

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

**SEPTEMBER 2003**



## **PUBLIC STATEMENTS PROMOTING MODERATION**

The Qur'an, the Islamic religion and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reject and condemn all forms of religious extremism that lead to violence, terrorism and the taking of innocent lives. Islam teaches peace, understanding and tolerance, not violence or hatred. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is steadfast in believing that those resorting to violence and extremism are deviants and criminals who must face the full consequences of their actions. Below are some of the public statements made by Saudi Arabian leaders in this regard.

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*"I believe that no society is immune from deviants and extremists. This situation exists in every country, in every society and in every faith. These individuals do not represent their societies. They do not represent the prevailing thinking of a society."*

**Crown Prince Abdullah, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, January 12, 2003**

PRESS RELEASE

September 4, 2003

**KING FAHD ADDRESSES ROLE OF MOSQUE IN ISLAM  
AND CONDEMNS EXTREMISM**

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, in a message to the nineteenth 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."

PRESS RELEASE

August 21, 2003

**SAUDI ARABIA'S HIGHEST RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY  
WARNS AGAINST THE DANGERS OF EXTREMISM**

Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh , the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Council of Senior *Ulema* [religious scholars], issued a statement today warning Muslims that extremism and fanaticism lead only to violence and the death of innocent people. Shaikh Al-Ashaikh emphasized that "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."

Shaikh Al-Ashaikh stated: "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."

Saudi Arabia's religious leaders have repeatedly and unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms. Following the Riyadh bombings on May 12, Shaikh Al-Ashaikh stated: "Terrorism has nothing to do with Islam... Islam should not be blamed for the acts of other people. People should be held responsible individually for their own acts."

PRESS RELEASE

May 20, 2003

## **KING FAHD VOWS TO EXPAND REFORMS**

### ***No Tolerance for Terrorism***

In an address to the Consultative Council, King Fahd bin Abdulaziz pledged to expand the breadth and pace of reform in the country and affirmed the government's resolve to crack down on terrorism.

“The people of Saudi Arabia oppose all forms of terrorism, and will never allow any faction of deviant terrorists to harm the country and undermine the safety of its citizens and residents. We will not allow any deviant ideology that encourages and feeds terrorism,” said King Fahd. “This nation is determined to eradicate all forms of terrorism.”

The King also emphasized that public education is critical to religious moderation, tolerance and the peaceful teaching of Islam. The King called upon religious leaders to promote social harmony and unity.

In King Fahd's words: “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.”

“No one can ignore the seriousness of our move toward reform. And I say to every citizen that each one of us has a role and a responsibility in this endeavor. I say to each government official that public service is an honor, which has obligations to the public good, but does not convey any special privileges. I say to every businessman that our economy is not just a source of capital and profit, but it is an investment in national

security and safety. I say to every woman that this nation is for all and you will be a partner in making its future. And I say to officials in education that they are shapers of future generations. Good education promotes character and instills values in the young for the benefit of this nation.”

“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.”

“The world we live in is at a crossroads. We are part of this world and cannot be disconnected from it. We cannot be mere spectators while the rest of the world is progressing towards a new global system. This country is the heart of the Muslim World, and the cradle of Arab identity. Therefore, we should rise to the challenges and support each other in carrying out responsibilities and duties.”

PRESS RELEASE

May 13, 2003

**ADDRESS TO THE NATION**

**CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH BIN ABDULAZIZ**

*In the name of God, most compassionate, most merciful*

My fellow citizens:

May God's peace and blessing be upon you.

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'a 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."

These messages, which do not require any interpretation, provide clear evidence that the fate of those murderers is damnation on earth and the fury of Hell in the thereafter.

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.

PRESS RELEASE

May 13, 2003

**PRINCE BANDAR'S STATEMENT  
ON THE TERRORIST ATTACKS IN RIYADH**

*His Royal Highness Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Saudi Ambassador to the United States, issued the following statement on the terrorist attacks in Riyadh:*

The terrorist attacks on Saudi Arabia May 12 are evil and unforgivable crimes. I send my deepest condolences on behalf of the people of Saudi Arabia to all of the American victims and their families and to the Saudi, European, Arab and Asian families. My government promises that 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.

