



**PUBLIC STATEMENTS  
BY SENIOR SAUDI OFFICIALS AND  
RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS  
CONDEMNING EXTREMISM AND  
PROMOTING MODERATION**

MAY 2008

# Senior Saudi Officials and Religious Scholars Condemn Extremism and Promote Moderation

— May 2008 —

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As home of the Two Holy Mosques of Islam, in Makkah and Madinah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stands as a target of extremists and terrorists who aim to subvert the country's faith. To combat this threat, senior Saudi government officials and religious scholars have long been vocal in condemning the mindset that supports terrorism, in addition to promoting moderation and tolerance among Saudis and Muslims worldwide.

Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance. Unfortunately, there are those who have used religion to advance perverted agendas. Anyone who resorts to violence and extremism in the name of religion is a deviant and criminal. The open and public expression of these views has been a critical aspect of how Saudi Arabia continues to fight successfully against extremists. The Saudi government seeks to protect the nation from violence and destruction and its youth from deviant ideologies that corrupt the Kingdom's future.

In the war on terrorism, the battle of ideas is critical to win, which is why Saudi religious leaders and officials have committed themselves to making certain their views are heard and understood.

- **Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Senior *Ulema* [religious scholars] Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, April 2, 2008:** “Fanatical zeal cannot be considered part of religion, even if they [extremists] falsely pretend to be devout...”
- **Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, address to the Shura Council, Saudi Arabia, April 1, 2008:** “Development can only be achieved in a climate of security and safety. So, we reiterate our resolve to annihilate the deviant group of murderous terrorists and fight the deviant thought with a sound one.... There is no room in the country of the Two Holy Mosques for extremism.”
- **Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Interior, at a press conference after attending the 7th Engineering Conference at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, December 2, 2007:** “Security efforts alone cannot eliminate terrorism. The intellectual effort is also necessary as it prevents extremist ideas from taking root in the minds of young Saudis.”
- **Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Senior Ulema, in a statement issued following the terrorist attacks in London, July 8, 2005:** “Killing and terrorizing innocent people and the destruction of property are not condoned by Islam. Attributing all these horrific incidents to Islam is unjust. Muslims should tell the truth and unveil falseness, and inform all people that Islam is a religion of righteousness, betterment and progress.

The following are additional public statements by leading government officials and religious scholars condemning extremism and terrorism and promoting moderation and tolerance.

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***“Achieving decisive victory against terrorism requires not only denying terrorists all financial support, but also combating extremist thought and the environment in which it prospers.”***

**—Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2007**

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- **Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance Saleh Al-Ashaikh, *Arab News*, May 10, 2008:**

“A preacher should know that it is his religious duty to speak out against terror and misguided ideologies as he is aware of what the Shari’ah says on the matter...When a preacher believes in what he is saying and is in the need of uprooting extremist ideologies his words will be sincere and strongly influence the people.”

- **King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, addressing the Shura Council, March 15, 2008:**

“The deviant group sought to develop its destructive capabilities to inflict greater damage on the homeland and its achievements and extended its base of support...I assure you of our continued determination to confront this group.”

- **Sheikh Salman al-Oadah, *Arab News*, January 6, 2008:**

“...How much blood has been spilled? How many innocent children, women and old people have been killed, maimed and expelled from their homes in the name of Al-Qaeda? Are you happy to meet Allah with this heavy burden on your shoulders? It is indeed a weighty burden—hundreds of thousands of innocent people, if not millions. How could you wish for that?”

- **Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, in a press conference after opening the Seventh Engineering Conference at King Saud University, *Al-Watan*, December 2, 2007:**

“We hope that [harmony between ideological and security efforts] can be achieved ... Unfortunately, the ideological effort has not reached the level that we hope for. Security measures in themselves are not sufficient; it is mainly action on the ideological level that prevents rogue ideas from influencing the minds of youths.” He added, “Pulpits of mosques should be used to guide people. When they are used for other purposes, it is an error that can lead to the gravest danger, namely violation of the faith and rebellion against the ruler.”

- **Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, *Okaz*, December 1, 2007:**

“Those who speak in mosques and incite youths to travel to Iraq and other areas for what they claim is jihad are viewed as corrupters, and we do not hesitate to stop them ... there is ongoing cooperation between the Ministries of Interior and Islamic Affairs to do so, but we would like to see more such cooperation to ensure that pulpits are devoted to the most important issues and to warning against dangers.”

