim agitation in television and radio has contributed to unprecedented acts of hate crimes.
- Islam and Muslims became a matter of public discourse in America. Along with major media organizations, mainline Protestants and Catholics, as well as members from the Black, Latino, Asian and Jewish communities have favored a position that distinguishes between extremists and mainstream Muslims. On the other hand, some Christian conservatives and pro-Israel zealots have actively sought to drive a wedge between Muslims and the nation. Members of these groups revived the defunct "clash of civilizations" thesis and have actively worked for the exclusion of Muslims from public forums, while continuing to argue for anti-Muslim public policies.

## **Introduction**

It is not clear yet how 9-11 will go down in history. Several things, however, are quite clear. The gruesome crime of terror impacted every segment of American society (and a good deal of the international community), so much so, that people followed and reflected on its aftermath and many Americans took action based upon their understanding of the world after the event. One major issue that came to the forefront was the Muslims of America—their status and, in some situations, their presence—became a matter of public debate.

Muslims have had to deal with those who thought Muslims had to choose between commitment to their faith and allegiance to their nation and, on the other end, those who argued for a better understanding of Islam and Muslims. Luckily, the intolerant crowd is in the minority.

This report documents the mixed responses of Muslims and others in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks and reviews actions and policies taken by the government to safeguard security and civil liberty. It is fortified with an appendix containing further illustrations and documentation of Muslim responses to 9-11.

## **American Muslims: Exercising Civic Duty**

The moment that Muslims in America turned on their televisions and were confronted with the horrible reality of 9-11's terrorist attacks, the paths they would need to take in the following months became crystal clear. Muslims realized their responsibilities as a community whose faith has been linked to the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history. Some Americans who succumbed to bigotry and intolerance tried to question their loyalty; some even committed violence against them. At the same time, Muslims felt the anguish of being part and parcel of a nation that had been the target of an inhuman attack. As a result, Muslims in America doubled their efforts to establish themselves as an integral part of the American mosaic, and they seized the opportunity to fulfill their obligations as citizens and residents of the freest country on Earth.

### **Condemning attacks**

The response to the events of 9-11 from American Muslims of every walk of life—leaders, scholars, and laymen—was swift, loud and unambiguous: this act was abhorred by Islam, and must be denounced in the strongest of terms. Muslims set out to make sure their fellow Americans were aware of this sentiment.

### **National Muslim leadership takes the lead**

Within hours of the first plane hitting the World Trade Center on 9-11, American Muslim organizations issued a joint statement condemning the terrorist attacks. The statement was endorsed by major Islamic organization in the United States, including the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), Imam Warith Deen Muhammad's Muslim American Society (MAS), the American Muslim Political Coordination Council (an umbrella group for major American Muslim public affairs organizations), and numerous others. The statement read in part:

“American Muslims utterly condemn what are vicious and cowardly acts of terrorism against innocent civilians. We join with all Americans in calling for the swift apprehension and punishment of the perpetrators. No political cause could ever be assisted by such immoral acts.”

CAIR went on to sponsor a full-page advertisement in the *Washington Post* on September 16, 2001, condemning the attacks, calling for the punishment of the perpetrators, and expressing gratitude to the rescue workers and condolences to the families of the victims. The ad read,

We at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) along with the American Muslim community are deeply saddened by the immense loss of human life from Tuesday's tragic events. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families, friends and loved ones of those who have been injured and those who have died. We applaud the heroes from all Fire Departments, Police Departments and Emergency Medical Services and extend our gratitude to all participating in the ongoing rescue and relief efforts. American Muslims wholly condemn the vicious and cowardly acts of terrorism. We join with all Americans in calling for the swift apprehension and punishment of the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity. May we all stand together through these hard times to promote peace and love over violence and hate.

Islamic organizations and leaders then reached out to other faith communities to condemn terrorism in solidarity with one another. Together with other major Christian groups, such as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, national and regional Muslim umbrella groups issued this statement:

We believe that the one God calls us to be peoples of peace. Nothing in our Holy Scriptures, nothing in our understanding of God's revelation, nothing that is Christian or Islamic justifies terrorist acts and disruption of millions of lives.

The immediate and unequivocal condemnation of the attacks by national American Muslim leaders was acknowledged and praised by political and community leaders and opinion makers. In a news conference following his visit to a Washington, DC, mosque on September 17, President George Bush praised the national Muslim leaders standing at his side as "good folks who were appalled and outraged at the terrorist attacks. It is my honor to be meeting with leaders who feel just the same way I do. They're outraged, they're sad. They love America just as much as I do.... Americans and Muslim friends and citizens, tax-paying citizens...were just appalled and could not believe what we saw on our TV screens." (www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/print/20010917-11.html). Observed *Boston Globe* columnist James Carroll on October 9, 2001, "Islamic religious leaders have been forthright in condemning the murderous assaults against America."

American Muslim leaders made a special effort to appear in the media of the Muslim world, and in particular, the Arab media. These leaders aired their emphatic condemnation of the terrorist attacks in popular outlets like the satellite television network al-Jazeera. CAIR's research director published a refutation of al-Qaeda and its worldview in the high-circulation, London-based Arabic language newspaper *al-Hayat* on January 9, 2002. The piece responded to Osama Bin Laden's attempt to draw a parallel between his cause and that of the Palestinians:

“Bin Laden exaggerated in blaming the United States for the woes of the Muslim world. The U.S. is not party to many of the transgressions committed against Muslims, although it could play a greater role in conflict resolution.

It is of particular benefit to highlight the vision of the Muslims of America, who look at American state and society in factual terms. [Here] the American is a neighbor, a classmate, or a coworker. Americans are fellow citizens who have spouses, children, homes, and elderly persons...

Moreover, striking against American economic interests [like Bin Laden instructed his followers] is a threat to the interests of the whole world, including Arab and Muslim regions. This is because Arab and Muslim labor and their economic production are only part of a global, interdependent economy.”

### [Scholars and imams: Islam demands we stand for justice](#)

Nationally known and respected Islamic religious leaders took to the airwaves and print media to communicate the position that the 9-11 attacks violate Islamic teachings. Only days after the attack, Imam Hamza Yusuf, an Islamic scholar and director of the Zaytouna Institute in Santa Clara, California, consulted with President Bush and sat by his side in solidarity when he addressed a joint session of Congress in the week after the attacks. Imam Yusuf appeared with Imam Siraj Wahaj of Brooklyn on CBS's "60 Minutes" to unconditionally condemn the attacks, and went on to make the rounds of print and broadcast media to present Islam's prohibition of terrorism from a scholar's point of view. "No one can grant these attackers any legitimacy," Imam Yusuf told the *San Jose Mercury News* on September 16, 2001. "It was evil."

On September 17, dozens of scholars of Islam at major colleges and universities throughout the country issued a lengthy joint statement, speaking against terrorism,

clarifying the Islamic position on the attacks, and expressing their compassion for grieving family members. “We are grief-stricken at these horrifying events,” they wrote; “the murder of innocents can never be justified and must not be tolerated.” (<http://groups.colgate.edu/aarislam/response.htm>)

Ingrid Mattson, a professor of Islamic studies and Muslim-Christian relations at Hartford Seminary, told *The New York Times* on October 8, 2001 that there was no basis in Islamic law for the terrorist attacks. “The basic theological distortion is that any means are permitted to achieve the end of protesting against perceived oppression,” said Dr. Mattson, a practicing Muslim. “Islamic law is very clear.”

Imams repeated this message during Muslim gatherings throughout the year. President of ISNA, Muhammad Nur Abdullah, standing on a stage flanked by U.S. flags on August 30, 2002, said in his opening address to the 30,000 participants in the 39<sup>th</sup> ISNA convention that Islam condemns the 9-11 violence. Summarizing the prevailing sentiment among America’s Muslims, he said, “We’re for justice.... This is our country. American Muslims, we care for the betterment of this country and for every human being.”

### *From national to local*

The message of condemnation of the terrorist attacks from national Islamic groups and scholars was intended not only for the general public, but for local American Muslim communities as well. National Muslim groups and religious leaders exercised their leadership and responsibility by playing an instrumental role in steering local communities into a united stance against terror in the wake of the 9-11 attacks. The groups that were signatory to the joint condemnation of the terrorist attacks took the message to their constituents, urging them at the grassroots to proclaim this uncompromising stance. CAIR, for example, distributed a response kit, including a sample press release, to local communities in order to help them quickly and unequivocally denounce the attacks as an affront to Islam and humanity.

Local communities responded. Across the nation and in virtually every major American city, community mosques and associations followed the lead of the national

organizations. For example, using the national leaders' statement as a foundation, a coalition of ten New Orleans-area mosques issued a joint condemnation of the attacks (*The Times-Picayune*, September 12, 2001). The Islamic Society of Central Jersey (ISCJ) published a full-page open letter on September 23, 2001 in the *New Jersey Star-Ledger* "condemning the vicious and cowardly acts of terrorism." In San Diego, Mohamad Nasser, San Diego chapter president of the Muslim American Society (MAS), told his local paper that the attacks were "absolutely cowardly, absolutely appalling.... There is nothing justifying what happened today. It is just unbelievable." (*San Diego Union-Tribune*, 9-11, 2001) At a Buffalo, New York interfaith meeting the day after 9-11, leaders from the local Islamic community condemned the attacks as an "utter violation of all the principles of Islam," the Rev. Stan Bratton, a meeting participant, told *The Buffalo News* on September 12, 2001. Dr. Khalid J. Qazi, president of the Western New York chapter of the American Muslim Council, also told that paper he condemned "this cowardly act of terrorism" and expressed hope that those responsible are quickly brought to justice. And Arsalan Tariq Iftikhar, executive director of the St. Louis chapter of CAIR, published several op-ed pieces expounding on the difference between extremists and mainstream Muslims. In one article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on September 16, 2001, he declared, "As a Muslim and as a St. Louisan, I stand in the strongest conviction and say that the terrorists' acts were no more Islamic than Tim McVeigh's actions were Christian."

### **Supporting law enforcement**

American Muslims endorsed the need for a military campaign overseas as well as a domestic law enforcement effort to bring the perpetrators of the 9-11 attacks to justice. But the support went beyond mere endorsement, to include active assistance and cooperation with the military and law enforcement. This cooperation and support flowed across the board: from national Islamic organizations and from individual Muslims.

### **National organizations urge support**

As the U.S. began the military campaign in Afghanistan, American Muslim groups issued statements in support of bringing the perpetrators of 9-11 to justice. For example, the American Muslim Council issued a statement on October 8, 2001 that read,

“The American Muslim Council supports our government’s action against world terrorism and reaffirms its condemnation of the terrorist attacks of 9-11th against our country. The AMC appreciates the President’s leadership in reaffirming that this is a war against terrorism and not against the Afghan people, Muslims or Islam. The AMC commends our President for his statement that our military campaign will take measures to protect the civilian population of Afghanistan.

The AMC is particularly grateful for the President’s compassion and humanitarian efforts for the Afghani people along with other initiatives, and fully supports his efforts to deal with the causes of terrorism.”

National Muslim organizations urged the American Muslim community to be vigilant in sharing any information about suspected terrorists, and to serve in law enforcement. When the FBI announced its need for Arabic and Farsi translators, community organizations publicly encouraged members of the community to apply for such jobs.

These efforts were deeply appreciated by law enforcement authorities as they investigated the 9-11 attacks. In remarks to the American Muslim Council’s annual convention in June, FBI Director Robert Mueller said:

“The active work of many in the American Muslim community in cities nationwide has merited public thanks and praise.

I’ll tell you one of the greatest acts of support has been the way the Muslim and Arab communities have responded to our urgent need for translators...for which we are grateful, extraordinarily grateful....

And again, I want to thank the many Muslim-Americans who have provided help to the FBI over the past nine months in a variety of ways. It has truly been invaluable.”

Aslam Abdullah, editor-in-chief of *Minaret*, an American Muslim publication, published a piece in the *Los Angeles Times* on July 3, 2002 in support of law enforcement. He wrote,

“This year, the Fourth of July is more than a holiday and celebration for me. It is going to be a tense day. I will be watching the news closely, praying that the day ends peacefully...I will be praying for those law enforcement officers who will be keeping a close watch on everything that appears to be suspicious. I will be praying for my people, my American people.”

### *Average American Muslim supports anti-terror efforts*

Even as the American Muslim leadership felt a responsibility to speak out strongly on the events of 9-11, polls indicated that the vast majority of Muslims around the country instinctively reacted in revulsion to the terrorist attacks. This was true even though, like many of their fellow Americans, a significant percentage expressed reservations about the possible consequences of war. Still, according to a poll commissioned in early December by the Muslims in the American Public Square (MAPS) Project, most Muslims said they supported the US response. Nearly 60 percent approved of President Bush's handling of terrorist attacks, 66 percent agreed that the war was being fought against terrorism, not Islam, and more than half said they supported the military action. (The study, conducted by Zogby International, queried 1,781 American Muslims between Nov. 8 and Nov. 19.)

Acting on their own, individual Muslims reached out to the press to make their fellow Americans aware of their views. One of many such pieces, a letter to the editor in *The New York Times* by Basil Abdelkarim of Torrance, Cal., reads:

“As an American Muslim, I have no doubt that Osama bin Laden sponsored the horrific attacks of 9-11...We have entered a frightening era, and genuine reconciliation between the West and the Muslim world assumes an even greater urgency.”

### **Muslims join in the healing**

Beyond condemning the events of 9-11, disassociating Islam from terror, and urging support for the apprehension of those responsible, Muslims had a need, just as their fellow Americans did, to heal the psychological wounds of the attack. And so, just as their neighbors did, Muslims rushed to help in the rescue and recovery operations, they crowded memorials for the victims, and they honored those who risked and gave their lives to help the survivors.

### *Muslims assist relief effort*

Immediately following the attacks, Islamic organizations urged their constituents to take specific steps to assist in the relief efforts. They called on Muslim doctors to travel to the scene (a Muslim medical technician died in the rescue operations), they

urged donations of goods and money to the Red Cross, and they set up special funds to collect money for relief.

