



# Al Basheer

*Seminary / Interfaith Center / Institute*

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Statement by Imam Mohamad Bashar Arafat  
Attack on France

On behalf of the Muslim community of Maryland, we wish to raise our voices in compassion for the victims and their families of the recent attacks, and in outrage against the ongoing criminal actions of those terrorists, who assailed the people of Paris. Just a day before, ISIS struck out against civilians in Beirut, again intending to terrorize the population of that country. In raising our voices, we wish, in union with all the renowned Islamic teachers and authorities, to assert that these actions are an abomination before God and have no justification in Islam.

Those groups, such as ISIS, who pervert Islam to justify such criminal and inhumane acts, do so in defiance of all the schools of Islamic Law, and pervert the teachings of the Qur'an and Shariah Law to serve their own immoral, political and criminal ideology. In fact, the first victim of ISIS is Islam itself, whose moral teachings they violate. The majority of their victims in the Middle East are their fellow Muslims, who do not share their distortion of Islam and do not wish to live under their tyranny.

As American Muslim imams, teachers and spiritual leaders, we call upon our local Muslim community to join us in raising the true voice of Islam, the voice of peace and the Almighty's love for all people, to reject all attempts to use our religion to justify any acts of violence and hatred, which sow the seeds of suspicion and division.

We also call upon the media to be fair in allowing the voice of true, mainstream Muslim leaders and teachers to be heard in their rejection of extremism and violence, and not ignore us and allow the voice of groups like ISIS to pretend to be the voice of Islam, which is heard by the American people and results in more hatred toward each other.

We also call upon all people of good will to resist any attempt to use the morally righteous plight of the Syrian people seeking freedom, a peaceful life and resistance of ISIS and their likes, to foster hostility and suspicion toward refugees, who are themselves the victims of the violence.

The Qur'an teaches that to kill one human being is to kill all of humanity. The Prophet Muhammad himself, (peace be upon him), said that apart from defending himself from aggression: "The perfect Muslim is he from whom others are safe from his tongue and hand." As your Muslim neighbors, we live next to you in peace, worship God in tolerance and respect of our different traditions of faith, contribute to the economic prosperity of our community, defend our democracy, and some of our children lie in our military cemeteries too. Let us stand together and refuse to allow the extremists and hate mongers to divide us with suspicion and mistrust. Let us together be the human voices of the God whom we all worship and who calls us to embrace one another in compassion and peace.