- **Chief Justice of the Jubail court Sheikh Riyadh Al-Muhaidib, *Al-Watan*, October 29, 2007:**

“Cursing peaceful non-Muslims is not accepted in Islam ... Preachers are required to follow the guidelines of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in this respect.” He added, “Preachers play a significant role in explaining Islam to all people, including People of the Book. Imams of mosques who deviate from the path of tolerance and moderation are few and do not represent a trend. Nonetheless, these isolated incidents should not be allowed to distort the image of our faith and country around the world, especially in areas where there is a large concentration of People of the Book, such as Jubail and Yanbu.”

- **Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs, statement to the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly, September 28, 2007:**

“Achieving decisive victory against terrorism requires not only denying terrorists all financial support, but also combating extremist thought and the environment in which it prospers.”

- **Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, during a meeting to over 600 prayer leaders and imams in Jeddah, *Arab News*, June 21, 2007:**

“It is your responsibility to confront this problem [deviant ideology] by applying your knowledge, minds and courage.” He noted that there are at least 14,000 Friday mosques in various parts of the Kingdom and continued, “This means we have 14,000 platforms. If the khatibs use this opportunity to expose the deviants and their ideology, it will have a great positive impact upon society.”

- **Comment by the Council of Ministers during a Cabinet meeting, Saudi Press Agency, April 9, 2007:**

“The media and cultural agencies must do more in confronting the phenomenon of terrorism, by rooting out terrorist ideology and addressing social and international factors that promote terrorism.”

- **Excerpt from the final statement issued by the Arab leaders attending the 19<sup>th</sup> Summit of the League of Arab States in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, March 29, 2007:**

“We therefore decide: ...To spread the culture of moderation, tolerance, dialogue, and openness; to reject all forms of terrorism and extremism, as well as all exclusionary racist trends, hatred campaigns and endeavors.”
- **Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Land Forces Symposium in Atlanta, Georgia, February 28, 2006:**

“...Victory [in the war on terrorism] also depends on eliminating the mentality of extremism and violence that perverts religion; on raising the level of global consciousness about different faiths and cultures; and on solving the political problems that enflame passions.”
- **King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Organization of the Islamic Conference Summit in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, December 7, 2005:**

“Fanaticism and extremism cannot grow on an earth whose soil is embedded in the spirit of tolerance, moderation, and balance.... I also look forward to the spread of moderation that embodies the Islamic concept of tolerance.”
- **King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, ABC, “Nightline,” October 14, 2005:**

“ ...We will fight the terrorists and those who support them or condone their actions for 10, 20 or 30 years if we have to until we eliminate this scourge.... We are fighting terrorism and extremism in our midst.... We have also regulated our charities and we have closed offices around the world, and we have withdrawn support for institutions that we found to be extremist.”

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***“These terrorist activities are targeting Islam and peace between people and countries of the world. If we do not move together, then terrorism will continue.”***

—Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Interior, 2005

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- **Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Arab News, July 25, 2005:**

“We are now looking forward as an Arab and Islamic world to think and unite in fighting terrorism. These terrorist activities are targeting Islam and peace between people and countries of the world. If we do not move together, then terrorism will continue.”

- **Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Saudi Ambassador to the United Kingdom and Ireland and Ambassador Designate to the United States, CNN, “Late Edition,” July 24, 2005:**

“...Islam is a religion of peace and harmony, and understanding, and, therefore, if there is anybody who is misusing Islam for any purpose whatsoever, we cannot accept that. And we do not accept that.”

- **Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, in a statement following the killing of Egypt’s envoy to Iraq, July 8, 2005:**

“Killing of the souls that Allah prohibited is a greater crime and one of the greatest sins, as Allah says: ‘And kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause,’ and Allah also says: ‘Because of that we ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder or to spread mischief in the land, it would be as if he killed all mankind.’”

- **Shaikh Saleh Al-Luheidan, Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, Saudi Press Agency, May 2, 2005:**

“Shedding the blood of the innocents is prohibited everywhere, and whoever does not believe in its prohibition is a sacrilegious deviant.”

- **Adel Al-Jubeir, Foreign Affairs Advisor to Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, Speech, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, March 7, 2005:**

“...Saudi Arabia has taken steps to combat the mindset that instills and justifies acts of terror, hatred and violence. Islam is a religion of peace, benevolence and tolerance, and we will not allow deviants to corrupt our faith.... Violence and extremism are not part of our Islamic faith or Saudi culture or traditions.”