To encourage Muslims to donate blood, leaders of the four organizations that make up the American Muslim Political Coordination Council (AMPCC) waited for hours alongside their fellow Americans lined up to donate blood at the Red Cross building in downtown Washington, DC. As far away as Los Angeles, Muslims responded to the call, with about 250 people giving blood the city's University Muslim Medical Association Free Clinic, as reported by the *Los Angeles Times* on September 30, 2001. Several other blood drives at local Islamic centers were reported as well, especially in the New York, New Jersey and Washington, DC metropolitan regions.

The New York-based ICNA was among the most active Muslim groups in the relief effort, compiling a list of dozens of missing, dead, and injured Muslims as a means of serving the community and demonstrating the universality of grief Americans felt as a result of the attack. ICNA advised its members to donate blood to the victims and suggested that local leaders establish active contacts with local authorities in order to be available to assist when needed. Local centers and associations pitched in as well; for example, the Turkish American Muslim Cultural Association raised \$1,000 for the Red Cross 9-11 Fund. All Dulles Area Muslim Society in Sterling, Virginia announced that the mosque had raised \$6,000 for the American Red Cross and organized a blood drive.

Another Muslim charity, Mercy-USA for Aid and Development, reported in its September 2002 newsletter the disbursement of \$65,000 in cash grants to six major relief organizations involved in the provision of assistance to the victims of the attacks. The groups include the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army, funds set up by New York Governor George Pataki and New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, and two firefighter associations.

### [Together in mourning](#)

At innumerable events around the country, Muslims participated in events to promote mutual healing after the trauma of the terrorist attacks. Muslims were invited to join fellow Americans in the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance ceremony on September 14 at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. The nationally televised service emphasized healing and unity and was attended by President George W. Bush,

former presidential candidate Al Gore, former Presidents Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, George Bush and Gerald Ford, as well as Washington diplomats and members of Congress. In his opening prayer, Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi, then president of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), read verses from the Qur'an and expressed grief on behalf of all Muslims for those who were killed or injured in the 9-11 terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC.

At an emotional interfaith service held at New York's Yankee Stadium for the families and colleagues of the victims of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks, 30,000 people came together to hear words of hope from religious leaders of all faiths. *USA Today* reported that many were moved to tears by the recitation of prayers by Muslim leaders. Addressing the crowd, Imam Izak-El M. Pasha, a New York Police Department chaplain, said: "They (the terrorists) are no believers at all. We condemn them and their acts, their cowardly acts, and we stand with our country. This must stop." (*USA Today*, September 24, 2001).

Local communities helped contribute to the healing in creative and touching ways. The Western New York Chapter of the American Muslim Council presented a check to help buy trees for the Amherst Memorial Hill Grove in honor of the 9-11 terrorist victims. Dr. Khalid J. Qazi, president the chapter, told *The Buffalo News* on November 17, 2001, "The contribution to the Hill Grove fund was a way for the Muslim community to help create a living memorial to the victims and express its horror at the events of 9-11." Imams participated in interfaith memorial services across the country, and Muslims initiated or participated in candlelight vigils in Washington, DC and other cities.



A Muslim teenager in Virginia taking part in a vigil in memory of the victims of 9-11.

### [Honoring heroes](#)

Not only did Muslims condemn the terrorist attacks and grieve over their victims, they were deeply appreciative of the firefighters, police officers, and other emergency response personnel and their grueling efforts to save lives. Muslims expressed this gratitude in local events honoring these heroes. For example, in Chicago, Muslims joined with the National Conference for Community and Justice and city officials in a ceremony to honor Chicago area law enforcement officers, firefighters, and paramedics who had volunteered to assist in the recovery efforts at the World Trade Center (*Chicago Sun-Times*, Nov. 16, 2001).

The American Muslim Council (AMC) established the Salman Hamdani Award to honor the heroism of the award's namesake, a medical technician who died while helping in the relief effort at the World Trade Center on 9-11. Hamdani had left his

Queens home in the morning and apparently saw the disaster in Lower Manhattan unfold from the subway train on the elevated tracks. He immediately headed toward the scene. Hamdani, a Pakistani-born laboratory research assistant, was missing for more than six months after the terrorist attacks. His remains—along with his medical bag containing an ID—were finally recovered near the north tower.

The following eulogy by New York Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly was published in the *Washington Post*: “We don’t know how many people he helped, how many lives he saved.... But if you look at his life, you know he was determined to make a difference, and he did. He was indeed a hero.” At AMC’s convention held in Washington, DC on May 16, 2002, Mrs. Talat Hamdani, mother of Salman Hamdani, received AMC’s first Salman Hamdani Award. She also received a similar award from CAIR-New York.

## **Muslims reach out to fellow Americans**

The events of 9-11 were followed by a surge of public interest in Islam and Muslims. Ordinary people wanted to know what Muslims thought of the attacks; others began wondering about the intentions of Muslims in their midst. American Muslims quickly realized that the best way to allay fears, prevent further damage to America’s well being, and preserve the society’s unity was to reach out to their neighbors to an unprecedented degree. “The American Muslims’ outreach to the rest of the country has been noteworthy for its unusual degree of openness,” observed the *Los Angeles Times* on September 30, 2001. Mosques opened their doors, Muslims conducted educational programs and teach-ins, and Islamic organizations and centers launched media and advertising campaigns to communicate with their fellow Americans.

## **Opening mosques to neighbors**

Muslim community organizations resolved that their communities should use the national spotlight focused on them to educate others about Islam. Islamic centers, even those where interfaith activities were not particularly encouraged in the past, have begun holding “open mosque” activities, and the practice has spread, especially since CAIR issued an action alert encouraging every mosque to plan an open house for non-Muslims.

The response from the public has been quite phenomenal. To the surprise of Muslims, virtually all who attended were amiable, spoke candidly, asked sincere questions about Islam, or expressed sympathy to Muslims at time of crisis.

It is impossible to list or even track all of the hundreds of open house and interfaith events Muslims have held since the attacks, but some examples will demonstrate the widespread nature of this trend. The December 2001 issue of *American Muslim*, published by the Muslim American Society (MAS), featured a report on 140 such exchanges involving MAS members in Texas, California, Maryland, Virginia, Michigan, North Carolina, Florida, Ohio, Oklahoma, Washington, DC, Massachusetts, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Alabama. In several centers, such events marked the first time mosques welcomed visitors from other faith groups.

- The Islamic Center of Central Jersey hosted a standing room only Interfaith Prayer Program attended by 1,500 members of the Central New Jersey Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities as well as local political leaders on September 30.
- About 90 people attended the October 28, 2001 open mosque event at Darul Islah in Teaneck, New Jersey.
- In an unprecedented act, the leader of Long Island's Catholic Church visited the Island's largest mosque, Islamic Center of Long Island, attending a multifaith service aimed at fostering religious unity in the wake of the attacks. Bishop William Murphy, of the Diocese of Rockville Center, was joined by Protestant ministers, a rabbi and about 150 others at the Islamic Center in Westbury.
- The Islamic Center of Fort Collins, Colorado held open-mosque events every week for a month after the terrorist attacks. Turnout ranged between 15 and 250, mostly neighbors. These events marked the first time the mosque received members of other faith groups.
- For the first time, San Diego's twelve mosques began to invite Christians, Jews and anyone else who was interested to attend Ramadan observances to satisfy their curiosity about Islam and to allay their fears about the religion. The Islamic centers came together under a newly formed coordination council called American Muslim Coalition, and, in addition to the open houses, planned town hall meetings and other events.
- The Muslim Community of Knoxville, Tennessee invited the public to attend a lecture by Imam Hamza Yusuf on March 23, 2002. The event emphasized the need for mutual understanding between Muslims and others. More than 100 people turned out for the event, including State Sen. Tim Burchett and Knoxville Director of Community Relations, Thomas

“Tank” Strickland. More than 100 people attended an open house event at Salahadeen Center of Nashville, which was held on November 27, 2001. Participants asked many questions and one reportedly converted to Islam after the event.

- In Metairie, Louisiana, Masjid Abu Bakr held an open house in September (attended by 25 people) and October (attended by 100 individuals). The mosque had never held such events before.
- The first-ever open mosque event at the Birmingham Islamic Society in Alabama, held on September 29, 2001, was attended by 400 people. The second such event was held on October 12, 2001 when 250 people turned out.
- On November 12, 2001, the Islamic Center at Auburn, Alabama opened for the first time to visits by neighbors. Nearly 300 people came, including law enforcement and other local officials. This was the first time this center held such an event.
- On November 11, 2001, about 300 people responded to a public invitation to visit the Islamic Center of Tallahassee, Florida, marking the first time the Islamic center had opened its doors to the public.
- About 500 people turned out for a first-ever public event at the Islamic Community of South West Florida in Port Charlotte, Florida on December 2, 2001. Some participants wrote letters to the editor of their local paper praising the event and the organization.
- In Jacksonville, Florida, the open mosque event of the Islamic Center of Northeast Florida was attended by 100 individuals, mostly members of neighboring places of worship.
- About 100 people turned out for the open house event organized by the Islamic Society of Greater Houston on November 4, 2001. Participants listened to presentations about Islam and Muslims. About 1,500 people showed up at the Islamic Association of Colin County in Plano, Texas on December 9, 2001. The turnout astounded organizers of the open house event, the first time a public event had been held there since the center opened in the city.

Through their interactions with others, Muslims became overtly conscious that the American public is for the most part fundamentally decent, open-minded and good-hearted, sophisticated in its thinking and able to distinguish between the acts of an extreme minority and an entire faith community.

## **Education: getting to know one another**

After the terrorist attacks, many Muslim leaders found themselves in demand as sensitivity trainers for companies and institutions interested in exercising good corporate citizenship by reducing the possibility of bias in their workplace. Also, in some universities, Muslim academics and students hit upon the idea of reviving the old 1960's institution, the "teach-in," an impromptu, interactive educational lecture designed to enlighten attendees about the issues of the day.

Several hundred Ford Motor workers of many faiths and jobs attended a program entitled "An Islamic Perspective on the Events of 9-11." The program was sponsored by the automaker. A Muslim engineer addressed the audience, explaining the tenets of Islam and telling them that the faith repudiates the terrorist attacks.

Federal and local government agencies also hosted educational seminars on Islam and the American Muslim community. For example, in January 2002, CAIR conducted sensitivity training workshops for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Department of Transportation. In February, a CAIR team presented a briefing to Congressional staffers on the status of American Muslims after 9-11.

A dozen students from Scripps and Pomona colleges attended a "teach-in" held at the Islamic Center of Claremont, California, two weeks after the attacks. It was a last-minute gathering, arranged the day before, at the students' request (*Los Angeles Times*, September 30, 2001). The University of Wisconsin-Madison and members of the Madison Muslim community held a "teach-in" in the days after the events to increase understanding of Islam. The event, according to the September 18, 2001 issue of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, focused on Islam's fundamental beliefs, how Islam is practiced, and how that practice affects society and politics throughout the world. In Tennessee, 200 people enrolled in the 9-11 class on the Middle East at Vanderbilt University ([www.vanderbilt.edu/News/register/Mar18\\_02/story7.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/News/register/Mar18_02/story7.html)).

To reach out to a wider public audience, the Independent Writers Syndicate was established out of the CAIR network to offer a Muslim perspective on current issues. The service distributes original commentaries to newspapers and web sites throughout North America. Commentaries are offered free-of-charge to one media outlet in each market

area. Although the idea of the syndicate was conceived in 2000, it materialized after 9-11, with newspapers becoming hungry for input from Muslims. In the few months after the attacks syndicate writers were published in more than 100 newspapers—mainly in the U.S., but also in Europe and the Middle East.

Just as CAIR and other national groups did, several local communities reported taking out newspaper advertisements to explain Islam and reach out to non-Muslims. For example, twelve San Diego mosques that had been organizing open mosques events and town hall meetings under the rubric of the American Muslim Coalition have also taken out informational ads in their local newspaper.

California Muslims spearheaded the effort to erect billboards at three high-traffic Orange County and Los Angeles locations to communicate neighborly messages from Muslims. As part of the campaign, two billboards in Los Angeles County and one in Orange County show seven smiling people, including a young woman holding a U.S. flag, above the caption: “Even a smile is Charity--a message from your Muslim neighbor.” The message is drawn from a quote attributed to the Prophet Muhammad: “Your smile for your brother is charity.”

## **Americans uphold tradition of tolerance**

As America struggled to come to grips with what happened on 9-11, many American leaders emphasized that the nation must not lose sight of the fact that America’s pluralism includes Muslims. While many still did not know much about Islam and Muslims, they were willing to withhold their judgment and to give their fellow Muslim citizens the benefit of the doubt. Evidence shows that despite the terrorist attacks, America’s favorable perception of Muslims has improved markedly.

## **Opinion polls: Americans not anti-Muslim**

Shortly after the attacks, almost equal percentages of Americans felt positive, negative, and neutral about Islam as a religion. A September 15<sup>th</sup> poll by Reuters and Zogby International found that 38 percent believed Islam is a religion that encourages fanaticism, 42 percent believed it does not, and 20 percent were not sure. (The survey was conducted September 15 - 16, 2001.) Most were able to distinguish between Islam as a

religion and the actions of some Muslims: 84 percent of those surveyed considered the U.S. to be at war with a small group of terrorists who may be Muslim, compared to eight percent who say the U.S. is at war with Islam.

Most of the American public professed generally a negative impression of Muslims and Arabs in America shortly after the attacks. Astonishingly, however, this attitude was no different from months before 9-11. In March 2001, only 45 percent of Americans had a positive opinion of Muslim Americans. Similarly, in a September 15, 2001 poll by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, 43 percent of poll respondents rated Muslim Americans and Arab-Americans favorably. It is important to note that even this minority's charitable view was reserved for Muslims and Arabs in America. Muslims and Arabs living in the Middle East were viewed positively by only 22 percent of Americans following the attacks (*USA Today*, October 9, 2001).

Despite this negative impression, just two days after the attacks, a majority—65 percent—reported they felt no different toward Arab Americans than they had before, according to a Time/CNN poll conducted on September 13, 2001. Also, balancing this mixed review of Muslims was the fact that the American public was surprisingly confident that Muslims in America sympathized with the rest of the country about the bombings. Seventy-six percent thought American Muslims' sympathies were with Americans, while only 11 percent thought they sympathized with the attackers (Harris Interactive, Inc., *Harris Study No. 15003*, September 27, 2001).

