

### Responding to current events as people of understanding

DISCLAIMER: This reminder was originally delivered in Arabic on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Any meanings lost in translation are not to be attributed to the speaker as reminders are translated by volunteers. The mosque has no official translator and volunteers often have no formal qualifications to translate on the day. Please forgive any errors as they are from our human weakness and any right guidance is from God.

Oh Muslims,

Our Islamic religion is not a form of mysterious imaginations and is not based on vague philosophies or misleading emotions. Indeed, it is a religion based on logic and wisdom in all of its legislations, guidance, principles and purposes. The Quran addresses us about the 'people of understanding' in more than 16 places in different surahs as the people of understanding are those more likely to be the people of religion and belief. The believer uses his mind to move in all directions to stay on the truth, calls for it, guide others to it and produces the wisdom that reforms life and betters the situation of the people.

God says: " He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding" [Al-Baqarah 2:269]. Wisdom always has a good impact on behaviour, hearing the call to good, raising and education. It also has a good effect on encouraging and warning, spending wealth for good and following the means of living. 'And whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good': meaning that he has been given justice and moderation so he never indulges in ill speech nor oppress or exceeds the limits. It means that he has been given the ability to recognise the causes and the objectives so he never misjudges the matters and that he has been given the right insight which guides him to the best in his thinking and actions; this include a lot of good. 'And none will remember except those of understanding': meaning that the person of understanding will never get misguided. He benefits from what's around him, take advantage from the experiences of people before him and learns from his mistakes so he never fell into traps as he always plans all of his affairs with insight.

Oh Muslims,

The purpose of this introduction is to draw your attention to a very important matter that relates to the Muslim minority living in Europe although it is not clear for some people. In May 2007, Swiss politicians from the far-right Swiss People's Party and a small Christian party launched an initiative to ban the building of minarets in Switzerland claiming that 'they are threatening social peace and security and they do not commensurate with the values of democracy and liberalism enjoyed by Switzerland' as reported in the news on 09/11/2009. This far-right party made a request to hold a referendum on the 29<sup>th</sup> of this month saying: 'the minarets are symbol of Islamic power and radicalism'; a claim denied by Islamic organisations which insists that minarets are simply means to show the Islamic identity of the mosques. The Committee on Human Rights of the United Nations expressed its concerns about this referendum criticising the tools employed by the Swiss far-right Party in this campaign to urge voters to vote in their favour including showing a women wearing a veil in front of the Swiss flag which is covered by minarets in the form of missiles!

Oh Muslims,

This is a dangerous incident that might be followed by more serious and dangerous incidents that might move to other European countries. We are in a time that witnesses the rise of right-wing extremism in many European countries. It is an indicator of danger, not only for Muslims, but for other people of other faiths and non-European races as well.

Oh Muslims,

We have been taught by previous experience that positive change or resisting negative ones is not always achieved by emotions and demonstrations- although they are part from the democratic procedure- but by other more important and effective tools like the ones used by the far-right party. They collected signatures for the enactment of laws banning minarets. Wisdom requires hard work to influence public opinion and to bring as many people as possible to the side of opposing such unfair initiatives because there is a large number of people that would act to dismiss these things. We need to look for supporters of just causes and coordinate with them. Neglecting such initiatives without showing any opposition will set a dangerous precedent which will not harm Muslims only- as some people think- but will harm western philosophy, civilisation and values of democracy and human rights that European citizens have fought for, for many years.

We should take the initiative and ask for our rights using the lawful means granted by the law and the constitution following the approach of cooperation, coordination and integration rather than individual attempts. Institutions should coordinate with each other in order to complement and do not interfere or repeat the work without any benefit. We also wish that countries take the initiatives at the level of international institutions and embassies so they might ease the suffering at the hands of far-right extremists.

God says “And do not let the hatred of a people for having obstructed you from the sacred place of prostration lead you to transgress. And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear God; indeed, God is severe in penalty.” [Al-Maeidah 5:2].