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**— Adel Al-Jubeir, Foreign Affairs Advisor to Crown Prince  
Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, 2005**

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- **Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Counter-Terrorism International Conference, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, February 5, 2005:**

“We are fighting terrorism, those who support it and those who condone it. We will continue to do so until we eliminate, with the help of God, this evil...It is our hope that this conference will usher in a new era of international cooperation in the war against terrorism that will enable us to rid our world of this threat.”

- **Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Counter-Terrorism International Conference, February 5, 2005:**

“In fact, terrorism is not just an act, but the product of an aberrant ideology that must be fought. That is why the onus of the responsibility lies with all societies, with all their institutions, to confront and combat terrorism since, just as the security institutions have their obligations, cultural - academic, mass media, and educational - institutions have a great responsibility to inculcate the right ideals and sound human values and to immunize societies against any delinquent ideas or evil deeds.”

- **Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, Saudi Press Agency, February 4, 2005:**

On the eve of the Counter-Terrorism International Conference in Riyadh, the Kingdom’s Grand Mufti Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh issued a statement condemning the “ugly acts of terrorism” and declaring that they must be confronted at all levels. Malicious acts of the terrorists, he said, include killing non-Muslims who are living in the Kingdom, accusing Muslims of being “infidels,” and calling for them to be attacked. All Muslims should therefore cooperate to eradicate extremism and make young people aware of its dangers.

- **King Fahd bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, excerpt from address to Hajj pilgrims, January 21, 2005:**

“The world has witnessed acts of terrorism that aim at undermining the pillars of stability and security as well as intimidating innocent people. Unfortunately these acts have been perpetrated by people who claim they belong to Islam. We would like to make it clear that these terrorist acts in fact run counter to the teachings of Islam, and have been carried out by individuals whose ideas are deviant. Terrorism leads to corruption on earth and to destruction; the Kingdom has therefore been confronting it in its various forms, and working to uproot it, refuting the deviant ideas believed in by terrorists, and clarifying Islam’s position on terrorism.

“Saudi Arabia has called on all peace-loving countries to work together to combat the phenomenon of terrorism through a comprehensive plan based on the United Nations. It is essential to cooperate in the fight against terrorism. No country in the world should ever provide shelter to terrorists, nor should any country ever enable them to practice their subversive acts from its territory. In line with this policy, the Kingdom has called for an international conference on combating terrorism to be convened in Riyadh on February 5, 2005.”

- **Shaikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais, Imam at the Grand Mosque in Makkah, *Arab News*, January 21, 2005:**

“Islam is a religion of moderation. There is no room for extremism in Islam.... Islam is a religion of peace that abhors attacks on innocent people.”

- **Imam Shaikh Saud Al-Sheraim, Saudi Press Agency, July 10, 2004:**

In his sermon at the Grand Mosque in Makkah on July 9, Imam Shaikh Saud Al-Sheraim called on members of the deviant group to surrender under a month-long amnesty announced by the government in late June. The killing and terrorizing of the innocent that is taking place in Muslim countries, he stated, is something evil and a sign of great danger, saying: “Such acts must never be ignored or justified but confronted and stopped by all available means.”

- **King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, addressing the Shura Council, June 20, 2004:**

“We will not allow a wicked group driven by a deviant ideology to destabilize the Kingdom’s security.”

- **Shaikh Dr. Salih bin Abdullah bin Humaid, imam at the Grand Mosque in Makkah, SPA, June 18, 2004:**

Shaikh Dr. Salih bin Abdullah bin Humaid spoke out against terrorism at a Friday prayer, reiterating that any terrorist act is criminal and contrary to religion. The perpetrators of these acts, members of a deviant group, he said, have killed and intimidated people, destroyed property, and wreaked havoc on earth; and therefore they will surely be punished in hell in the hereafter.

- **Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, June 15, 2004:**

“Senior religious scholars in Saudi Arabia have continually and unequivocally condemned terrorism. In our war against terrorism, these condemnations are a powerful weapon.”

- **The Council of Call and Guidance, Saudi Press Agency, April 26, 2004:**

The Council of Call and Guidance, in its meeting on April 25, condemned the explosion [at the General Department of Traffic in Riyadh on April 21], and urged confrontation of the deviant ideas that lead to such criminal acts. The Council, which comprises representatives from various areas of jurisprudence including the Islamic Affairs Ministry, the Presidency of the Two Holy Mosques, and the Islamic universities, called for fortifying young people against destructive ideas that run counter to the teachings of Islam.