A week after the attacks, a full 90 percent of Americans felt that “Arab Americans, Muslims, and immigrants from the Middle East” would likely be singled out unfairly by their fellow Americans (*CBS News/New York Times* poll, September 20-23, 2001). Fifty percent thought discrimination would be very likely, 40 percent said it was somewhat likely). About 24 percent admitted to negative feelings about Arab-Americans—far from a majority, but potentially more than enough to cause concern. Several questions demonstrated the public's fear and frustration, with 58 percent saying Arabs should undergo special security checks before boarding planes and 49 percent saying they should carry special identification.

Yet other polls suggested this might have been an initial reaction after the shocking tragedy. A *Newsweek* question that specifically mentioned the internment of

Japanese Americans during World War II, found 62 percent who said it would be a mistake to target any national group. A Pew Research Center survey found 57 percent who opposed the idea of internment camps to round up immigrants from “hostile nations.” When deeply held values are tested by terrifying events, it takes time for people to work through their fear and let their better judgment temper any rash response.

Still, in a September 14, 2001 poll conducted by CNN and the national daily *USA Today*, only 31 percent said that since the attacks they had personally heard any of their friends, neighbors, fellow workers or acquaintances make negative comments about Arabs living in America.

The most extensive post-9-11 poll on American’s views on Islam, jointly sponsored by the ABC television network and the Beliefnet religion news website, was conducted on January 6, 2002. The poll revealed that the percentage of Americans with a favorable view of Islam had dropped slightly, while the percentage with an unfavorable view of Islam had also dropped. In an October 9<sup>th</sup> poll, 47 percent had a favorable view, 39 percent said unfavorable and 13 percent said they didn’t know. (The October survey was apparently conducted by ABC and not reported at the time.) In January, 41 percent said favorable, 24 percent said unfavorable and 35 percent said they didn’t know.

Contrary to predictions of increased aversion toward Arabs and Muslims after 9-11, the General Social Survey of the National Organization for Research at the University of Chicago, which measures a wide variety of long-term public attitudes, found otherwise (*Associated Press*, March 8, 2002). Two months after the 9-11 attacks, the number of Americans with a favorable opinion of Muslims jumped by nearly 15 percent to its highest recorded level, providing a major counterweight to the majority’s distrust of Muslims in the days immediately after the incidents (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, *Post 9-11 Attitudes: Religion more prominent; Muslim-Americans more accepted*, December 6, 2001). The trend has held up, with favorability ratings for US Muslims in March 2002 having dropped off only slightly since the surge in favorability documented in November 2001. Obviously the public mood is not constant, but it has overall remained tolerant toward American Muslims.

## **Americans lend hands to their Muslim neighbors**

There were several instances of Americans from various faith communities coming to the aid of Muslims in the wake of the violent post 9-11 backlash. Jennifer Schock, 31, a Web designer from Fairfax, Virginia, sprang into action upon learning that some American Muslim women started leaving their head scarves at home out of fear for their safety. Schock and other non-Muslim women around the USA began donning scarves themselves as a sign of solidarity with their Muslim sisters. Through the Internet (Website: [www.interfaithpeace.org](http://www.interfaithpeace.org)), they established a global network called Scarves for Solidarity to support the right of Muslim women to choose their headwear without fearing retaliation.

Muslim community centers reported many spontaneous acts of kindness from members of the public. Within a week after the attacks, Islamic centers in San Diego received bouquets of flower and cards of support and sympathy from members of other faith groups—especially after reports of Muslim women being afraid to leave home.

One week after 9-11, a Muslim in San Francisco, whose store was vandalized, reported that neighbors tried to offer him money toward the \$1,500 repair of the damage.

On October 6, 2001, the *Washington Post* reported several similar stories. The article included the following anecdotes:

“The Islamic Center in Athens, Ohio, reported being mailed a \$100 check from a non-Muslim couple who wrote that ‘we are all one people.’ In San Diego, the Islamic Center said it was ‘flooded with letters and cards of support.’ And Olga Benedetto, a 27-year-old student at Chicago’s Moody Bible Institute, e-mailed an offer of ‘help for those in the Chicago area needing groceries or other needs.... I understand that some of you are afraid to leave your homes.’

Similar sentiments have been evident around the Washington metropolitan area. Egyptian-born Ahmed Heshmat, a doctor who lives near Rockville, said that his wife, Jenane, was shopping recently with their two young daughters when ‘the manager came running up to her and gave the girls a gift. It turned out to be pencils and papers. He said it was just to show support.’

In Manassas, Virginia a local interfaith group contacted Prince William County’s Muslim Association of Virginia with an offer to guard its mosque, said Association President Yaqub Zargarpur, a businessman who came from Afghanistan 20 years ago.”

On December 1, 2001, nearly 850 people jam-packed the Muslim Community Association in Santa Clara, California. Some of the participants asked if the center would consider offering classes to give more detailed presentations on Islam.

One measure of this support is surveys targeting Muslim community members. In an August 2002 CAIR survey, about 80 percent of 945 respondents said they have experienced kindness or support from friends or colleagues of other faiths. (In contrast, 57 percent said they have experienced anti-Muslim bias or discrimination). When they were asked about the way in which they received the support answers varied, with many saying they received best wishes for their safety verbally and in writing. Some reported neighbors and coworkers saying they realized that the attackers do not represent the Islamic faith. A large segment reported specific actions members of other faith groups took to express their support. Neighbors visited Muslims in their homes and volunteered to help do grocery shopping or to accompany them on shopping trips. Members of other faith groups showed up at Friday prayer services at their mosque to express solidarity. Colleagues at work challenged rude and negative remarks about Muslims. Supervisors told Muslim employees to report any offensive behavior, as it would not be tolerated.

### **Minority and faith communities extend support**

The events of 9-11 prompted an unprecedented number of interfaith services nationwide, featuring leaders of different religions praying for peace and remembering the attack victims. Almost immediately after 9-11, the National Council of Churches (NCC) issued joint communiqués with Muslim groups condemning the terrorist attack. The NCC board began a series of consultations with Muslim leaders aiming at a better understanding and cooperation. The group was apparently heartened by the outreach initiative from Muslims and reciprocated by issuing a support statement on Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. NCC members took similar measures. For example, the United Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns decided in October 2001 to adjust the agenda of its meeting to focus on improving relations with Muslims.

On May 14, 2002, the NCC board issued a statement acknowledging Muslim outreach efforts. The statement read,

“After 9-11, hundreds of Islamic centers and mosques across the United States held open houses, inviting their neighbors of other faiths in to grieve together and build bridges of understanding.... For many Christians, it was their first occasion to enter a mosque and talk with a Muslim.... Muslims for their part wanted their neighbors of other faiths to understand who they really were - not terrorists, but peace-loving, PTA-going, regular Americans who came here from all parts of the world.”

The NCC urged Christian congregations to hold interfaith open houses on or around 9-11, 2002, thus commemorating the first anniversary of the attacks by extending hospitality to their Muslim neighbors. This effort, called “Open Doors Project,” is aimed at assisting local congregations through printed materials and advice to organize educational activities involving Muslims and Christians.

Pope John Paul II called on Catholics to join in the last day of the Muslim Ramadan fast in 2001. The event was designed to pray for world peace and promote understanding between Islam and Christianity. American Catholics heeded the call by publicizing the event as an ecumenical effort.

California Catholics in particular, appeared to be the most receptive to the idea. Of course, relations between Catholics and Muslims in California have been growing for more than a decade. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in an initiative headed by Bishop Todd D. Brown of the Diocese of Orange, has for some time been holding regional conversations with Muslim leaders in three parts of the country. Muslims were part of the Interfaith Coalition to Heal Los Angeles, an effort to improve communication between faith communities and shore up deteriorating neighborhoods after the 1992 riots.

Local Christian congregations sought to publicize their outreach efforts through the Internet. On October 17, 2001, Dr. Arthur Caliandro, senior pastor of Marble Collegiate Church interviewed three New York City Muslim religious leaders: Imam Al-Hajj Talib W. Abdur-Rashid, of the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood; Shaykh Abd’Allah Latif Ali, of Admiral Family Circle; and Shaykh Ahmed Dewidar, Imam of the Mid-Manhattan Masjid.

Also, local Jewish and Muslim congregations in various parts of the country held joint meetings. In the West Coast, on *Eid al-Fitr*, one of Islam’s most important holidays, a day dedicated to the remembrance of Abraham, Los Angeles Muslims and Jews met to remind themselves of their common patriarch. In the East Coast, the Jewish Council of

Baltimore visited the Islamic Society of Baltimore on January 23, 2002 during an interfaith exchange evening.

## **Muslims targeted by extremism**

Unfortunately, the spirit of tolerance was clouded at times with intolerant speech directed at Muslims and, in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks, Muslims experienced their worst wave of hate crimes in U.S. history.

### **Anti-Muslim rhetoric**

American Muslims, moving to the national spotlight after the deadly attacks, have grown to appreciate the full diversity of this nation. While many local communities have witnessed a dramatic increase in interfaith exchanges, Muslims were disheartened by the vitriol from the far right wing and anti-Muslim elements.

### **Southern Baptist Convention**

At the June 2002 annual gathering of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in St. Louis, the Rev. Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., told SBC conventioners that the Prophet Muhammad was a “demon-possessed pedophile.” (Vines is a former SBC president.) Vines added that, “Allah is not Jehovah either. Jehovah’s not going to turn you into a terrorist that’ll try to bomb people and take the lives of thousands and thousands of people.” When asked by reporters if they would condemn those bigoted remarks, both the outgoing and incoming SBC presidents said they supported Vines and his statements.

Some Southern Baptists do not condone interfaith prayers even with other Christian denominations. But according to numerous reports, not all congregations of the 16 million strong Baptists share Vines’ anti-Muslim sentiment. There are hundreds of tolerant congregations across the South and Midwest that no longer send delegates to the annual Southern Baptist Convention or to statewide gatherings such as the one held in Missouri. Many of these congregations do not agree with the national denomination’s position on interfaith issues.

There is also American Baptists, which is a separate church organization that has publicly denounced the anti-Muslim remarks by SBC leaders. In a statement issued on June 14, 2002, American Baptist Churches USA General Secretary A. Roy Medley remarked:

“As General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches, USA, I am deeply saddened by remarks made by some Baptist leaders and other Christians that have maligned the Islamic faith and religion. Historically American Baptists, while deeply committed to the unique truth of the Christian Gospel, have stood for freedom of religious expression and practice. As Baptists we respect the faiths of others and have benefited from dialog and cooperative work with people of other faiths, especially on such issues of common concern as peace and justice.”

In November 2001, the General Board of American Baptist Churches USA issued a declaration on anti-Islam, anti-Muslim and anti-Arab prejudice in the U.S. That declaration called on American Baptists:

“(1) To pursue a better understanding of Islam, Muslims and Arabs (including Arab Christians) by including in their churches' educational programs a study of Islam, of the Muslim world and the Christian minorities within that world, and of the issues that have united and divided us by inviting Muslims and Arabs to be a part of the leadership and fellowship of such programs;  
(2) To encourage local and regional ecumenical and interfaith agencies to seek conversation and cooperation with Muslim religious organizations;  
(3) To advocate and defend the civil rights of Arabs and Muslims living in the U.S. by such means as monitoring organizations and agencies which exercise responsibility for the peace, welfare and security of the community;  
(4) To reject the religious and political demagoguery and manipulation manifest in the reporting of events related to the Middle East, to seek an understanding of the underlying causes of the events, and to condemn violence as a means of enforcing national will or achieving peace;  
(5) To challenge and rebut statements made about Islam, Muslims, and Arabs that embody religious stereotyping, prejudice and bigotry.”

Also, there is the National Baptist Convention, an African American denomination that does not harbor anti-Muslim views. In fact, the National Baptist Convention issued a media advisory reflecting on the tragedy by warning against divisiveness. The press release asked people

“to respond with all of our capacities of love to meet the needs of those who administer and receive aid;  
to encourage individuals to gather at appropriate times and places of worship throughout the weeks ahead to seek the solace and guidance of The Divine;

to pray for calm and rational thought and behavior;  
to pray that our shock and anger do not turn to hatred or fear;  
to pray that our passions do not goad us into cries for vengeance;  
to pray that our energies be mobilized to seek a just peace wherever wars exist  
and people lift up sword against people;  
to pray that the finest character of America will emerge from the chaos of this  
experience.”

### Televangelist Pat Robertson

In contrast, televangelist Pat Robertson, speaking on his Christian Broadcasting Network’s ‘700 Club’ ([www.cbn.com](http://www.cbn.com)) program in February 2002, described a veritable infestation of America with violent, subversive Muslims. He chose to blast President George W. Bush’s position on Islam as well. He said, “I have taken issue with our esteemed president in regard to his stand in saying Islam is a peaceful religion.... It’s just not. And the Quran makes it very clear, if you see an infidel, you are to kill him.”

He said, “Our immigration policies are now so skewed towards the Middle East and away from Europe that we have introduced these people into our midst and undoubtedly there are terrorist cells all over them...They want to coexist until they can control, dominate, and then if need be destroy.”

Various Muslim groups and scholars responded to the Robertson’s assertions in his widely watched network. Muslims exposed Robertson’s distortion of the Quran, which permits defensive struggles but calls for peace when aggression ends. The Quran teaches, “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (2:256) Several other verses of the Quran calling for peace once oppression ends were cited, including “God does not forbid you to be kind and equitable to those who had neither fought against your faith nor driven you out of your homes. In fact God loves the equitable.” (60:8) and “Fight in the cause of God with those who fight against you, but do not exceed the limits...If they desist, let there be no hostility except against the oppressors.” (2:190-193)

On the issue of a Muslim’s friendship with people of other faiths, Muslims reminded the public that a number of verses support cordial relations with anyone who does not attack their faith. These include “O ye who believe! Take not for friends and protectors those who take your religion for a mockery or sport...” (5:57); “God only forbids you to make friendship with those who fought you on account of your faith and

drove you out of your homes and backed up others in your expulsion.” (60:9); and “And dispute ye not with the People of the Book [Christians and Jews] except with means better (than mere disputation) unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, ‘We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you.’” (29:46) As a call to religious tolerance, the Quran states: “Those who believe (in the Quran) and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians and who believe in God and the last day and work righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.” (2:62)

### *Attorney General John Ashcroft*

In February 2002, Muslim and Arab-American groups called on Attorney General John Ashcroft to clarify offensive remarks he allegedly made in December about the faith of Islam. According to an interview with syndicated columnist Cal Thomas published on the internet site, crosswalk.com, Ashcroft said: “Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his son to die for you.” Despite several requests from Muslim and Arab-American groups, Ashcroft did not respond publicly. Eventually, under increasing public pressure he said that the reported remarks “do not accurately reflect what I believe I said.”

