

North American Muslims issue fatwa against terrorism: Americans have ignored previous denunciations of violence

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North American Muslim clerics have issued a fatwa against Islamic terrorism, hoping to build on the just-completed Mideast peace talks and a Vatican invitation to meet with Muslim leaders.

The Fiqh Council of North America, an affiliate of the Islamic Society of North America, counts support from some 500 Muslim leaders and organizations for its condemnation of violence, chair Muzammil H. Siddiqi said in announcing the action November 30 in Washington.

“Targeting civilians’ life and property through suicide bombings or any other method of attack is prohibited in Islam—*haram*—and those who commit these barbaric acts are criminals, not ‘martyrs,’” the fatwa reads.

The fatwa also says Muslims have a duty to alert law enforcement about any threats to human life and must not cooperate with any group or individual involved in terrorism.

The fatwa follows similar attempts by moderate Muslims, including the Fiqh Council, to denounce violence, Siddiqi said. Both Siddiqi and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick were on hand November 30 to promote the fatwa—saying that previous calls were “widely ignored.”

Recent events worldwide, however, including Mideast peace talks in Annapolis, Maryland, and correspondence between Muslim scholars and Pope Benedict XVI, make this an opportune time to gain momentum in the U.S., the Muslim and Catholic leaders said.

“We’ve reached a good plateau,” said McCarrick, former archbishop of Washington and a leader in interfaith peace efforts. “Now we have a good foundation to build on.” McCarrick gently chided Americans for not heeding previous attempts by moderate Muslims to be heard. A number of Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders, as well as some prominent Washington insiders, attended the fatwa announcement. - *Religion News Service*