



Friday, October 19, 2001

Islamic leader denounces terrorism

By **Jennifer Charney**, OU Staff Writer

Islam does not justify terrorism, and the perpetrators of September's terrorist attacks on the United States are murderers, not martyrs, an Islamic leader said at an OU forum on Thursday, Oct. 18.

Imaam Achmat Salie of the Islamic Association of Greater Detroit in Rochester Hills spoke at Oakland's fourth discussion on the September terrorist attacks: "Religion and Terrorism: Are They Compatible?"

Salie said the answer is "No."

"If these (terrorists) claim to be Muslims, then they have gone contrary to all the Islamic teachings," he said. "A Muslim is someone who surrenders himself to a life of peace and a life of prayer and coexistence."

Islam is an Arabic word that means surrender or submission. The Koran, the sacred text of Islam, says the worst punishments -- execution, banishment or amputation -- are given for acts of terror, Salie said.

"Muslims throughout the country and throughout the world have deplored what happened to the (World Trade Center), what happened in the Pentagon," he said, adding that hundreds of innocent Muslims died in the attacks.

Salie stressed that Islam should not be linked to terrorism because terrorism exists everywhere. Making such an association, he said, would be like calling the acts of the Ku Klux Klan and the Irish Republican Army "Christian terrorism."

At the forum, Salie joined fellow panelist Charles Mabee, a chaplain at the OU Campus Ministry and instructor in comparative religion in the **Department of Sociology and Anthropology**.

Mabee said that religion and terrorism can become intertwined because religions are not separate from cultures.

"Cultures deal with evil, with injustice, with crime by means of reciprocity. In other words, an eye for an eye, a tooth for tooth," Mabee said. "Religion is not about reciprocity, but about responding to evil out of a posture of love and forgiveness. The problem is that all religions have to operate in a real world, where we're less than religious."

Salie said that when Americans try to understand what motivates such acts, seeking that understanding is not condoning the attacks. To minimize the suffering of the innocent, Salie said he supports using military technology to pinpoint the perpetrators.

In closing, Salie urged people to temper their prejudice against Arabs and Muslims. "Sometimes we see from a distance a rope; it looks to you like a snake. When you come closer, you say, 'But this is really a rope.' I think we really need to get closer, meet more people in that particular community."

Sumeera Younis, an OU freshman studying philosophy and English, agreed that Muslims and Arabs have been the objects of unfair suspicion since the attacks.

"We're living a double standard," she said, explaining that after Timothy McVeigh bombed the Oklahoma City federal building, Americans weren't quick to suspect young white men.

The next forum in the Attack on America Series, "The Economic Impact: Locally and Globally," is Tuesday, Oct. 30, from noon to 1 p.m. in the Oakland Center Fireside Lounge. The panel will feature professors of economics and industry experts, one of whom was at ground zero on the morning of the attacks.

The **Center for Student Activities** is planning other programs through the end of the year, including a forum on bioterrorism, a talk with U.S. Senator Carl Levin, and a tribute to people from Oakland County who participated in World Trade Center relief efforts.

SUMMARY

In an OU forum on September's terrorist attacks on the U.S., an Islamic leader said religion and terrorism are incompatible.

Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Friday, October 19, 2001
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Friday, October 19, 2001
Article Start Date: Monday, December 15, 2003