### *Senator Gordon Smith*

In January, Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR) made a public statement that Oregon has been a hub of terrorist fund-raising activities. Smith, citing unclassified information he learned in confidential security briefings, said terrorism-related fund raising has occurred in Corvallis and at Portland State University. University officials said they knew nothing about Smith’s claims. Oregon Muslims have responded to the baseless allegation from the senator. A statement by a coalition of Muslim groups read,

“We believe that Senator Smith, who is up for reelection, is attempting to curry favor with the electorate by engaging in Muslim-bashing. While such a tactic to exploit the 9-11 tragedy and the current war on terrorism may improve his visibility with the electorate, it comes at a very high price to many already-marginalized citizens”

### [Conservative commentator Ann Coulter](#)

In an address at Michigan University conservative commentator Ann Coulter referred to Native Americans as “peyote smoking Indians” and Middle Easterners as “camel riding nomads.” In her online column responding to the 9-11 terrorist attacks, she wrote of the terrorists, “We should invade their countries, kill their leaders, and convert them to Christianity.”

### [Rep. C. Saxby Chambliss](#)

While speaking to Georgia law enforcement personnel, Rep. C. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security and a candidate for the Senate, said “just turn [the sheriff] loose and have him arrest every Muslim that crosses the state line.” Under pressure, he sent a letter to the *Valdosta Daily Times*, contending that his comments were taken “out of context” and “should in no way be interpreted as my view of what should happen...If my remarks were offensive in any way, I apologize.”

### [Free Congress Foundation President Paul Weyrich](#)

Paul Weyrich, president of the Free Congress Foundation, called for the U.S. Postal Service’s year-old “Eid Greetings” stamp to be rescinded and “overprinted with the image of the twin towers,” because “America’s most notable experience with Islam was the attacks on 9-11.”

### [Franklin Graham](#)

After 9-11 evangelist Franklin Graham, son of the renowned Reverend Billy Graham, repeatedly called the Islamic religion “wicked, violent and not of the same God.” He also said “I don’t believe this is a wonderful, peaceful religion.... When you read the Koran and you read the verses from the Koran, it instructs the killing of the infidel, for those that are non-Muslim.” In a report aired on *NBC Nightly News*, Graham stood by remarks he made about Islam last month at the dedication of a chapel in North Carolina. At that event, Graham said: “We’re not attacking Islam but Islam has attacked us. The God of Islam is not the same God. He’s not the son of God of the Christian or Judeo-Christian faith. It’s a different God, and I believe it is a very evil and wicked

religion.” Later Graham issued a statement in which he said: “It is not my calling to analyze Islam or any other religions, though I recognize that all religions have differences. In the past, I have expressed my concerns about the teachings of Islam regarding the treatment of women and the killing of non-Muslims or infidels.” Mr. Graham publicly dismissed invitations of Muslims to meet to clear his misconceptions about the faith.

### Local churches

A sign outside the Crossroads Assembly of God Church in the town of Wilder, Idaho equates Islam with evil. The sign, posted in block capital letters, reads: “The spirit of Islam is the spirit of the Antichrist.” The church’s pastor, Geoff Cole, who put up the sign said the message reflects not hatred, but the Gospel. He said he drew the sign’s statements from the Bible: 1 John, 4:2-3. The quotation reads, in part, “...every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.”

Local leaders criticized the sign but stressed that it was a form of protected speech. Wilder Mayor Steve Rhodes said he finds the sign offensive, but the city cannot censor the opinion reflected on the sign. He told a local newspaper, “It is inappropriate. It doesn’t reflect the community, and it sure doesn’t reflect myself or my council.” Muslims in Idaho were dismayed by this cold reaction to what they believed a clear case of hate. While Muslims did not contest that hateful speech is not prosecutable, they felt that other Christians should have been more vocal in their opposition to bigotry and ignorance.

### Simon Wiesenthal Center Dean Marvin Hier

Rabbi Marvin Hier, Dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, made the accusation that the Quran holds “extremist” views. Hier made this claim during a discussion of the possibility of peaceful coexistence between Judaism, Christianity and Islam on CNN’s Larry King on December 1, 2001. The following is part of the interview:

“Rabbi Hier: There are direct references in the Quran to violence. I’ll read one from the Quran: ‘O you who believe, take not the Jews and Christians for friends.

He among you who taketh them for friends is one of them.’ And that’s a quote from the Quran.

Larry King: It doesn’t say kill them.

Rabbi Hier: No, but it infers, of course, that there is a difference. And there are other quotes, as well. So if someone asks me straight: Are there any extremist views in the Quran? I would say yes.”

A Muslim guest on the program, Dr. Maysam Al-Faruqi of Georgetown University, corrected Hier’s mistranslation of the Quranic text. She said,

“The verse that the Rabbi actually quoted is not at all what he says. It is: ‘Do not take Christians and Jews as *awliya*,’ which does mean friends, it means as overlords. In other words, people who will dictate to you your behavior. In fact, the verse that deals with friendship is that one that says: ‘As for such as those who do not fight you on account of your faith and neither drive you forth from your homeland, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and equity, he only forbids you to turn in friendship to those who fight you because of your faith.’”

### [Toward Tradition President Daniel Lapin](#)

Rabbi Daniel Lapin, President of Toward Tradition, which works to build an alliance between Jews and the right wing, recently proclaimed, “Conservative Christians are the natural allies of the Jewish community.” Lapin does not believe that Christians, Jews and Muslims form one great ‘Abrahamic’ civilization. In his opinion “today we are witnessing two distinct religious civilizations in conflict: that of the Koran, allied with the believers in no God, violently challenging the civilization of the Bible, of Christianity and Judaism.”

### **Hate crimes wound a community**

The 9-11 attacks were followed by a dramatic rise in anti-Muslim hate crimes. CAIR received 1717 reports of harassment, violence and other discriminatory acts in the first six months. Although violent attacks have dropped sharply, CAIR has logged more than 325 complaints in the second six-month period after the attacks—a 30 percent increase over the same period prior to 9-11. And most recently, on August 30, 2002, an anti-Muslim hate-rape took place in California, perhaps the first such attack on record in U.S. history. An 18 year-old man raped a 15-year old girl inside Palo Alto Longs Drugs store while making anti-Muslim comments, according to the Palo Alto Police Department.



Associated Press Photo cited in National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, "Backlash: When America Turned on Its Own, p.6)

### Murders

A dozen murders have been reported, including a handful of incidents in which the victims were simply mistaken for Muslims and Arabs because of their appearance.

- In Dallas, Hassan Waqar, a 46-year-old Muslim owner of a convenience store was shot to death on September 15, 2001.
- In Mesa, Arizona, Balbir Sodhi, a 49-year-old Sikh Indian man, was killed in front of his business on September 15.
- In San Gabriel, California, Adel Karas, a 48-year-old Egyptian Christian Copt, was murdered in his import shop by two men on September 15.
- In Lincoln Park, Michigan, Ali al-Mansoop, an American citizen of Yemeni descent was shot to death in anger over 9-11 by the ex-boyfriend of the woman he was dating.
- The *New York Times* reported on January 24, 2002 that the death of an immigrant might have been a hate crime. The victim's lawyer alleged that the Queens man charged with murdering the Afghan-born filmmaker and then freezing his head was motivated in part by misguided patriotism.
- In Minneapolis, in October 2001, a 66-year-old Somali immigrant, Ali W. Ali, died a few days after he was found injured and unconscious at a bus stop. He had been punched in the head by a Caucasian male. The coroner ruled that Ali died of natural causes. Members of the Somali community in Minneapolis contend he was a victim of a hate crime and that a white man struck Ali in the face.
- In Chattanooga, Tennessee, a Palestinian business owner was shot four times in the back and killed in front of his grocery store. The store was open and unattended and there was cash in the victim's wallet, but nothing was stolen.

- In early October, 2001 Abdullah Mohammed Nimer, a traveling salesman, was murdered on the street in South Central Los Angeles.
- In Ceres, California, just a week after 9-11, the police found in a canal the body of Surjit Singh Samra, a 69-year old Sikh man with a turban who appeared to have been murdered. On the day of the killing, Mr. Samra had left for his daily walk but never returned to the family's home.
- On September 29, 2001 in Reedley, California, Abdo Ali Ahmed, a 51-year-old convenience store owner of Arab descent, was shot to death.
- In April 2002, a Dallas, Texas jury convicted Mark Stroman for the murder of Vasudev Patel last October. Stroman thought the Hindu man looked Middle Eastern and killed him to avenge the attacks on New York and Washington.

### Attacks on mosques

Many mosques were attacked or threatened. The following incidents, among others, were reported to CAIR:

- In Detroit, Michigan, the Islamic Center of Detroit was attacked by a group of people who threw rocks and broke the mosque's windows and glass showcase on 9-11.
- Immediately after the 9-11 attacks, a drive by shooting occurred at the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo.
- In Irving, Texas, nine shots were fired at the Islamic Center of Irving on September 12, breaking the windows and damaging the furnishings. The community asked the police to investigate it as a hate crime, but the police told them they would record it as a regular crime.
- In Sparks, Nevada, someone shot at the North Nevada Muslim Community Center on September 12. In addition, a bomb threat was received by the Center.
- The Islamic Center of Charlotte, North Carolina was forced to close down its full-time school, the Charlotte Islamic School, on September 12 after receiving threatening phone calls. The Islamic Center of Charlotte continued to receive threatening calls for a whole week, during which the school remained closed.
- In Perrysburg, Ohio, the Islamic Center in Perrysburg Township was vandalized; its windows broken by rocks on September 13.
- In Princeton, West Virginia, racial slurs were spray-painted in the rear of the Islamic Society of the Appalachian Region on September 15.
- In San Diego, California, two individuals fired a device that emitted smoke and caused a loud sound near the entrance of the local mosque on September 17. Nobody was hurt. The police arrested two individuals and they treated this case as a hate crime.

- In Colorado, the Islamic Center of Fort Collins received threatening phone calls on September 18.
- In Chicago, Illinois, hate messages were left on answering machine of the Islamic Center of Illinois on September 20. Threats were made as well as accusations.
- In Kingman, Arizona, someone shot over 70 rubber bullets at Masjid Ibrahim. No worshipers were hurt in this September 12 attack.
- In Seattle, Washington, Idriss Mosque was subject to an attempted arson on September 13. Patrick Michael Cunningham, the suspect in the attack, was caught by two community members who were leaving the mosque at the time of the attack. The man was charged with attempted arson, the obstruction of the free exercise of religious beliefs, and attempted defacement of religious real property.
- In Canejo Valley, California, evidence of vandalism was found in the parking lot outside the Islamic Center of Canejo Valley two days after the terrorist attacks, which included spray painted comments like, "Jesus is the Lord and Allah is the Devil."
- In Manassas, Virginia, passersby shouted near Manassas Mosque on September 12: "We hate you f\_\_\_\_\_ Muslims and we hope you all f\_\_\_\_\_ die."
- In Fargo, North Dakota, a couple of incidents were reported. The Islamic Center received crank calls on September 14. Four days later, several men brandishing a shotgun appeared in the Center's parking lot, but they left without incident.
- In Lynnwood, Washington, a woman left the following message on the phone of Masjid Dar Al-Arqam on September 15: "It's time for you people to get out from here."
- In New Orleans, Louisiana, Masjid Ar-Rahma received a threatening phone call on September 12.
- In Raleigh, North Carolina, Al-Iman School and Mosque received a bomb threat on September 12.
- In Silver Spring, Maryland, the Muslim Community Center received over 15 calls between the day of the terrorist attacks and September 14 threatening to destroy their building and bring harm to the members of the community.
- In Lubbock, Texas, an unknown person called the Islamic Center of the South Plains on September 16 and left the following message on the answering machine: "You Arabs are all guilty. Go back to your ugly countries."
- In San Francisco, California, two hate flyers were posted at entrance of the Islamic Center of San Francisco on September 17. They read, "Allah is dead, Rambo killed him." and "Enslave all Arabs... get free gas."
- In Cleveland, Ohio, 29-year-old Eric Richley of Middleburg Heights rammed his car through the Grand Islamic Mosque of Cleveland with his Ford Mustang on September 17. The front wall collapsed, causing an estimated \$100,000 in damage.

- In Sterling, Virginia, the sign at the entrance of ADAMS Center was vandalized on September 17 with insults to Islam and Muslims. Curses were spray-painted inside the facility.
- An attack by vandals on the Islamic Center of Columbus on December 29, 2001 caused severe damage to all three floors of the center. The attackers drilled holes in floors at the Islamic Center of Columbus, ripped up copies of the Quran and pulled water pipes from walls, saturating floors and ceilings of the three-story building. The damage was discovered when members arrived for prayer services on Sunday morning.
- The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on December 10, 2001 that rock-throwing vandals smashed the front window of an East Bay mosque on December 9, 2001, while 15 worshipers were inside performing the Morning Prayer. Two large river rocks, each twice the size of a fist, crashed through the 10-foot-by-5-foot window at The Islamic Center of Contra Costa on Clayton Road in Concord, showering the interior with broken glass.
- In Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the Islamic Center of Sioux Falls was vandalized on the night of October 3. The local FBI is investigating the incident as a hate crime.
- The building of the Islamic Society of Kentucky in Lexington was set on fire on October 24, 2001, and the arson is believed to be hate motivated.
- The Islamic Center of Greensboro received a death threat on its answering machine on October 25.
- In Bridgeview, Illinois, a mob of several hundred teenagers waving American flags led by a local evangelical preacher started to march to the Mosque Foundation on October 26, but their path was blocked by the police.
- In Evansville, Indiana, a Neo-Nazi skinhead vandalized and damaged the local Islamic Center in Evansville on October 26.
- In Nashville, Tennessee, the front window of the mosque was broken on November 2, causing several thousand dollars worth of damage.
- A molotov cocktail was thrown at the Islamic Society of Denton, Texas on November 17.
- On March 25, 2002, Charles Franklin, a 41-year-old carpenter, drove a truck into the Islamic Center of Tallahassee at Florida State University. The man left the scene after the crash, but was caught by the police later. Luckily, no one was injured in the crash, which occurred 30 minutes before evening prayers. A police spokesman said the man had a Bible wrapped in a blue cloth on the front seat of his truck and later he admitted that was motivated by hatred of Muslims.
- Robert Goldstein, a 37-year-old doctor plotting to bomb mosques in Florida, was arrested on August 23, 2002. Deputies found more than 30 explosive devices, including hand grenades and a 5-gallon gasoline bomb with a timer and a wire attached, and a cache of up to 40 licensed weapons, including .50-caliber machine

guns and sniper rifles, inside Goldstein's home. They also found a list of 50 Islamic centers and organizations in the state, mostly in the Tampa Bay area.