- **Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, Saudi Press Agency, April 22, 2004, the day after a suicide bombing in Riyadh:**

Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh issued a statement citing verses from the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad that clearly stipulate such an act as "forbidden and highly sinful." He also declared that it is forbidden to cover up such acts, or to express justification for them, and whoever does so, is an accomplice to the crime.

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**—Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Saudi Ambassador to the United States, 2004**

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- **King Fahd bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, excerpt from address to Hajj pilgrims, February 2, 2004:**

"The entire world, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has been harmed by many acts of terror intended to undermine stability, and spread fear and evil. Some of these events have been perpetrated by individuals unfortunately claiming to be Muslims. It is necessary to clarify the position of Islam concerning these events and their perpetrators. These acts, and those who carry them out, are deviant. It is important to oppose them. These acts are a function of false ideas, contrived by individuals who have strayed from the truth, and contradict the teachings of religion.

- **Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, February 2, 2004:**

Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Council of Senior Religious Scholars, delivered the sermon to almost two million pilgrims at the peak of the Hajj. As Saudi Arabia's highest religious authority, he used this important occasion to denounce terrorism and those who perpetrate it in the name of religion.

During his sermon he highlighted the importance of educating others about Islam, so that terrorists will not be able to claim that their reprehensible actions have anything to do with the true faith: "You must know Islam's firm position against all these terrible crimes. The world must know that Islam is a religion of peace and mercy and goodness; it is a religion of justice and guidance ... Islam has forbidden violence in all its forms. It forbids the hijacking airplanes, ships and other means of transport, and it forbids all acts that undermine the security of the innocent."

- **Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, Saudi Press Agency, January 27, 2004:**

In a lecture he gave yesterday in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's Grand Mufti Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh reiterated his condemnation of terrorism, declaring that Islam does not tolerate the shedding of blood and absolutely prohibits random killing of people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. ... Terrorism, he declared, is a result of deviant ideas that destabilize society, and called for enlightenment of young people to protect them from such deviant ideas.

- **Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, January 8, 2004:**

"I have no doubt that the establishment of the Center [The King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue] and the continuation of dialogue within its boundaries will become a historic achievement that contributes to the creation of a channel for objective expression that would have an effective impact in combating extremism and fostering a pure atmosphere that could give birth to wise positions and illuminating ideas that reject terrorism and terrorist thought.

Islam advocates moderation.... The bullets that kill women and children, terrorize those secure in their safety, and destroy innocent communities, come not only from rifles, but from deviant thoughts and misguided interpretations of our great religion and its noble message."

- **Shaikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais, Arab News, November 8, 2003:**

Shaikh Al-Sudais, the imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, on November 7 denounced plans by militants to destabilize the Kingdom and undermine its security...

"They [militants] have violated the sanctity of time and place and committed terrorism, violence, bombings, crime and corruption," the Makkah imam said while delivering his Friday sermon. ...

In his sermon, Shaikh Al-Sudais advised the faithful to make use of Ramadan to win God's forgiveness and mercy. He stressed the need to teach moderation to the youth. "This is the joint duty of mosque, family, school, university and the media," he explained.

- **King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, August 30, 2003:**

King Fahd, in a message to the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the World Supreme Council for Mosques August 30, emphasized the important mission of the mosque in Islam, which is to promote peace, tolerance, moderation and wisdom. King Fahd added that fulfillment of this mission will help show the youth the correct path of Islam, distancing them from grievance, aggression and evil.

King Fahd condemned all forms of terrorism and warned that terror networks were using misguided Muslim youths to further their cause. King Fahd added: "By playing into the hands of terror networks, these youths have tarnished the image of Islam and Muslims."

- **Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, August 21, 2003:**

“Muslims must understand that the path of reform never comes through violence. Islam is not a religion of violence. It is a religion of mercy for everyone.... One of the fall-outs from extremism in understanding Islam is that some people call for jihad for the sake of God without justification.... These people, who call for jihad, want to raise the banner of jihad to draw the youth into their ranks, and not to fight for the Almighty God.”

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—Grand Mufti Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, 2003

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- **Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, *Arab News*, July 22, 2003:**

“These misguided groups, whose members’ minds have been possessed by the devil, will be punished and defeated, God willing, along with those who support them”, he said.

