

See more news releases in: [Religion](#), [Domestic Policy](#), [Not For Profit](#)

## CAIR: Muslims Ask MN Gov. to Retract Statement Against NY Islamic Center

### Community leaders urge Pawlenty to uphold religious freedom, educate himself about Islam

MINNEAPOLIS, August 9 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Leaders of over twelve Minnesota Muslim organizations and mosques today called on Governor Tim Pawlenty to retract a statement he made in opposition to a New York Muslim cultural center. His comments appeared to link all Muslims and the Islamic faith to the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

[ACTION: To offer polite comments to the governor, go to: <http://www.governor.state.mn.us/contacts/index.htm> ]

On Friday, Pawlenty told Real Clear Politics, "I'm strongly opposed to the idea of putting a mosque anywhere near Ground Zero -- I think it's inappropriate. I believe that 3,000 of our fellow innocent citizens were killed in that area, and some ways from a patriotic standpoint, it's hallowed ground, it's sacred ground, and we should respect that. We shouldn't have images or activities that degrade or disrespect that in any way."

SEE: Mulling 2012, Pawlenty Takes Restrained Plunge

<http://tinyurl.com/2g4f46b>

In a letter sent to Pawlenty's office, the Muslim leaders urged the governor to understand that the 9/11 terrorist attacks were a tragedy for all Americans, including Muslims. The letter noted that dozens of American Muslims were killed in the attacks.

"Our governor has engaged in collective guilt by saying that all Muslim activities and images anywhere near Ground Zero are degrading and disrespectful," said CAIR-MN Civil Rights Director Taneza Islam. "All Americans, including Muslims, should seek to help heal our society and avoid statements that create division or distrust."

Ms. Islam added that the stated goal of the New York Muslim cultural center is to assist in that healing process by promoting prayer, unity, and mutual understanding.

SEE: Fareed Zakaria: Build the Ground Zero Mosque

<http://tinyurl.com/2cugp4y>

The Muslim leaders also urged Pawlenty to respect the First Amendment and America's longstanding history of religious tolerance.

"The underlying issue here is freedom of religion," said Somali Action Alliance Executive Director Hashi Shafi. "For Governor Pawlenty to deny Muslims their right to build a cultural or religious center is both unpatriotic and unconstitutional." Shafi commended New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg on his August 3 speech in support of religious freedom.

SEE: Mayor Bloomberg's Ground Zero Mosque Speech

<http://tinyurl.com/2654klx>

The community leaders are asking the Governor to:

1. Retract his statement.
2. Meet with local Muslim community leaders to discuss the issue and to understand how his comments have negatively impacted the Minnesota Muslim community.
3. Seek out opportunities in the upcoming Islamic holy month of Ramadan to educate himself on Islam and Muslims and build relationships with constituents.

Many American Muslims view the rhetorical attacks on the New York Muslim cultural center as part of a wider attack on the religious and civil rights of Muslims. This disturbing phenomenon was the subject of a major New York Times article on Sunday.

SEE: Across Nation, Mosque Projects Meet Opposition (NY Times)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/08/us/08mosque.html>

CAIR: Conn. Muslims Requesting Protection from Protests

<http://tinyurl.com/247ucob>

For GOP, Islamophobia is the New Anti-Communism


<http://tinyurl.com/22lx3uw>

Those who defend Muslim religious rights also note that the main opposition to mosques and Islamic centers nationwide comes from a hard core of anti-Muslim bigots who often have a long history of bashing Islam.

For example, it was recently revealed that a founding member of the primary anti-Muslim hate group promoting opposition to the New York Islamic center, Stop the Islamization of America, has partnered with an individual who called for the killing of all Muslims.

He wrote: "[T]here are no innocent muslims. islam is subject to killing on grounds of political expediency on the same basis as islam kills its victims, and islam cannot ethically and morally claim otherwise." [Note: Grammatical errors in the original text



 RSS Feeds

 Print

 Email

 Share it ▾

 Blog it ▾

 Blog Search ▾

### Other News Releases in Religion

Haiti Update: Construction in Full Gear, Volunteers, Donations Needed

CAIR: NY Bus Ads Sponsored by Anti-Islam Extremists

AJC Urges Chile Government to Address Surge in Anti-Semitic Incidents

### Journalists and Bloggers

Visit PR Newswire for Journalists for releases, photos, ProfNet experts, and customized feeds just for Media.

View and download **archived video** content distributed by MultiVu on The Digital Center.

have be maintained.]

SEE: SIOA Co-Founder: Kill Your Liberal Relatives and All Muslims

<http://tinyurl.com/2e5kzxv>

The Minnesota Muslim community is estimated to be at least 150,000.

Signatories to the letter include: Center for Somali Solutions; Council on American-Islamic Relations-Minnesota; Dar Al Hijrah; EngageMN; Islamic Circle of North America-MN Chapter; Islamic Resource Group; Jafari Islamic Center; Masjid An-Nur; Northwest Islamic Community Center; Sisters Need a Place; Somali Action Alliance; Somali American Community; Somali Community Link; and Tawfiq Islamic Center.

Become a Fan of CAIR on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/CAIR/42590232694>

Subscribe to CAIR's E-Mail List

<http://tinyurl.com/cairsubscribe>

CONTACT: CAIR-MN Civil Rights Director Taneeza Islam, Esq., 651-587-4712, E-Mail: [tislam@cair.com](mailto:tislam@cair.com); Dar Al Hijrah Chairman Abdisalam Adam, 612-227-3933, E-Mail: [info@daralhijrah.com](mailto:info@daralhijrah.com); Masjid An-Nur Imam Makram Elamin, 612-760-4375, E-Mail: [imamelamin@yahoo.com](mailto:imamelamin@yahoo.com); Somali Action Alliance Executive Director Hashi Shafi, 612-242-9991, E-Mail: [shafi@winning.com](mailto:shafi@winning.com)

SOURCE Council on American-Islamic Relations

[Back to top](#)

RELATED LINKS

<http://www.cair.com>

---

[About PR Newswire](#) | [Contact PR Newswire](#) | [PR Newswire's Terms of Use Apply](#) | [Careers](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Site Map](#) | [RSS Feeds](#)  
Copyright © 1996-2010 PR Newswire Association LLC. All Rights Reserved.  
A United Business Media company.