### Attacks on Muslim women

Many Muslim women became fearful of wearing head cover in public. A few asked religious scholars whether they could take it off in public in fear for their lives.

- Houda Koussan, 27, of Dearborn Heights said she has been spit at because she wears a headscarf.
- In Brooklyn, New York, a group of teenagers and adults cursed at two Muslim women and threw rocks at them on 9-11.
- In Fremont, California, a woman with hijab attempting to attend college on 9-11 was told by a police officer that she should return home because of anti-Muslim sentiment and the possibility of violence.
- In Alexandria, Virginia, a woman was riding the Metro Rail on September 12, 2001, when several men purposely stepped on her feet several times. She has also been the recipient of taunts and verbal abuse.
- In Fontana, California, a woman got out of her car to pick her children up from school on September 13, when a Caucasian woman began cursing and verbally harassing her. When the woman walked back to the parking lot, the harasser physically attacked the woman.
- In Atlanta, Georgia, an unidentified man called the office of the Islamic Circle of North America on September 13 threatening to rape Muslim women and yank off their scarves.
- In Annandale, Virginia, a woman was on her way to the Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center on September 18, when two men assaulted her. They hit her with a stick and said that she should go home.
- In Clarkston, Georgia, three men attacked a woman as she was leaving her apartment building on September 26. One of them took off her hijab; another put his foot on her neck, while the third kicked her back. As she tried to pick up her hijab, they kicked her while cursing at Arabs. The men also attempted to take off her clothes. She was dragged to a tree, screaming and pleading, while one of them held a knife to her two-year old son. The attackers escaped when they noticed cars were approaching the crime scene.
- In Laguna Hills, California, on September 27, a woman's car was vandalized. The car had deep cuts with a sharp object and one of the tires had been spray painted red.
- In Manchester, New York, a woman was attacked on October 15 by her neighbor, who yelled racial slurs and death threats. The neighbor also let her dog loose on the woman and later pushed her down the apartment building stairs when the

latter went to do her laundry. The police arrived after each incident but did not arrest the neighbor. The victim filed a 10-day restraining order.

- In Orlando, Florida, on October 26, a woman was at a shopping mall with her mother who wears a hijab, when a Caucasian man approached them and started yelling, “Get out of our country, you rag head! Go back! Get out of here!”
- In Alexandria, Virginia, a woman was approached on November 9 by a male in the Metro, who spat on her, threatened to kill her and send her back to her country. The Metro police were notified but they could not track the man down.
- In Pembroke Pines, Florida, a Pakistani woman with a scarf was attacked and hit at Winn Dixie grocery store on September 13.

### *Bombs and arson attacks*

- In Bethesda, Maryland, two connecting stores owned by different persons of Middle Eastern descent were burned down on September 12.
- In Alexandria, Virginia, the owner of an Islamic bookstore found that two bricks had been thrown through his store window when he arrived to work on September 13. The bricks had messages attached to them, one of which read: “Death to Arabs.”
- In Long Island, New York, on September 13, a Muslim-owned restaurant was firebombed.
- In Tulsa, Oklahoma, a store owner’s shop was vandalized on September 14, with damages amounting to \$500. The front panels and windows of the shop were smashed.
- In Springfield, Michigan, the front window of an Arabic store was shattered on September 16.
- In Buena Park, California, the Islamic Halal Tandoori Restraunt was set on fire on September 27. The police called the owner at 4:00 a.m. to let him know about the fire.
- In Houston, Texas, Prime Tires, an auto mechanic shop, was gutted by fire on October 26. The Houston Fire Department Arson Unit is reportedly investigating the case as a hate crime.
- In San Francisco, the owner of a building received 2 bomb threats and on September 13, a fire occurred in the building and was confirmed as an arson attack. The fire had been set in the dental office on the lower floor, near some oxygen tanks.
- In Bowling Green, Kentucky, a bookstore owner found two bullet holes in the door of his shop in the morning of September 13. He also discovered that glass window had been shattered.
- In Yonkers, New York, while a store clerk was working at the Madaba Deli on October 26, a rock was thrown through the window, breaking it.

- In Somerset, Massachusetts, a group of teenagers torched a convenience store owned by a man they mistakenly thought was Arab on November 7.
- In Anaheim, California, a small bomb went off in front of a man's house on September 15. The police did not take a report after being called to the house but returned several days later, after much complaining by the victim's friend.

### Physical assaults

- The *News-Gazette* reported on December 20, 2001 that a Muslim student was beaten by a Campus town mob in what he described as a racially motivated attack. Saleem Mahjub, a senior in mechanical engineering at the University of Illinois, was attacked shortly before 3 a.m. outside an apartment building near the intersection of Fifth and John streets, in Champaign. Mahjub was taken by ambulance to Carle Foundation Hospital, where he received stitches and was treated for a broken nose.
- In Santa Barbara, California, the liquor store of a Christian Syrian was vandalized on September 13. The perpetrator was caught on tape.
- In Santa Barbara, Mr. Passat's Pennywise Market was vandalized on September 19. He is an Indian of the Hindu faith.
- In Corona, New York, a man was leaving a halal meat store on September 22, when he was forcefully hit on the back of the head, which caused him to fall. The perpetrators walked away laughing.
- In Queens, New York, a 66-year old Sikh Indian man was shot with a pellet gun and battered with a baseball bat by three local teens on November 7.

### Workplace discrimination

Workplace discrimination complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) soared after 9-11. Between 9-11 and Dec. 6, officials said the EEOC received 166 complaints of illegal discrimination, mostly involving Muslim workers who were fired from their jobs. During the same period a year ago, only 64 such claims were filed. By early February 2002, the agency has received 260 claims from Muslims since 9-11, an increase of 168% over the same period a year earlier. By early March 2002, the national figure of complaints reached 300. These do not include complaints filed with state and local agencies. The number continued to increase. The *Chicago Tribune* reported on March 15, 2002,

“Eight months after the attacks on America, the number of workplace bias complaints by Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern and South Asian employees is increasing rapidly. The EEOC has received 488 complaints since 9-11.... By

April 11, 62 new claims had been filed and by May 7, the agency had received another 74, the largest increase to date.”

Many such incidents were received by CAIR. The following are a few examples:

- In Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina, a Muslim employee was called on September 12 and told not to report to work the following day without explaining the decision.
- In Malden, Massachusetts, two Muslim employees reported that their supervisors harassed them on September 12 and falsely accused them of rejoicing about the 9-11 attacks.
- In Gaithersburg, Maryland, on September 12, a co-worker said to a fellow Muslim employee, “We need to ship their behinds out of here and they can take their Allah with them.” When the Muslim responded with, “I never messed with you during your Bible study,” the co-worker went into a rage and the Muslim was sent home.
- In Dallas, Texas, four Muslim employees were sent home from work on September 16 for no apparent reason.
- In Roland Heights, California, a Muslim employee reported that his coworker started yelling at him and pushing him around on September 17. The supervisor suspended the complainant with pay, but let the attacker go. Later she was terminated.
- In Duluth, Georgia, a teacher who refused to remove her hijab on September 18 was told to sign a waiver stating that if she is harmed, the school would not be responsible, but if others come to harm then she would be held responsible.
- In Alexandria, Virginia, a man was beaten by the husband of a co-worker on September 19 and was taken to the emergency room. The attacker shouted, “Let me see how your god and your Islam is going to protect you now!”
- In McLean, Virginia, a woman reports being terminated without a valid reason on September 24. She believes it was connected to the fact that her supervisor was always making comments about immigrants, including statements like “I don’t feel safe in my own country anymore because of all of the foreigners in my building.”

## **Government efforts on behalf of Muslims**

Early on in the crisis, national political leaders worked to set the tone of tolerance toward Muslims. Congress strongly supported that sentiment. In fact, the House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning bigotry and violence against Arab Americans, American Muslims and South Asians in the wake of 9-11. Local and federal authorities acted with resolve against the anti-Muslim backlash.

## **Law enforcement agencies battle hate**

Local and federal authorities have been on alert since the beginning of the crisis to the possibility of a violent backlash. Generally, the authorities have taken measures to monitor, investigate, prosecute, and even prevent incidents. Local and federal agencies responded quickly to stem the rise the anti-Muslim hate crimes. Police departments across the country stepped up patrols around Muslim facilities.

Local police departments kept the public apprised of anti-Muslim attacks. The *Washington Post* reported on October 3, 2001 that Montgomery County logged 12 hate crimes reported since 9-11. The police in Dearborn, Michigan reported receiving 22 complaints of intimidation incidents against Arabs and Muslims during the last three weeks of September 2001 (There was only one reported case in the same period of 2000). The Los Angeles Police Department reportedly logged nearly 100 incidents, most targeting Arab-Americans, Muslims, Afghan-Americans, Sikhs, Asians and others mistaken for Arabs or Muslims. On January 11, 2002, the *San Francisco Chronicle* cited California Attorney General Bill Lockyer noting that normally his office logged about five hate crimes a day, but since the terrorist attacks, the number has jumped to 20 per day. He also noted that crimes against Arab Americans, Muslims and those perceived to be in those groups accounted for the large increase.

In mid-October 2001, the government was investigating 170 hate crime reports. By February 2002 the Department of Justice had investigated approximately 300 incidents. In some cases, suspects were apprehended, put on trial and convicted for the crimes they committed. For example, 29-year-old Eric Richley, who smashed his car into an Ohio mosque, was sentenced to a five-year prison term. He pleaded guilty in Cuyahoga County Court to burglary, ethnic intimidation, vandalism and drunk driving in the September 16th incident in which he drove his car at high speed through the glass entrance of the Islamic Center of Greater Cleveland.

Also, the EEOC updated its anti-discrimination guidelines to employers, warning against the increased incidence of workplace discrimination on the basis of religion, ethnicity, and country of origin. On December 11, 2001, the EEOC held a public hearing about workplace discrimination in the wake of 9-11. This came as a response to the

finding by the Commission showing that more than 130 charges of employment discrimination directly related to the events of 9-11 have been filed with EEOC since that tragic day.

Also, a federal judge handed down a longer-than-normal sentence for a man who falsely connected his fiancée's Arab-American boss to the 9-11 attacks. Judge Nina Gershon of U.S. District Court sentenced Jack Barresi, 38, to 21 months in prison for falsely telling the FBI that his fiancée's boss was a potential suspect. Prosecutors requested Barresi be given more than the normal six-month sentence for such violations because of the "heightened anti-Arab sentiment." Barresi told federal authorities right after the attacks that on September 7, his fiancée's boss told him that he could "not wait for you Americans to blow up and die," authorities said. Barresi later admitted that he made the claim up.

Muslim communities around the country expressed gratitude to the law enforcement community. The Islamic Center of Boca Raton, Florida held a reception on January 19, 2002 to thank the police department for extra patrols aimed at protecting Muslim community facilities against threats and vandalism after the terrorist attacks. The center had received a number of anonymous threats by phone, and the center's imam was reportedly threatened at gunpoint at the end of September.

Also, Muslim community groups hailed the vigilance of law enforcement authorities when they foiled a bombing attack by the Jewish Defense League (JDL) in California. JDL chairman Irv Rubin and another member of his group were arrested on December 11, 2001 on suspicion of plotting to blow up a mosque in Culver City, California and the offices of the Muslim Public Affairs Council and Arab American Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA). Rubin was arrested after the last bomb-making components were allegedly delivered to his co-conspirator's home. Other bomb components were seized at the home as well.

An alarming development took place in November 2001, when Middle East Forum director Daniel Pipes was appointed to a newly formed Special Task Force on Terrorism Technology sponsored by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a division of the Department of Defense. Concerns of Muslims were

heightened by the fact that Mr. Pipes has been among the leading personalities agitating the public against Muslims. After September 11, he told a Salon.com reporter that 10 to 15 percent of Muslims in the world are “potential killers.”

Also alarming was the silence of President Bush (after his initial leadership in setting a tolerant tone for the country) in the face of repeated bigoted statements from high profile people like Franklin Graham, who swore the President into office.

## **Civil liberties: a victim of 9/11**

As has been noted above, in the first few days after the 9-11 attacks, government officials, including President Bush, made a point to reach out to the Muslim community. He visited the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C. in the company of national Muslim leaders. In the face of hate crimes against Muslims, he warned Americans against “picking on” people because they are different. He also praised Americans who expressed sympathy with Muslim women wearing hijab after they were attacked. Local and federal agencies worked to combat the hysterical anti-Muslim backlash. But since that initial period of support, a number of governmental policies have singled out American Muslim organizations and immigrants from Muslim countries.

## **Civil liberty violations**

### **[The USA PATRIOT Act of 2001](#)**

On October 26, 2001, the President signed the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act, better known by its acronym, the USA PATRIOT Act. The law, which hurriedly passed with little public debate, has been criticized by constitutional law experts saying it eroded civil liberties Americans take for granted. In particular, critics have charged that the Act gives the executive branch the power to detain immigrant suspects for lengthy periods of time, sometimes indefinitely. Critics have also pointed out that the Act allows the executive branch to circumvent the Fourth Amendment’s requirement of probable cause when conducting wiretaps and searches. Under the current law, critics say, persons and organizations searched could be U.S. citizens who are not suspected of any

wrongdoing. The law permits personal or business records to be seized for an investigation without prior evidence of connection to terrorism or criminal activity. The government only needs to claim that the seizure is designed to look for such evidence.

