

# Canadian imams declare fatwa against 'honor killings'

by [Ron Csillag](#) in the [March 7, 2012](#) issue

Muslim clerics in Canada issued a fatwa against so-called honor killings a week after three members of an Afghan family in Montreal were convicted of the murders of four relatives.

The religious decree—only the third of its kind in Canada—also prohibits domestic violence and hatred of women. It was issued February 4 on the eve of Mawlid an-Nabi, the Prophet Muhammad's birthday.

"These crimes are major sins in Islam, punishable by the court of law and almighty Allah," said Imam Syed Soharwardy of Calgary, representing 34 clerics affiliated with the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada. "There is no justification for honor killings, domestic violence and misogyny in Islam," Soharwardy added.

The fatwa came less than a week after the January 29 conviction of Mohammad Shafia and his wife, Tooba Yahya, for drowning their three daughters and Shafia's first wife in what they regarded as an honor killing. The couple and their adult son, Hamed Shafia, were found guilty of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The four victims were found drowned inside a submerged car that had been pushed into a canal near the eastern Ontario city of Kingston.

Honor killings, while rare, are typically used against family members whose actions are seen to have brought shame or ill repute on a family. One Canadian imam, H. Q. Mufti, pointed out there have been a dozen such

killings in Canada over the last decade.

Soharwardy told reporters that a fatwa is "not legally binding," but it is "morally binding." He said "a very small minority" of Muslims support honor killings, and they "need to be corrected." Previous fatwas issued in Canada denounced the Taliban for preventing the education of girls and terrorists for plotting acts of mass destruction. —RNS