



Abdirashid
Abdi - bdi^M
Abubakar Assadique Islamic Center

Website: www.abuubakar.org E-Mail: AAIC@abuubakar.com

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

On behalf of the Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center (AAIC), I would like to thank you for attending today's press conference. This is a difficult time for our community as we deal with the issue of the youth who left for Somalia, as well as an inaccurate and unfair portrayal of our mosques and imams. There have been several statements in the media, mostly by individuals in the community who have personal biases against the mosque, that are simply not true. We hope the following points will help clarify our role and position in this matter.

1. We share the pain and grief that the families of the youth who went to Somalia are experiencing. We continue to pray for the safe return of their loved ones. Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center (AAIC) is available to assist those families during this difficult time with any support we are in a position to provide.
2. It is disturbing and regrettable that the Imam and the spiritual leader of Abubakar Center and its youth coordinator were denied to travel to the holy city of *Makkah* to perform *Hajj* (pilgrimage), and yet – to this day – no answers or explanations have been given by law enforcement agencies.
3. AAIC's Islamic teaching is guided by the Qur'an and the Sunnah (tradition) of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), and does not preach or condone any extremist ideologies. It has not, and will not, recruit for any political cause, nor allow others to do so at the Center.
4. AAIC's Islamic teachings have been public since its founding ten years ago; we have held 8 Islamic conferences, most of them in the Minneapolis Convention Center, each attended by 5 to 7 thousand people. These conferences were also attended by some local, state, and federal officials.
5. AAIC has always been committed to organizing youth programs for the Somali and East African youth which attract approximately 200 or more boys and girls every year. The ages of those youth ranged from middle school ages to college students. All those youth programs have been, and continue to be, public since they were started in 2003.
6. It is unfortunate that some individuals in the Somali community unfairly accused Abubakar Center to have links to the disappearance of the Somali young men. We strongly deny these unsubstantiated allegations. Abubakar Center didn't recruit, finance, or otherwise facilitate in any way, shape, or form the travel of those youth.
7. We have invited the law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, to meet with the community and religious leaders to discuss the issue of the Somali young men who left for Somalia. In addition, we are planning to hold an open house for the wider community to come and see the Islamic Center for themselves.
8. The Somali American community of Minnesota continues to be vibrant, positive, and a productive addition to this country. We are grateful for the warm welcome by the citizens of this great State of Minnesota. This is our new home. As community and religious leaders, we assure that we will never permit anything that would jeopardize the local and national security of our new home.