Critics also noted that under the USA PATRIOT Act, businesses are required to monitor their customers and report “suspicious transactions” to the Treasury Department. Buried in the more than 300 pages of the new law is a provision that “any person engaged in a trade or business” has to file a government report if a customer spends \$10,000 or more in cash. The threshold is cumulative and applies to multiple purchases if they’re somehow related—three \$3,500 pieces of home or office furniture, for example, might trigger a filing.

### Detentions

A year after the 9-11 attacks, a significant number of non-U.S. nationals originally from Arab and Muslim countries still remain in detention. Most of these people are believed to have overstayed their immigration visas, although they have neither been linked to the attacks nor charged with any criminal offenses. There are some 300,000 absconders in the U.S. These are immigrants who entered the country legally but overstayed their visa. Government critics view the selective enforcement of immigration law on absconders from Muslim-majority countries as a form of bias.

Many detainees have been deported since the initial sweep. While the detentions have been surrounded by secrecy, news reports suggest that nearly 1,200 people were taken into custody in the initial stage of the crackdown. There have been charges that detainees have not been informed of the reasons of their detention. Many have not had prompt access to a lawyer and detainees have been treated as if they were guilty until proven innocent.

The lengthy detentions have been criticized in particular for their violation of the Constitution’s Sixth Amendment, which states: “...the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him.”

Many Muslims see the plight of Dr. Al-Najjar as a symbol of the misplaced retaliation against Muslims after the 9-11 attacks. Dr. Mazen Al-Najjar, a stateless Palestinian who had overstayed his immigration visa, was held in solitary confinement on the basis of secret evidence from November 24, 2001 until his deportation in late August 2002. He was only allowed one hour of exercise each day and was reportedly strip-searched twice a day. Al-Najjar had previously been detained for more than three years as the U.S. worked to deport him. A U.S. Appeals Court forced his release only months prior to his 2001 arrest. The court ruled that prosecutors could not try him with secret evidence, but that did not stop the government from jailing him again on the same grounds.

In addition to this group of detainees, there were also an unidentified number of people taken into custody and interrogated for a short period of time, days or hours. Most of these were legal immigrants. Some were interrogated in their homes and places of work or business. Some of the people held for such questioning included two children who are British citizens of Pakistani descent, ages 11 and 13, in Dumphries, Virginia. They were reportedly taken from their school by local police officers, who were later joined by FBI agents to conduct the interrogation. They were asked if they practiced Islam and what they thought about various religious concepts (particularly jihad). They were also questioned about the mosque they attended and the views of their imams. The detention took place after the teacher of the older boy found out he was a Muslim from Pakistan and had attended Islamic activities.

Among those interrogated by federal government personnel were individuals with pilot licenses, those in pilot training programs, or individuals working in areas classified as sensitive, such as trucking or hazardous material handling. Some of the victims of this type of profiling were legal immigrants; others were American citizens, including members of the military. Interrogators reportedly asked people about their views of what happened on 9-11, what was happening in Afghanistan and whether they sent money to their country of origin.

Even Muslims with record in public service were searched and questioned. More than 30 FBI agents and a hazardous materials team participated in raids at the home of

the Pakistan-born Dr. Irshad Shaikh, who has been the health commissioner of Chester, Pennsylvania since 1994. Authorities wouldn't say why the homes were searched. Federal court documents used to obtain search warrants were sealed. No charges have been filed. The man said agents told him he had been seen dumping a cloudy liquid on the ground behind his home and handing a silver canister to someone. The liquid, the man said, was soapy water from a clogged sink and the canister was a food dish.

### Security interviews

In November 2001, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced that the government would conduct "voluntary" interviews with 5,000 legal Muslim foreign nationals. When this was completed earlier this year, Mr. Ashcroft announced that an additional 3,000 people of the same category of individuals would next be sought. The attorney general said the government learned a great deal from the initial interviews, but little was known as to how that information related to the investigation of the 9-11 attacks or any suspected terrorists. News reports suggested that fewer than 20 of the initial interviewees were arrested, all on charges unrelated to terrorism.

In November 2001, U.S. Department of State officials announced the introduction of a 20-day waiting period for men from predominately Muslim nations who apply for visas. The new policy reportedly applied to males aged 18 to 45 for the purpose of completing a background check based on answers to a special questionnaire the applicants must fill out. The list of countries where the new policy will take effect includes: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

### Closing charities

Three Muslim charities have been effectively shut down since December 2001 and are now engaged in a legal battle against the federal government. On December 4, 2001, the government designated the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF) a terrorist organization and seized its assets. The government accused HLF of supporting Hamas, a group listed as a terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of

State. HLF has insisted that its social and health services have been extended to assist Palestinian orphans, widows and poor persons irrespective of political views. The group stated it did not condone terrorism and that it has never offered any financial support to any party outside its humanitarian mission. Some anti-Palestinian groups have been lobbying for years to shut down the charity.

In addition, Global Relief Foundation (GRF) and Benevolence International Foundation (BIF) were hit with financial sanctions by the Treasury Department without the government having specified any suspicions about the conduct and financial ties of the two groups. No criminal charges have been filed against any of the three charities. These closures have had a wide impact; roughly 50,000 donors were affected by the closures. These foundations had established a track record of effective relief work. They carried out several development projects in high-need areas and served refugees and victims of natural disasters. Donors view such organizations as essential to the ability of Muslims to practice the religious duty of *zakat* (alms giving), a pillar of their faith. Many Muslims believe shutting down religious charities because of suspicion that some of its associates or recipients have extreme political views is a form of profiling that is discriminatory by nature.

Those who oppose the government closure of the charities believe the government violated the Fourth Amendment of the Bill of Rights, which states: “The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause.”

Prosecution by means of secret evidence has been criticized as inherently unfair. The accused cannot possibly defend himself against evidence he does not know. Critics argued that the use of secret evidence is in violation of the Fifth Amendment, which states that no person shall “be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”

### [Raids on businesses](#)

On March 20, 2002, federal agents raided a number of Muslim offices and homes in Virginia and Georgia. A U.S. magistrate judge signed a search warrant indicating that

a U.S. senior special agent had reason to believe that the raided homes and businesses concealed unnamed evidence of “the provision of material support for foreign terrorist organizations....” Targets of the raids included respected leaders and organizations in the American Muslim community such as the International Institute of Islamic Thought, which conducts research on Islamic reform issues, and the Graduate School of Islamic Social Sciences, which has trained chaplains serving in the U.S. military. Those whose homes were targeted said frightened mothers and daughters were handcuffed for hours and, in the case of a woman and her teenage daughter, were refused their request to wear their headscarves. Affidavits that led to the raids were sealed and thus the targeted individuals and organizations do not know what led the government to suspect they had any connection to terrorism. Again, no criminal charges were filed and no evidence was produced to back up the government’s actions.

The raids were launched as part of Operation Green Quest, a task force created to track and disrupt the sources of terrorist finances. According to Customs, Operation Green Quest is said to be carrying out more than 300 probes into terrorist finances. In its four months of operation, it has seized about \$10.3 million in smuggled US currency and \$ 4.3 million in other assets. The government shut down and seized approximately \$1 million from Al Barakaat and Al Taqwa, alleging they were funding Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda terrorist network. Offices of the two money transfer businesses were closed down in Northern Virginia, Minneapolis, Boston, Seattle and Columbus, Ohio. Some of the businesses, such as the Minneapolis-based Al Barakaat, were lifted from the terrorist ban in August 2002, when the government cleared them.

### *Passenger profiling*

The U.S. has had in place an extensive passenger-profiling program at the nation’s airports since 1996. Muslims have complained in the past of the discriminatory nature of singling people out because of complexion and religious appearance or any other signs of faith and ethnicity. But the experiences of Muslims in the post-9-11 climate have been unmatched by any previous period. Persons of Muslim or Arab appearance were not just pulled out of passenger lines; they were treated rudely.

A few examples can illustrate the point. A Muslim woman from Lincoln, Nebraska was ordered to remove her hijab before boarding an American Airlines flight. She was frightened by the guards with guns, so she complied.

In another incident, Anila Sial wrote the following column in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on November 20, 2001 describing how she was forced to take off her hijab at the airport.

“I prepared myself for some delays when I took my first post-9-11 flight. Like most travelers, I had read about tighter security at airports. Plus, as a 22-year-old, scarf-wearing Muslim woman, I figured I might be targeted for extra scrutiny. But I wasn’t prepared for what happened when I left St. Louis to visit my sister in New York City recently. Getting there from St. Louis was no problem. It was the return trip from John F. Kennedy Airport where things became surreal. Following the same procedure as I have on countless other flights, I checked my baggage and proceeded to the first security checkpoint. This is where travelers lay their luggage through the X-ray machine and walk through the metal detector. I laid down my purse, jacket and cell phone to be scanned and walked through the metal detector without setting off the alarm. I stepped ahead to grab my belongings, when one of the airport security women stopped me abruptly. ‘I need you to take that off,’ she said, pointing towards my scarf. Caught off guard by this unusual request, I stuttered, ‘What? Why?’ The woman repeated in a much louder voice, ‘Take your thing off!’ ‘I can’t,’ I started to explain. At this point, she began to yell: ‘Yes you can, take that off now!’ I had no choice but to follow her directions, especially since everyone was now looking at me. I unpinned my scarf and let it sit on my shoulder. Under the scarf I wore a tight cap to keep my hair in place. The security guard pointed to it and demanded I remove it, as well. I pulled the hat down half way. Finally, she was satisfied and allowed me to go. Completely shocked and humiliated, I felt like crying. I realized that the security agent probably didn’t even realize how violated I felt. Imagine if the woman behind me was randomly targeted and asked to remove her blouse in front of everyone. She would probably be stunned.”

In another similar incident, a 17-year-old Muslim high school student from Virginia says that she was intimidated into removing her religiously mandated headscarf by a security guard at Baltimore/Washington International Airport (BWI). The teenage traveler told CAIR that after she went through a security checkpoint on her way to a Northwest Airlines flight, a guard shouted, “Hey, you need to take that off,” referring to her headscarf. She responded by asking, “Why do I have to take off my head cover?” The girl was then surrounded by military personnel in camouflage uniform with combat rifles. She became terrified and removed her headscarf immediately.

In a number of cases the abuse included the selective removal of Arab and Muslim passengers from the airplane. The case of a Muslim Secret Service agent captured national attention. The agent, who was on his way to his assignment of protecting President Bush, alleged that he was kicked off American Airlines Flight 363 from Baltimore to Dallas on December 25<sup>th</sup> because the captain had concerns about his identity, even though the agent went through the proper procedures for armed security personnel who are passengers. The agent's identification was subsequently checked several times by American Airlines personnel and by local police. He even offered to have the Secret Service confirm his identity. When the agent asked to go back on the plane to retrieve his jacket, the captain said: "I don't want him back on that plane."

Most cases of similar nature did not receive extensive media coverage. University of Florida newspaper the *Independent Florida Alligator* reported on November 21, 2001 that University of Florida liberal arts and sciences seniors Ismael Khan and Nauman Piracha were removed from Delta Flight 915 to Atlanta. Delta flight attendants reportedly thought they looked suspicious. In another situation, Shaun Ahmad, a passenger who was escorted off a plane wrote the following description of his experience in the *Charlotte Observer* on December 20, 2001:

"I was flying from Charlotte to New York. Soon after I took my seat, a passenger of South Asian descent sat down next to me. Although I am an American, I too have brown skin as my parents are from Pakistan originally. A couple of minutes later a US Airways security agent came to our row and asked my neighbor to leave the plane. Another agent then asked me to take my bags and follow him. When I asked why, he refused to answer. After being escorted off the plane, I was searched. When I asked again why I had been removed from the plane, I was told that I and the passenger I was traveling with had acted erratically. When I asked why the agent thought I was traveling with this other South Asian, he remained silent. I have brown skin and I am a Muslim, but I am also an American. I should not have to put up with harassment because of my ethnic or religious background. And although Attorney General Ashcroft continues to insist that justice in America remains blind to race and religion (I'm not so sure), one thing is for certain: US Airways certainly does not."

The government's profiling system, which includes ethnic and religious criteria, does not actively discourage such abuses. In some cases, the same procedures for scrutinizing Muslims and Arabs have also been applied to American citizens at the

country's ports of entry. In February 2002, a man and his three friends, all American citizens, were traveling on business to Houston, Texas and decided to cross the border to Mexico for dinner. Upon returning, they were pulled aside, interrogated, and held for more than two hours. They were allegedly told they looked Middle Eastern and were in the wrong place at the wrong time. While immigration officers at the port may be acting on their own in such cases, there is little effort by the government to prevent such mistreatment.

Still, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released a fact sheet reaffirming anti-discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or creed. In part it reads,

“In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9-11, security measures have been heightened for the safety of all. While safety and security are the highest priorities, of equal importance is a smooth, and safe experience for all individuals as their journey takes them through the aviation system.... None of the new security measures decrease the responsibility of airports and airlines to enforce ...Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the implementing regulations... regarding discrimination. Federal civil rights laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of a person's race color, national origin, religion, and sex.... However, everyone may experience some inconveniences and delays while the nation adjusts to the new security reality. You may be asked to exhibit an increased level of cooperation in security searches with today's new security regulations. Please assist the security staff in accomplishing their required tasks. Private security screening requests should be accommodated when possible. Just as there can be no discrimination against people on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or creed, there can be no compromise to the commitment and enforcement of safety and security standards in the aviation community.”

Despite the official warning, reports of incidents mounted. According to a March 4, 2002 report by the *Washington Post*, the U.S. Department of Transportation has received 98 discrimination complaints from airline passengers, including 26 who said they were kicked off flights since 9-11. Only 10 reports were filed in the same period a year earlier.

## **Guarding America's tradition of liberty**

### **Ethnic minorities**

A November report by the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) expressed fear that in the wake of the 9-11 attacks progress on the status of undocumented workers would be reversed due to an increased association between immigration and security threats resulting from the attacks. The report points out that restrictive immigration provisions have been included in new anti-terrorism measures, leaving the immigrant rights community with new sets of civil liberties and civil rights concerns. On the other hand, the war on terrorism has forced the administration to adopt more of a global and regional perspective than it previously had, to secure future collaboration with its partners in other countries and to think about meeting future threats from a multinational position.

