

JAMIATUL ULAMA

COUNCIL OF MUSLIM THEOLOGIANS

Established in 1923 as Jamiatul Ulama Transvaal

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Security Threats to 2010 South Africa A PRESS STATEMENT

(For Immediate Release)

In recent media reports, the Somali community has been singled out, suggesting that within it are elements planning to attack missions of the USA on South African soil. Such potential threats to national security are a cause for concern and alarm for peace-loving South Africans.

It is however crucial to note how modern day sophistry is supplying experts who are preying on raw intelligence 'leaks' to build a case against sections of the community.

Some of these experts have, from the time of the announcement of South Africa as host of the 2010 FIFA World Cup tournament, shown an aggressive form of Islamophobia by putting forward theories, for instance, about Islamic security threats to the soccer tournament in South Africa.

In a self-fulfilling prophecy, these 'experts' cynically latch on anything that gives them an 'I-told-you-so' sense of bravado. We hope that they do not pray that this should come to pass so that they should be proven 'right.' These 'experts' are advancing ideas in a manner that in itself either compounds relatively older societal fault-lines or poses new challenges.

One old concern that is vivid on many people's minds is that of xenophobic violence which reared its ugly head one-and-a-half years ago. Our apprehension is that in the wake of such reports, the entire Somali community, in particular, is put at a high risk of a backlash from the public.

The new challenge brought about by such reports is the undermining of a sense of security that South Africa has with respect to terror threats. Alongside that is the fostering of a climate of intrigue and suspicion among communities living together.

These concerns or challenges would better be dealt with by a more responsible reporting that neither compromises the capacity of the authorities in dealing with such sensitive matters, nor indiscriminately expose law-abiding individuals to uncalled-for risk.

Notwithstanding, we stand by any due process of law that deals with any criminal activity by individuals and groups that infringe on peace, security, hard-won fundamental rights and civil liberties.

The wider Muslim community, an integral part of the South Africa, shares and looks forward to the nation's success in all its endeavours for the betterment of lives. We hope that the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup shall not be only symbolic but also serve as a meaningful milestone in the continued struggle for our socio-economic development. We shall continue striving for harmonious coexistence and put shoulder to the wheel in developing our country to meet the aspirations of our people.

E.I. Bham (Moulana)
Secretary General
15 October 2009

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