No words can express our feelings for the loss of the innocent people who were murdered and injured. Those victims were Arabs, Americans, Europeans, and Asians. They were Muslims as well as Christians. The attack was an attack on humanity. We reject the terrorists who express their hatred for our people and our friends through such cowardly actions. 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. As a nation of peace, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will work to protect our citizens and our friends who live and work in our country, American, Arab, European, African or Asian, Muslim or non-Muslim; and we are determined to eradicate the terrorists who bring violence and hatred to the whole world, as Crown Prince Abdullah declared today.

The target of the Al-Qaeda terrorists is Saudi Arabia and the United States and the 70-year relationship that has benefited both our peoples; and at a time when we are working together to bring peace and stability to the people of the Middle East, their aim is to destroy our alliance through violence. But they will not succeed.

We say to the people of the United States, as your friend and ally, you can rely on us to do our part as we have done in critical times in the past. We will continue to hunt down the criminals, we will continue to cut off their finances and we will bring them to justice.

On this day, grief and pain weigh on our hearts. I pray that God Almighty continues to give us the wisdom and courage that will lead our nations and the world into a new era of peace and prosperity for all mankind, of all faiths.

PRESS RELEASE

February 13, 2003

**SAUDI KING AND CROWN PRINCE ADDRESS MUSLIMS**

*Statement contains messages of peace, and stance on Iraq*

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, and Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, issued a statement Monday from the Holy Site of Mina on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha 2003, addressing the 2 million pilgrims gathered for Hajj and all Muslims everywhere.

The following are excerpts from the statement.

“... 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 Saudi Arabia has condemned terror in all its forms. It took a leading role in urging the international community to challenge this sinister world phenomenon....”

“...In this world, the Muslim has a constructive role to play, and he should strive to prove that he is equal to the task. He should endeavor to promote the welfare of mankind and preserve the five necessities as is required by religion, namely: religion, mind, honor, self and property.... ”

“...The [Kingdom] set into motion the call to Islamic solidarity ... to bring Muslims together, overcome dissensions and eliminate their causes, promote all that may lead to harmony and eliminate all that may lead to misunderstanding...”

“...Towards this end the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia submitted a peace initiative to the 14<sup>th</sup> Arab Summit held in Beirut [in March 2002]. The Saudi initiative was adopted by the Summit and became an Arab peace plan with international support.”

“Our attitude towards the Iraq situation and towards complete disarmament in the area of weapons of mass destruction is within the aforementioned principles. In fact it is an endeavor to put these principles into practice. We are doing all we can to spare Iraq and its people as well the entire region, the dangers and woes of war and its ramifications. We hope that the efforts being made to solve the crisis by peaceful means will be successful. Likewise we hope that reason will prevail and that constructive dialogue be given a chance to find a peaceful resolution.”

“With regard to weapons of mass destruction, whether in this region or in any other part of the world, the Kingdom lends its full support to international efforts to eliminate such weapons irrespective of whether they are nuclear, chemical, or biological. The Kingdom calls on the international community to do all that is necessary to support all efforts required to eliminate weapons of mass destruction...”

PRESS RELEASE

February 11, 2003

### **SAUDI RELIGIOUS LEADERS FORBID ATTACKS ON NON-MUSLIMS**

Saudi Arabia's Council of Senior Ulema (Religious Scholars) has issued an edict condemning attacks and other violence against innocents. The edict also conveys that it is a crime to randomly judge people as "infidels" and target them for violence.

The Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Council of Senior Ulema Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh said that this is a very serious matter as it relates to the shedding of innocent blood, the bombing of buildings, and the destruction of public and private installations. 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."

Violence against Westerners has not been an issue or problem in Saudi Arabia. However, the religious authorities took this step to reinforce the prohibition in Islam against all forms of violence.

PRESS RELEASE

February 4, 2003

## **STATEMENT REGARDING SAUDI EDUCATION SYSTEM**

In 70 years, Saudi Arabia has formed a nationwide educational system that provides free education from preschool through university to all citizens. Today, there are eight universities, over 100 colleges and more than 26,000 schools. Some 5 million students are enrolled in the educational system, which boasts a student to teacher ratio of 12.5 to 1.0 – one of the lowest in the world.