The specific impact on immigrant communities is summarized in the NACLA as follows:

Many foreign nationals, immigrants, and first-generation U.S. citizens are included among the numerous victims and heroes of the attacks. Family members of some immigrant workers, however, have been hesitant to report missing loved ones out of fear of the INS; further, many of these immigrants and their family members, due to severe restrictions on eligibility for public services, have been unable to access certain public programs such as disaster relief programs and unemployment insurance. Many more immigrant workers found themselves among the unemployed as a result of cutbacks in travel and other affected industries. And despite strong statements from U.S. officials urging racial and ethnic tolerance, reports of violence, harassment, and hate crimes against Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and others simply mistaken for "terrorists" have been distressingly common. In the wake of the attacks, some people immediately called for even more severe restrictions on immigrant admissions and a further curtailment of the rights of immigrants already in the country. Issues that previously had low priority such as national ID cards, increased border enforcement and INS restructuring have re-appeared in light of recent events.

The Congressional Black Associates organized a panel discussion on November 16, 2001, hosting representatives of the Hispanic, Sikh and African-American communities in challenging the effectiveness and legality of profiling as a law enforcement tool. Several of the panel participants noted that although profiling is now being directed primarily at Muslims and people who look "Middle Eastern," experience

shows that it will also be used against other minorities. Many African Americans oppose profiling Arab and Muslim Americans since the practice has been deployed against blacks.

### [The civil liberties coalition](#)

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and eighteen other organizations went to federal court early December 2001 in hopes of obtaining detailed information on detainees. The groups, which include Amnesty International, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, and Human Rights Watch, filed suit in a federal court in Washington under the Freedom of Information Act. They are seeking the names of people detained in connection with the investigation, along with charges filed, length of detention, place where the detainees are jailed, and names of their lawyers.

Also, two federal lawsuits have been filed seeking to open the deportation hearings of Rabih Haddad, founder of Global Relief Foundation, which is accused of funding terrorist activities. The American Civil Liberties Union filed suit on behalf of the *Detroit News*, the weekly *Metro Times* and Rep. John Conyers, (D-MI). The *Detroit Free Press* and the *Ann Arbor News* filed a separate lawsuit for the same purpose.

Fearing the impact of Justice officials' sweeping new powers, national civil rights groups and Arab and Muslim organizations have formed a coalition to defend against practices they say violate people's civil liberties. The coalition, which includes the ACLU, the Arab American Institute and the Black Leadership Forum, called for more congressional oversight, including hearings. It also is demanding that Justice Department officials release more information about the remaining detainees held for immigration violations and stop the questioning of young male foreigners, most of whom are from Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries. The coalition kicked off its campaign with a rally January 19<sup>th</sup> in Washington in commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

On January 16, 2002, the ACLU, joined by other civil rights groups, filed a lawsuit in a federal district court in Chicago alleging that an Illinois National Guardsman and three private security personnel at O'Hare International Airport engaged in an unnecessary, unjustified, illegal and degrading search of a 22-year-old United States

citizen of Pakistani descent last November. In the complaint, the ACLU asserts that Samar Kaukab was pulled out of a group of airline passengers and subjected to repeated and increasingly invasive searches based on her ethnicity and her religion. Ms. Kaukab's religion was evident because she was wearing hijab. The lawsuit names Major General David Harris, Adjutant General for the Illinois National Guard, and Argenbright Security, Inc., as defendants for their personnel's role in the abuses directed toward Ms. Kaukab. The lawsuit stresses that Ms. Kaukab was identified and subjected to a humiliating search not because she posed any security threat, but only because her wearing of a hijab identified her as a Muslim. Security personnel surrounded her, detained her and subjected her to an embarrassing and degrading search simply based on her ethnicity and religion.

In August 2002, a federal judge ruled that the justice department had engaged in unconstitutional behavior by holding the deportation hearing of Rabih Haddad behind closed doors. The man has since filed to attain political asylum in the U.S. The court also ruled that the government has to release the names of detained individuals, unless the detainees wish otherwise or in cases of material witnesses whose identity must remain anonymous.

### *Congressional action*

On November 8, 2001, the Senate blocked the passage of an amendment introduced by Senator Robert C. Smith (R-NH) to the Intelligence Authorization Bill that would have stripped away the requirement that the government present the accused with a summary of any secret evidence—classified information not shown to a defendant—used against him or her during deportation proceedings before the so-called Alien Terrorist Removal Court. The Smith amendment failed after the Senate voted unanimously for substitute language that would require the Attorney General to submit a report on the matter in three months. Civil libertarians regarded the failure of the Smith Amendment a victory in the battle to safeguard the U.S. Constitution. Both Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Bob Graham (D-FL) spoke against the amendment in its original form, saying Congress should resist “going down the road” of the notorious Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, the laws passed during the administration of John Adams that allowed the arbitrary and utterly unwarranted deportations of law-abiding non-citizens.

Also, U. S. Representative John Conyers Jr., member of the Black Caucus and House Judiciary Committee, has been among the most outspoken critic of secret evidence and profiling. He took interest in a number of cases involving Muslims detainees after 9-11. His opinion piece in *The Detroit News* on January 22, 2002 read,

“I recently strongly criticized the Justice Department’s decision to change its longstanding practice of holding public immigration hearings behind closed doors (“Muslim man denied bail,” Jan. 3) I became concerned after being denied admission to a bond hearing in Detroit involving Rabih Haddad, a well-respected member of Michigan’s Muslim community who was being detained for an immigration violation. In this time of heated passions and rhetoric, we must make the critical distinction between our government’s detention of suspected terrorists based on specific evidence of illegal behavior and the government’s disregard for the constitutional rights to have a fair and public hearing. To be clear, I have firmly supported the need to bring terrorists to justice, while consistently protesting against government abuses of our Constitution... pending a hearing, and hearings before an immigration judge are open to the public. What I find objectionable is the fact that Pastor Haddad continues to be detained without credible evidence being offered regarding the need for his detention and without the benefit of public hearings...I fear the Justice Department, in its zealotry to protect our freedoms by detaining Middle Easterners without disclosing evidence and holding secret hearings, is quickly whittling away the constitutional foundation that has made freedom a beacon for the world.”

### Media promotion of tolerance

While media coverage of 9-11 and its aftermath is not the focus of this research, it is important to note the stark contrast between the anti-Muslim tone of several conservative media personalities and other reporters who took a more balanced approach in their coverage of 9-11. Among the commentators who engaged in Muslim bashing were Sean Hannity and Bill O’Reilly of Fox, Rich Lowry of the *National Review*, Dr. Laura Shlesinger, Rush Limbough, Cal Thomas, and Allen Keys. However, several media outlets have made an effort to draw a clear distinction between Islam and terrorism. They have also been vigilant on the issue of civil liberties. Here are a few examples.

- *Oprah Winfrey Show*, October 5, 2001

The one-hour, widely watched NBC program gave a crash course on Islam that was generally balanced. It introduced the main beliefs of Islam and featured an American Muslim couple practicing their faith and going about their daily lives in Chicago. The program also made a distinction between the faith and its adherents,

featuring a variety of political hotspots in Muslim countries and discussing matters of religion and politics.

- *San Jose Mercury News*, November 15, 2001. The newspaper ran the following editorial:

First, the Justice Department rounds up more than a thousand people and holds them without letting anybody know the charges against them, or even who is being held. Then the State Department announces that it will slow the process for granting visas to men from Arab and Muslim countries. But don't stop there. Why not violate the long-held principle that people in custody are entitled to private conversations with their attorneys? And while we're at it, why not just ignore the American criminal justice system for some people and let their cases be handled in secret, by military courts? What next? Summary executions? ...The president has the constitutional authority to do what he's doing. He nonetheless undermines the values America seeks to defend as it battles those for whom civil rights have no meaning.

- *Seventh Heaven Show*, January 8, 2002.

This Warner Brothers Television Network show featured Ruthie stepping in to protect her Muslim friend Yasmine from bullies who have been terrorizing her because of her ethnic and religious background, and gains the support from the entire Camden family. Eric, Annie and the other kids all work together to defend Yasmine and her family and discover in the process the sad truth that many people in their community share the same fears.

- *Michigan Daily*, January 9, 2002. The newspaper ran the following editorial:

Rabih Haddad, a leader of the Ann Arbor Muslim community, was arrested on Dec. 14 by the Immigration and Naturalization Service on charges of overstaying his tourist visa. Since then he has been detained and has been denied bond on two separate occasions, the latest reasons proffered by the court being risk of flight and danger to society. Haddad has visited the U.S. off and on for more than a decade and in that time has founded the Global Relief Foundation, taught at a local Islamic school, served as assistant to the leader of Ann Arbor's mosque and applied for permanent residency. While it is within INS jurisdiction to arrest or detain visitors for overstaying visas, the elements of secret evidence, racial profiling and inconsistency indicate justice is not being served in this case.... [I]t should take care to uphold the civil liberties that are fundamental to those values.

- *Washington Post*, February 7, 2002. The newspaper ran the following editorial:

Ten days after the 9-11 attacks, the administration instructed its immigration judges to keep certain proceedings closed. Not only would hearings be conducted in secret with “no visitors, no family, and no press” present, but the “record of the proceeding [was] not to be released to anyone” either -- including “confirming or denying whether such a case is on the docket or scheduled for a hearing.” The Justice Department has since been conducting its 9-11-related immigration cases under these indefensible rules, though the cases thus far have not involved classified evidence. Last week two Detroit newspapers, Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) and the American Civil Liberties Union challenged in court both the policy generally and the closure of one immigration case in particular -- that of a man named Rabih Haddad. Mr. Haddad, the co-founder of a Muslim charity suspected of terrorist links, was detained on immigration charges. Whatever the merits of the case against him, he has a lot of supporters, and they -- along with the press -- want to attend his immigration trial. Yet, officially, there is nothing to attend. It doesn't matter that no sensitive or classified information has been discussed at the hearings to date, the plaintiffs claim. Public access has been nonexistent anyway. Immigration cases carry enormous consequences for people's freedom. They should, like criminal trials, be open for public scrutiny and criticism unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary. Holding trials in secret is a tactic unworthy of a great legal system.

- *A Walk In Your Shoes*, February 10, 2002.

Noggin and Nickelodeon simulcast this episode, which was designed to help children understand the world around them and dispel any myths they may have about Muslims and the Islamic faith. The 30-minute episode featured Nancy, a 15-year-old Protestant teen from the suburbs of Boston and Mariam, a 13-year-old Muslim teen from northern New Jersey. Nancy spends two days with Mariam to get a better understanding of the life of a Muslim-American teen. Nancy is nervous about terrorism in America and apprehensive about Muslims since her friends lost family members on 9-11. As Nancy explores Mariam's life, she gets the opportunity to attend Mariam's Muslim school, pray at her mosque, wear a hijab and celebrate Ramadan with Mariam's family. During the episode, Mariam teaches Nancy why Muslims fast and that Islam is a religion that preaches love and kindness to others. The two girls also go ice-skating, shop at the mall and surf the web together.

- *Kansas City Star*, February 14, 2002

If a report that Attorney General John Ashcroft made a tactless and inaccurate comment about Islam is correct, he should immediately apologize. So far Ashcroft has failed to give this matter the attention it deserves. He simply had a Justice Department spokeswoman issue a statement saying that the words attributed to him by Thomas “do not accurately reflect the attorney general's views.” This careful wording implies denial but is actually silent on whether the

quote was accurate. Thomas insists that it was. The columnist said he even repeated the quote in Ashcroft's presence to make sure that it was right. The quoted remark amounts to a broad and unfair attack on an entire faith. The attorney general needs to quickly clarify the situation. If Thomas' report is accurate, Ashcroft owes Muslims a sincere apology.

## **Appendix**

### **CAIR Full Page Advertisement**

**Washington Post, September 16, 2001**

We at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), along with the entire American Muslim community, are deeply saddened by the massive loss of life resulting from the tragic events of September 11th.

American Muslims unequivocally condemn these vicious and cowardly acts of terrorism.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families, friends and loved ones of those who have been killed or injured.

We also extend our gratitude to all the heroic firefighters, police officers and emergency medical workers who continue to risk their lives in the ongoing rescue and relief efforts.

We join with all Americans in calling for the swift apprehension and punishment of the perpetrators of these crimes.

May we all stand together through these difficult times to promote peace and love over violence and hate.

**CAIR**

Council on American-Islamic Relations

New York • Washington DC • San Francisco • Los Angeles • Dallas • St. Louis • Columbus  
Detroit • Raleigh • Minneapolis • Miami • Ottawa

[www.cair-net.org](http://www.cair-net.org)

### **ISNA JOINS AMPCC IN CONDEMNING TERRORIST ATTACKS**

(Plainfield, IN – 9/11/2001) – The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), along with other Muslim organizations throughout North America, today condemned the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington and offered condolences to the families of those who were killed or injured.

The AMPCC statement read in part:

“American Muslims utterly condemn what are vicious and cowardly acts of terrorism against innocent civilians. We join with all Americans in calling for the swift apprehension and punishment of the perpetrators. No political cause could ever be assisted by such immoral acts.”

- END -

Signatories:

American Muslim Alliance  
American Muslim Council  
Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers  
Association of Muslim Social Scientists  
Council on American-Islamic Relations  
Islamic Medical Association of North America  
Islamic Circle of North America  
Islamic Society of North America  
Ministry of Imam W. Deen Mohammed  
Muslim American Society  
Muslim Public Affairs Council

### **U.S. Muslim Scholars Condemn Attacks**

CHICAGO, Sept 12 (IslamOnline) - Muslim scholars in North America unanimously condemned the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon and expressed their deep sorrow and sympathy for those Americans who were killed and injured.

The Detroit-based Shari'a Scholars Association of North America (SSANA) strongly condemned the attack and said that there is no cause that justifies "this type of an immoral and inhumane act that has affected so many innocent American lives."

Insisting that Islam condemns such despicable attacks, the Association in a statement said, "Certainly, there is no justification for these acts from either an Islamic perspective or, in truth, from the perspective of any other moral and freedom-loving people. These acts diminish the freedom of all Americans, including American Muslims. Our condolences go out to all of the victims of these inhumane acts."

