



Press Release

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Muslims Speak Out Against Secular Extremism

AMC condemns Switzerland's ban on the building of mosque minarets

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (AMC) USA strongly condemns the constitutional referendum recently passed in Switzerland that bans the construction of minarets, a traditional architectural feature of Muslim Mosques around the world. Minarets – very similar to spires found in Christian churches around the world – have never been used for political force or coercion. In societies where Muslims are in the minority, minarets are not even used to announce the Islamic call to prayer. Rather, the minaret is simply a benign feature of Islamic architecture. Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, the justice minister of Switzerland, explained that the referendum “*reflects fears among the population of Islamic fundamentalist tendencies.*” The AMC believes that rather than contributing to these fears by passing referendums like this that add to growing Islamophobia, nations should learn from President Obama’s approach to establishing a peaceful society of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. President Obama clearly stated: “*it is important for Western countries to avoid impeding Muslim citizens from practicing religion as they see fit...we cannot disguise hostility towards any religion behind the pretence of liberalism.*”

AMC USA calls upon the US government to apply pressure on the Swiss government to abide by Article 18 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, which states: “*everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion...and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.*” Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah, Vice President of AMC USA said, “*We are all entitled to the right to practice our faith, and it is our hope that our government will remind Switzerland of its responsibility to protect that right of its citizens.*”

Although the sentiments of Muslims are sure to be hurt by Switzerland’s referendum, AMC USA condemns any act of violence in response to it. Groups such as al-Qaeda have vowed revenge “*by every means.*” AMC USA urges all Muslims to respond to this incident in a civil manner. Rather than causing damage and destruction, if Muslims truly intend to protect the honor of Islam, they must adhere to the practice of the Prophet of Islam by practicing peace and patience. AMC USA welcomes the opportunity to discuss the peaceful teachings of Islam to teach people that there is no need to fear Islam and to highlight the fact that like the vast majority of Muslims throughout the world, members of the AMC are peaceful, patriotic citizens who have nothing to do with fundamentalism or extremism.

About AMC:

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (AMC) is a dynamic, reformist and fast growing international movement within Islam. Founded in 1889, AMC spans over 190 countries with membership exceeding tens of millions. AMC USA, established in 1921, is the first American-Muslim organization.

AMC is the only Islamic organization to believe that the long-awaited messiah has come in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) of Qadian. Ahmad claimed to be the metaphorical second coming of Jesus of Nazareth and the divine guide, whose advent was foretold by the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad. AMC believes that God sent Ahmad, like Jesus, to end religious wars, condemn bloodshed and reinstitute morality, justice and peace. Ahmad's advent has brought about an unprecedented era of Islamic revival and moderation. He divested Islam of fanatical beliefs and practices by vigorously championing Islam's true and essential teachings.

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