The Saudi government recently conducted an audit, which determined that about five percent of school textbooks and curriculum guides contained possibly offensive language. A program is now in place to eliminate such material from schools. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah recently 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."

The Crown Prince also told the gathering: "Wisdom and reason must guide your statements and actions; you must not let emotions sway you. It is your responsibility, when you return to your nations, to counsel people to employ wisdom, patience and reason in dealing with issues."

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal recently stated: "We are working very hard to build a world-class educational system which will help our children be prepared to make substantial contributions to the global society. Our schools and our faith teach peace and tolerance."

The Saudi commitment to its education system also includes approved budgets for the construction of 780 new schools as well as improvements to another 380 schools. Part of

this funding will improve and equip a number of educational facilities, such as supplying schools with computers and laboratory equipment. The funding will also provide maintenance to existing schools.

PRESS RELEASE

January 13, 2003

### **SAUDI CROWN PRINCE CALLS FOR MODERATION AND TOLERANCE**

At a gathering hosted at his home in Riyadh for distinguished visitors to the Al-Jenadriyah Festival, Crown Prince Abdullah called upon regional leaders to promote moderation and tolerance. He said that this was a time for deep thought and reflection, for tolerance and moderation, for honesty and sincerity. He urged scholars and intellectuals to exert their efforts toward bringing people together not dividing them.

"The scholar, the author, the thinker, the philosopher and the poet all must strive to bring humanity together", stated the Crown Prince. "I have faith in your ability to contribute to the greater good."

The Crown Prince also commented: "Reason, patience, moderation and kind words help bring people together."

He urged those assembled to reject extremism and intolerance.

PRESS RELEASE

December 7, 2002

## **MOSQUES NOT TO BE USED AS POLITICAL PLATFORMS**

### ***Official Order Sent to imams and khuttab***

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.

**EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER SENT BY CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH TO  
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2002**

“...terrorism has no religion or nationality ... 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 has 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.”

“...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.”

**STATEMENTS MADE BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS  
AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

*“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,”*

**Crown Prince Abdullah, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, June 30, 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,”*

**Crown Prince Abdullah, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, June 22, 2003**

*“We have entrusted a committee of experienced and knowledgeable people to propagate the moderate views of Islam,”*

**Crown Prince Abdullah, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, May 21, 2003**

*“We will not remain idle and watch certain religious figures who instigate violence by issuing edicts branding certain people as ‘infidels’,”*

**Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Minister of the Interior, May 15, 2003**

*“Whoever did this will regret it because they have galvanized this country’s determination to extract this cancer (terrorism) and ensure that it doesn’t return... they have turned this country into one fist aimed at putting an end to this heinous wound in the body of this nation so that it won’t return.”*

**Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs, May 14, 2003**

*“Terrorism has nothing to do with Islam...Islam should not be blamed for acts of other people. People should be held responsible individually for their own acts.”*

**Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, Grand Mufti, Chairman of the Council of Senior Religious Scholars, May 24, 2003**

*“Our schools and our faith teach peace and tolerance...There is no room in our schools for hatred, for intolerance or for anti-western thinking. We are working very hard to build a world-class educational system which will help our children be prepared to make substantial contributions to the global society.”*

**Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs, December 9, 2002**

*“Islam is a religion of compassion, forgiveness and goodness...”*

**Shaikh Saleh Al-Luheidan, Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, November 6, 2002**

*“Islam, as you know, does not advocate terrorism; and the hurting or killing of human beings is not acceptable by anyone whether he is a Muslim or not.”*

**Crown Prince Abdullah, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, March 23, 2002**

*“Any attack on innocent people is unlawful and contrary to Shariah.”*

**Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdullah Al-Subail, Imam of the Grand Mosque of Makkah, December 4, 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 Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, Grand Mufti, Chairman of the Council of Senior Religious Scholars, September 15, 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 Saleh Al-Luheidan, Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, September 14, 2001**