Additionally, the statement added that, "SSANA supports all efforts to investigate and immediately capture the evil persons responsible for these immoral and cowardly acts."

Sheikh Muhammad Hanooti, member of the Fiqh Council of North America and resident scholar at IslamOnline, told Islamonline that Muslims all over the world condemn this heinous act in the strongest of expressions and feelings. He said, "Islam tells us murdering one person is equal to murdering all humanity. We feel that great many innocent lives have been lost in this barbaric attack."

He added, "We pray to God to enable the people of United States of America to have peace, stability, security and prosperity."

Muzammil Siddiqui, director of Islamic Society of Orange County (ISOC) and former president of Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) could not be reached for comment but a statement released by the ISOC, which mentions him as the contact person, said that in each of its prayers yesterday the Society offered a special prayer and supplication for the victims of the tragedy in both New York and Washington DC.

"We encourage Muslim medical professionals and Muslim relief agencies to assist in whatever possible way with humanitarian and relief efforts both locally and nationally. Moreover, we urge people of diverse religious traditions, faith groups and spiritual expressions, including Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and members of other communities, to share their grief and sorrow together as one family, the human family," the statement read.

"We pray to God Almighty to provide safety and security to those working to alleviate the suffering and pain of the victims and their families of this tragic violence. We pray to God Almighty to instill patience and tranquility to all those involved in the process. Lastly, we pray to God Almighty to continue to bless and protect this land and all of its inhabitants," the statement added.

M. Amir Ali, Director of the Chicago-based Institute of Islamic Information and Education said, "Our condemnation of this terrorist act is unconditional and unequivocal and we support an impartial investigation for bringing perpetrators to full justice. I would like to add that there should be no retaliation against any party or a country without proof, but based on suspicion and prejudice."

"The Muslim leaders of Chicago discussed an action plan to help the victims and survivors of the terrorist attack by sending a team of doctors to New York, donating blood for the victims and sending money to help the needy. Committees were established to implement the resolutions immediately," he said.

Leading Islamic scholar Sheikh Taha Jaber Alwani, president of the School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg, Virginia, told AP news, "Muslims in this country would think this is unacceptable. I can't accept anything against any American citizen. I'm Muslim. I'm also American. I love America."

All local and national imams and scholars have expressed similar sentiments.

## **Scholars of Islam speak out against terrorism; clarify position of Islam**

Monday, September 17, 2001

Dozens of scholars of Islam issued a statement today, condemning the violent attacks of 9-11th.

“We are grief-stricken at these horrifying events,” they wrote; “the murder of innocents can never be justified and must not be tolerated.”

In a lengthy statement, professors from major colleges and universities throughout the country expressed their compassion for grieving family members while also decrying the increase in violence against American Muslims this past week. “Anger and frustration are completely understandable and shared by us all,” they wrote “yet that anger must not be directed at individuals utterly innocent of these terrible crimes.”

In recent days, verbal and physical attacks against Muslims (and people who were thought to be Muslims) have been reported from California to Vermont. Muslims have been warned to stay home or to avoid wearing traditional dress. “Particularly distressing is the fact that many American Muslims have fled to the United States, seeking a haven from intolerant regimes in Kosovo, Afghanistan or Iraq. For them now to face intolerance and violence here is an abuse of our Nation’s most deeply cherished beliefs” they said.

The co-signers of the statement are members of many scholarly societies in the United States and Canada. They include:

Professor Asma Afsaruddin, of Notre Dame University  
Professor Vivienne Sm. Angeles, La Salle University  
Professor Ghazala Anwar of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand  
Professor Jonathan Brockopp, Director of the Religion Program at Bard College  
Professor Patrice C. Brodeur of Connecticut College  
Professor Arthur Buehler of Louisiana State University  
Professor Amila Buturovic of York University  
Professor Juan E. Campo of the University of California, Santa Barbara  
Professor Vincent J. Cornell of University of Arkansas  
Professor Frederick M. Denny Chair of Islamic Studies and the History of Religions, University of Colorado  
Professor Abdullahi Gallab of Hiram College  
Professor Behrooz Ghamari of Georgia State University  
Professor Alan Godlas of University of Georgia  
Professor Hugh Talat Halman, of University of Arkansas  
Professor Pieternella (Nelly) Harder Vandoorn,, of Valparaiso University  
Professor Marcia Hermansen of Loyola University, Chicago  
Professor Valerie J. Hoffman, of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Professor Qamar ul-Huda, of Boston College  
Professor Aaron Hughes of the University of Calgary  
Professor Amir Hussain of California State University, Northridge  
Professor John Iskander of Georgia State Univeristy  
Professor Ahmet Karamustafa of Washington University in St. Louis  
Professor Tazim Kassam of Syracuse University  
Professor Zayn Kassam of Pomona College  
Professor Ruqayya Khan of University of California at Santa Barbara  
Professor Kathryn Kueny, of Lawrence College  
Professor Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Dean of the College, Georgetown University  
Professor Richard C. Martin, Emory University  
Professor J.W. Morris, Chair of Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter

Professor Gordon D. Newby, Executive Director, Institute for Comparative and International Studies at Emory University  
Professor James Pavlin of Rutgers University  
Professor Jack Renard of St. Louis University  
Professor Omid Safi of Colgate University  
Professor Walid Saleh of Middlebury College  
Professor Zeki Saritoprak of Berry College  
Professor Michael Sells, Haverford College  
Professor Laury Silvers-Alario of Holy Cross University  
Professor Alfons Teipen of Furman University

## **Statement of California Muslim Organizations**

**Released September 21, 2001**

We, the undersigned Muslim organizations, support the President and Congress of the U.S. in the struggle against terrorism. Holding to the ideals of both our religion and our country, we condemn all forms of terrorism, and confirm the need for perpetrators of any such acts of violence to be brought to justice, including those who carried out the attacks of Tuesday, 9-11, 2001.

At the same time, in the planning of this "war against terrorism," we call upon the President and Congress to reaffirm the values and principles that make this country great, namely that one is innocent until proven guilty, that all accused have the right to a fair trial, that no one be punished for the acts of another, and that respect for human life is supreme, regardless of race or religion. To this end, we urge the U.S. government not to abandon the due process of law in determining responsibility for the attacks and punishing the guilty parties.

We are saddened by the possibility of military action, as we do not believe that terrorism can be eliminated solely or even effectively through military force. Rather we call upon our leaders to recognize that in order to rid the world of the ugliness of terrorism, our nation must understand its root causes. We hold out the hope that these root causes can be addressed through non-violent means, in a way that promotes peace and harmony between the nations of the world.

Signed:

*Afghan Muslim Association (Fremont, CA)*

[American Muslims for Global Peace and Justice \(AMGPJ\)](#)

[American Muslims for Jerusalem \(Northern California\)](#)

[American Muslims Intent on Learning and Activism \(AMILA\)](#)

*Arab-American Congre*

*Council on American-Islamic Relations (Northern California)*

[Islamic Circle of North America \(ICNA\) Bay Area](#)

[Islamic Networks Group \(ING\)](#)

*Islamic Society of the East Bay (Union City, CA)*  
*Islamic Society of San Francisco*  
*Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) West Zone*  
*Muslim American Society*  
[Muslim Community Association \(MCA\)](#)  
[Muslim Peace Fellowship \(Nyack, NY\)](#)  
[South Bay Islamic Association \(San Jose, CA\)](#)  
[Zaytuna Institute \(Hayward, CA\)](#)

## **Rallying to make a difference**

By Katherine Morales, *Dallas Morning News*, October 21, 2001

Imad Ismail stood on a sidewalk in downtown Dallas, telling strangers the same things he has told his friends at school for the last six weeks.

The 14-year-old didn't commit the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Nobody he knew was involved.

His religious beliefs don't condone them, and he was appalled by them.

"I'm here because I think I can try to make a difference – to inform the public about what's going on," he said.

Imad joined hundreds of other families and community leaders, Muslim and non-Muslim, on Saturday for a rally against terrorism sponsored by the Council on American-Islamic Relations-DFW.

He stood with his siblings and cousins holding banners and American flags.

"Most people have been pretty cool – they've waved and smiled," Imad said, referring to passers-by.

The Duncanville teen said the reception hasn't always been as friendly.

"People would yell things at me on the street, and people at school would ask me if I was a terrorist," he said. "I don't take it seriously. They don't know me."

Behind Imad, speakers at the rally walked onto a small stage and denounced the attacks.

"The last six weeks have been difficult for our nation as a whole," said Mohamed Elmougy, president of the council. "We are here to reclaim our faith from those who have hijacked it from us. We cannot allow the few to ruin it for the many."

Mr. Elmougy also said it was unfair of people to think of Osama bin Laden as a true representative of Islam.

That statement brought rounds of applause from the audience. Some people waved handmade signs above their heads with messages of patriotism and peace.

Shamshad Haider Murtazawi, a Muslim cleric, gave those who gathered a perspective from the Quran on terrorism and murder.

"We do not kill, and it is absolutely forbidden in the Quran unless it is for self-defense," he said. "Human conscience does not allow terrorism, and Muslims will fight against it."

Melissa Walker drove from Sulphur Springs with her husband and two children to attend the rally after reading about it on a local website.

"I'm glad they have a variety of speakers with different perspectives," she said. "They speak for all of us and say the things we want to say. I wish there were more outlets for this."

A few non-Muslims also attended the event to show support for the Islamic community and to learn more about the tenets of Islam.

"I'm opposed to the violence that has been exhibited toward some of these people, although they had nothing to do with the attacks," said Norma Bell of Garland. "I'm Catholic, but we're all just trying to get to the same place."

### **Muslim Religious figures condemn terrorism**

**\* "Hijacking Planes, terrorizing innocent people and shedding blood constitute a form of injustice that can not be tolerated by Islam, which views them as gross crimes and sinful acts."**

Shaykh Abdul Aziz al-Ashaikh (Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Senior Ulama, on September 15th, 2001)

**\*The terrorists acts, from the perspective of Islamic law, constitute the crime of hirabah (waging war against society)."**

Sept. 27, 2001 fatwa, signed by:

Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (Grand Islamic Scholar and Chairman of the Sunna and Sira Countil, Qatar)

Judge Tariq al-Bishri, First Deputy President of the Council d'etat, Egypt

Dr. Muhammad s. al-Awa, Professor of Islamic Law and Shari'a, Egypt

Dr. Haytham al-Khayyat, Islamic scholar, Syria

Fahmi Houaydi, Islamic scholar, Syria

Shaykh Taha Jabir al-Alwani, Chairman, North America High Council

**\*"Neither the law of Islam nor its ethical system justify such a crime."**

Zaki Badawi, Principal of the Muslim College in London. Cited in Arab News, Sept. 28, 2001.

**\*"It is wrong to kill innocent people. It is also wrong to Praise those who kill innocent people."**

Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai, Pakistan. Cited in NY Times, Sept. 28, 2001.

**\*"What these people stand for is completely against all the principles that Arab Muslims believe in."**

King Abdullah II, of Jordan; cited in Middle East Times, Sept. 28, 2001.

**\*Ingrid Mattson, a professor of Islamic studies and Muslim-Christian relations at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, said there was no basis in Islamic law or sacred text for Mr. bin Laden's remarks. "The basic theological distortion is that any means are permitted to achieve the end of protesting against perceived oppression."**

Dr. Ingrid Mattson, a practicing Muslim.

### **Participants in the National Day of Unity and Prayer**

**Organizations participating in the 9-11, 2002 Day of Unity and Prayer (as of September 2, 2002)**

AK ICNA North-West Region  
Unitarian Universalist Society of  
Chicago Islamic Center

AR Almobarak Cultural Center  
Immaculate Conception Church

CA Islamic Society of Orange County & CAIR - LA  
Basileia, an Open Door Community of Christ  
Islamic Center of Conejo Valley  
Coachella Valley Islamic Society  
Orange County Islamic Foundation  
Muslim Community Center of Greater San Diego  
Islamic Society of San Francisco  
Atonement Lutheran Church & Islamic Society of San Diego  
Unity Network  
Islamic Center of Claremont  
First Congregational Church of Escondido  
Masjid Al Islam  
Islamic Center of Fremont  
Muslim Women In Action  
Islamic Center Woodland California  
Muslim Student Union (USC)

CO Islamic Center of Fort Collins

FL Islamic Center of Northeast Florida  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bay County  
Nur Ul Islam of South Florida

GA Masjid Al-Hedaya

IA Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids

IL Islamic Center of Macomb  
Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva  
Islamic Center of the Quad Cities  
Central Illinois Masjid and Islamic Center  
Evanston Friends Meeting  
Chicago Islamic Center

KS Islamic Center of Topeka

MA Duxbury Interfaith Council  
Islamic Society of Western Massachusetts  
United Muslim Mothers  
Islamic Center of New England  
Islamic Society of Greater Worcester

MD Islamic Society of Baltimore

MI Islamic Cultural Institute  
Islamic Center Lansing

MO Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis

NC Islamic Center of Greensboro

NJ Darul-Islah

Center for Understanding Islam  
 Shia Education Network, Inc.  
 Islamic Center of Passaic County  
 Muslim Center of Middlesex County  
 Yale University (MSA)  
 Centenary United Methodist Church  
 Metuchen-Edison Interfaith Clergy Association  
 NV Islamic Society of Nevada  
 NY Upper Westchester Muslim Society  
 Islamic Cultural Center of New York  
 Mid Hudson Islamic Association  
 OH Oberlin Muslims in Remembrance  
 Masjid Saad Foundation  
 OK Islamic Society of Tulsa  
 Islamic Society of Tulsa  
 The Islamic Society of Stillwater  
 PA Muslim Students Association at the University of Pennsylvania  
 Muslim Association of the Lehigh Valley  
 Muslim Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh  
 SC Disciples United Methodist Church  
 TN Al-Noor Islamic Center  
 Muslim Community of Nashville  
 Salahadeen Center of Nashville  
 TX Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Waco  
 Islamic Association of North Texas  
 Islamic Center of Greater Austin  
 TX Islamic Society of Greater Houston  
 VA Islamic Center of Shenandoah Valley  
 Islamic Center of Virginia  
 Unitarian Universalists of Sterling  
 Washington Moroccan Club  
 WA Institute of Service Leadership And Management  
 WI Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee