

Muslim nations: Deride Islam, face legal attacks

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — The Muslim world has created a battle plan to defend its religion from political cartoonists and bigots.

Concerned about what they see as a rise in the defamation of Islam, leaders of the world's Muslim nations are considering taking legal action against those that slight their religion or its sacred symbols.

It was a key issue during a two-day summit recently in this western Africa capital.

The Muslim leaders are attempting to demand redress from nations like Denmark, which allowed the publication of cartoons portraying the Prophet Muhammad in 2006 and again last month, to the fury of the Muslim world.

Though the legal measures being considered have not been spelled out, the idea pits many Muslims against principles of freedom of speech enshrined in the constitutions of numerous Western governments.

"I don't think freedom of expression should mean freedom from blasphemy," said

Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade, the chairman of the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference.

"There can be no freedom without limits."

Delegates were given a voluminous report by the OIC that recorded anti-Islamic speech and actions from around the world. The report concludes that Islam is under attack and that a defense must be mounted.

"Muslims are being targeted by a campaign of defamation, denigration, stereotyping, intolerance and discrimination," charged Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the secretary general of the group.

The report urges the creation of a "legal instrument" to crack down on defamation of Islam. Some delegates point to laws in Europe criminalizing the denial of the Holocaust and other anti-Semitic rhetoric.

They also point to articles within various UN charters that condemn discrimination based on religion and argue that these should be ramped

up
 "In our relation with the western world, we are going through a difficult time," Ihsanoglu told the summit's general assembly. "Islamophobia cannot be dealt with only through cultural activities but (through) a robust political engagement."

The International Humanist and Ethical Union in Geneva released a statement accusing the Islamic states of attempting to limit freedom of expression and of attempting to misuse the UN.

Human Rights Watch said in a statement that objectionable depictions of the Prophet Muhammad do not "give them the right under international human rights law to insist that others abide by their views."

Hemayet Uddin, the lead author of the OIC report and head of cultural affairs for the group said legal action is needed because "this Islamophobia that we see in the world has gone far beyond a phobia. It is now at the level of hatred, of xenophobia, and we need to act."

Fisk

(Continued from Page 12)
 Lomotey said all levels of university staff and students are involved in the school's fundraising efforts.

Spokesperson West said the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has given the school a \$1 million grant outright coupled with a \$2 million challenge grant which requires Fisk to raise \$4 million in unrestricted funds by June 30 in order to receive the grant.

He said the university has raised \$1 million through corporate donations and gifts from "all over."

West said Fisk has averaged a fundraising goal \$3.6 million per year for the past five years and has met that goal. From this year on, he said the university plans to increase that goal.

The United Negro College Fund has partnered with Fisk to help the school pull through its financial turmoil.

John Donohue, UNCF executive vice president of development, said UNCF started working with Fisk in November and at the time Fisk was in danger of not being able to make its payroll after the middle of December. He said there was

even talk of the school having to close its doors.

Donohue said Fisk has a "two-pronged challenge:" securing finances immediately

to finish the year in the black and to come up with a new business model for the future.

Shauntel Lowe writes for the Black College Wire.

LEGAL NOTICES

McCarran International Airport Notice of Disparity Study Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given that the Clark County Dept. of Aviation, Las Vegas, Nevada (Department) will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, March 26, 2008 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the North Las Vegas Airport, 2730 Airport Drive, North Las Vegas, NV 89032.

The purpose of the hearing is to learn about business owners' experiences with contracting or subcontracting (such as construction, professional services, concessions, general services), or attempting to do so, on any projects and, relatedly, their experiences with the any Airport within the Department's system (Airport). Thus, if you have tried to contract with the Airport, vendors, or contractors working under an agreement with a member of the Airport, the Airport would like to know about your experiences.

The information the Airport will be seeking includes, but is not limited to: whether or not firms face difficulties or barriers when bidding as prime contractors, subcontractors, vendors, or concessionaires; whether or not business owners believe they have been treated fairly or unfairly based on their race, ethnicity or gender; whether or not prime contractors solicit, or fail to solicit, bids or price quotes from S/M/WBEs, DBEs, or ACDBEs on projects; and whether or not there is a level playing field for firms in access to capital, bonding and insurance. Personal testimony will be limited to five minutes, follow-up questions may be asked of each speaker.

If you need a special accommodation, please notify Ms. Hope Smith at (850) 386-3191 by 12:00 noon on Thursday, March 20, 2008.

Written testimonies can be submitted no later than Wednesday, April 30, 2008. Deadline is 12:00 noon.

Submitted to:
 MGT of America, Inc.
 ATTN: Ms. Hope Smith,
 McCarran International Airport Disparity Study Public Hearing
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 hsmith@mgtamerica.com

For more information on the Disparity Study, contact Ms. Cynthia Cicero, McCarran International Airport Disparity Study Project Manager at (702) 261-5161, cynthiac@mccarran.com or Ms. Hope Smith, MGT of America, Inc. at (850) 386-3191, hsmith@mgtamer.com.
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Senator Steven Horsford



Invites the Community To attend a Town Hall Meeting On Education

When- Tuesday April 8th

Time – 6:00pm

Location – Matt Kelly Elementary
 1900 North "J" Street
 Las Vegas, NV 89106

Bring your input on ways to improve public education for our children. Hear from representatives from the Clark County School District and Nevada Department of Education.

For more information please call (702) 985-7535 or visit www.stevenhorsford.com

**"Putting Community First...
 Making Education a REAL Priority."**