- **Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, *Arab News*, July 1, 2003:**

“Our youth must be inoculated against alien ideas. Families, schools and mosques as well as the country’s ulema and intellectuals and the media and every sincere person must contribute to this effort in order to expose alien thoughts and show the truth.”

- **King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, addressing the Shura Council, May 17, 2003:**

“We will not allow any deviant ideology that encourages and feeds terrorism. This nation is determined to eradicate all forms of terrorism....

“...It is the responsibility of our religious leaders to save our youth from the evil of destructive thoughts that propagate extremism and hatred and only result in devastation and ruin.

“...And I say to every citizen that one of the most important obligations is to confront narrow mindedness, regionalism and social division. Confronting these ills is a requirement of our faith and contributes to national unity.

- **Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, in an address to the nation, May 13, 2003:**

“The tragic, bloody and painful events that took place in the heart of our dear capital, Riyadh, last night, in which innocent citizens and residents were killed or injured, prove once again that terrorists are criminals and murderers with total disregard for any Islamic and human values or decency. They are no different from vicious animals whose only concern is to shed blood and bring terror to those innocents under God’s protection.

“These tragic events should serve as a warning to the unwary, and should restore sanity to the deluded. The perpetrators are but a small group of deviants whose objective is to do harm to our society by doing damage to its security.

“On the other hand, the whole Saudi nation, old and young, men and women, stand shoulder-to-shoulder in condemning this heinous act and expressing their rejection of those who perpetrated it. We will be steadfast in defending our homeland, the cradle of Islam, and the heart of the Arab world.

“If these murderers believe that their criminal and bloody act will shake our nation or its unity, they are mistaken. And if they believe they can disrupt the security and tranquility of our nation, they are dreaming. This is because the Saudi people, who have embraced the Holy Book as their guide and the Shari’ah as their way of life, and who have rallied behind their leaders, who in turn embraced them, will not permit a deviant few to shed the blood of the innocent which God Almighty, in His infinite wisdom and justice, has sanctified. The entire Saudi nation, and not just its valiant security forces, will not hesitate to confront the murderous criminals.

“There can be no acceptance or justification for terrorism. Nor is there a place for any ideology which promotes it, or beliefs which condone it. We specifically warn anyone who tries to justify these crimes in the name of religion. And we say that anyone who tries to do so will be considered a full partner to the terrorists and will share their fate. As revealed in the Holy Qur’an: ‘If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein (forever): and the wrath and the curse of God are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him.’

“Further, as revealed in the Holy Qur’an, the taking of an innocent life is a crime against all of humanity. In the words of the Prophet (God’s peace and mercy be upon him): ‘He who kills a resident living in peace among you, will never breathe the air of heaven.’

“I vow to my fellow citizens and to the friends who reside among us, that the State will be vigilant about their security and well-being. Our nation is capable, by the Grace of God Almighty and the unity of its citizens, to confront and destroy the threat posed by a deviant few and those who endorse or support them. With the help of God Almighty, we shall prevail.”

- **Prince Bandar bin Sultan, in a statement issued following the terrorist attacks in Riyadh, May 13, 2003:**

“The terrorist attacks on Saudi Arabia May 12 are evil and unforgivable crimes... we will not rest until, together, we hunt down these criminals and bring them to justice. And when we do, their punishment will be swift and severe.

“...These terrorists have turned their backs on our people and they have perverted our faith; they do not in any way represent Islam. They only represent hatred towards all of humanity.... we are determined to eradicate the terrorists who bring violence and hatred to the whole world, as Crown Prince Abdullah declared today.”

▪ **Council of Senior Ulema (religious scholars), Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, February 11, 2003:**

Saudi Arabia’s Council of Senior Ulema issued an edict condemning attacks and other violence against innocence. The edict also conveys that it is a crime to randomly judge people as “infidels” and target them for violence. The edict issued by the Council on this matter is as follows:

“The acts of shedding the blood of innocent people, the bombing of buildings and ships, and the destruction of public and private installations are criminal acts and against Islam. Those who carry out such acts have deviant beliefs and misguided ideologies and are to be held responsible for their crimes. Islam and Muslims should not be accountable for the actions of such people. Islamic Law clearly prohibits leveling such charges against non-Muslims, warns against following those who carry such deviant beliefs, and stresses that it is the duty of all Muslims all over the world to consult truthfully, share advice, and cooperate in piety and righteousness.”

▪ **King Fahd bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz excerpts from a statement from the Holy Site of Mina on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, February 10, 2003:**

“This religion [Islam] is a religion of peace and tolerance, ease in the implementation of religious teachings, duties and rites; and tolerance in day-to-day dealings with people.... The government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has often condemned terror in all its forms. It has taken a leading role in urging the international community to challenge this sinister world phenomenon.”

▪ **Crown Prince Abdullah, Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, February 4, 2003:**

Crown Prince Abdullah urged a gathering in Riyadh of young people from around the world to shun extremism, saying: “Ours is a tolerant and temperate faith and we must conduct ourselves accordingly. There is no room for extremism or compulsion in Islam. In fact, it violates the tenets of our faith and the traditions of our Prophet.”

▪ **Shaikh Saleh Al-Ashaikh, Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, December 7, 2002:**

In an official letter to Saudi religious leaders, Shaikh Saleh Al-Ashaikh, Minister of Islamic Affairs, said restrictions have been put in place to prohibit unauthorized persons from making speeches at mosques. The order, distributed as part of a new

program for the care of mosques and their workers, warned speakers at mosques against making provocative speeches and inciting people.

The letter said that mosques are meant only for prayer, guidance and other pious activities and should not be used as political platforms.

Al-Ashaikh warned speakers against misusing mosques to make provocative speeches or incite people or exploit mosques by reciting poems in praise of some misguided people. Violators of the order can be subject to severe punishment, including removal from office.

Al-Ashaikh also commended the efforts of the imams and khuttab in fulfilling their religious duties by leading people in prayers and providing advice and guidance. He also called upon the imams and khuttab to serve as models for others by spreading love and brotherhood.

▪ **Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, excerpts from a letter to President George W. Bush on the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks, September 10, 2002:**

“The target of the terrorists who engineered this crime was humanity at large. They hoped that this outrageous act would incite and ignite bloody strife among different faiths and civilizations. But their evil was turned against them, for all humanity united to fight terrorism, and wise voices from all corners of the world arose to echo your declaration that terrorism has no religion or nationality; that it is pure evil, condemned and abhorred by all religions and cultures.

“We in Saudi Arabia felt an especially great pain at the realization that a number of young Saudi citizens had been enticed and deluded and their reasoning subverted to the degree of denying the tolerance that their religion embraced, and turning their backs on their homeland, which always stood for understanding and moderation. They allowed themselves to be used as a tool to do great damage to Islam, a religion they espoused, and to all Muslims. They also aimed at causing considerable harm to the historic and strong relationship between the American people and the people of Saudi Arabia. I would like to make it clear that true Muslims all over the world will never allow a minority of deviant extremists to speak in the name of Islam and distort its spirit of tolerance. Your friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia denounced and condemned the September 11 attacks as strongly as did the American people. We, like you, are convinced that nothing can ever justify the shedding of innocent blood or the taking of lives and the terrorizing of people, regardless of whatever cause or motive. Therefore, we do not simply reiterate sincere and true condolences to the relatives of the victims, but assure all of our continued will and determination to do our utmost to combat this malignant evil and uproot it from our world.”

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***“...nothing can ever justify the shedding of innocent blood or the taking of lives and the terrorizing of people, regardless of whatever cause or motive.”***

**—Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, 2002**

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- **Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdullah Al-Subail, imam of the Grand Mosque of Makkah and member of the Council of Senior Islamic Scholars, Saudi Press Agency, December 4, 2001:**

“Any attack on innocent people is unlawful and contrary to Shari’ah.... Muslims must safeguard the lives, honor and property of non-Muslims who are under their protection and with whom they have concluded peace agreements.”

- **Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, in a statement issued September 15, 2001:**

“The recent developments in the United States constitute a form of injustice that is not tolerated by Islam, which views them as gross crimes and sinful acts.”

- **Shaikh Salih Al-Luheidan, Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, in a televised statement on September 14, 2001:**

“As a human community we must be vigilant and careful to oppose these pernicious and shameless evils, which are not justified by any sane logic, nor by the religion of Islam.”

- **Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, in an interview with *Sharq Al-Awsat*, April 21, 2001:**

“What you call suicide bombings in my view are illegitimate and have nothing to do with jihad in the cause of God. I am afraid it is another form of killing oneself.”



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