

November 13, 2014

The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde  
Bishop of Washington  
Episcopal Church House  
Mount St. Alban  
Washington DC, 20016

Dear The Very Reverend Gary Hall:

We, the undersigned, write to stress our opposition to the decision to permit an Islamic prayer service in the National Cathedral on Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. We do so on for three separate, but important reasons. They are:

1. The nature of the organizations involved.
2. The significance of the timing of the prayer service.
3. The distinct possibility that offensive and controversial statements about Christians and other non-Muslims may be made.

Firstly, according to the Washington Post, the Friday prayer service was organized together with the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), The Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) and the All-Dulles Area Muslims Society (ADAMS) Center.

Ample evidence exists to connect each of these organizations to the Muslim Brotherhood, a global organization dedicated to Islamic supremacism, promoting terrorism, and spreading the totalitarian ideology of Shariah.

According to documents seized by law enforcement and submitted as evidence in the largest terrorism finance trial in American history, the goal of the Muslim Brotherhood is to wage a “grand jihad in eliminating and destroying Western civilization from within and ‘sabotaging’ its miserable house...” Throughout the Middle East the Muslim Brotherhood has repeatedly targeted Middle Eastern Christians, most especially Egyptian Copts, for attack, bombing places of worship and attacking congregants. They have also attacked fellow Muslims who do not meet the Brotherhood’s strict Shariah standards. As a result they have been listed as a terrorist organization by several predominantly Muslim countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Permitting organizations associated with the Muslim Brotherhood to utilize the National Cathedral in a high-profile public relations stunt is to ultimately be complicit in these efforts.

We would be pleased to meet with you or your representatives and provide extensive documentation, including trial documents, court testimony, and reputable open source reporting affirming these assertions.

Secondly, the timing of this scheduled service is highly significant. November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014, will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the last sitting Caliph of the Ottoman Empire's call for jihad against non-believers. The call for violent jihad against non-believers directly resulted in a genocide against the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek residents of Turkey. And while for most westerners the November 14<sup>th</sup> Jihad declaration is little more than a footnote in the annals of World War I, for Islamic supremacists like those associated with Muslim Brotherhood, it is a date pregnant with meaning. To permit such a public display, and permit such groups to occupy the National Cathedral of the United States on this date represents an affront to the memories of those who were killed as a result of this genocide, and an affront to those Christians across the Middle East who are currently under threat by those who seek to emulate it.

Lastly, given the nature of the participants involved, there is a probability that participants may purposefully invoke supremacist and aggressive religious verses or sayings.

Such invocations have been a highlight of numerous past events, including a prayer service at the Vatican where the invited imam recited a quranic verse calling for "*victory over the disbelieving people*" (Surah 2:286). An Imam did likewise at the opening of the Iowa State House in 2008. At a funeral for Navy Seal team members killed in the "Extortion 17" incident, an Afghanistan Imam recited "*Not equal are the Companions of the Fire and the Companions of the Garden: it is the Companions of the Garden, that will achieve Felicity.*" (Surah 59:20), leading some family members of the slain to believe their loved ones had been condemned to hell by the Imam for being Christians. Controversy also erupted when an Imam opened the Texas Senate with a verse that included "*Guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.*" (Sura 1:6-7) These verses are part of the Surat Al-Fātiḥah, the first verse of the Quran, and are considered obligatory for recitation during all prayers, including those that will be held in the National Cathedral on November 14<sup>th</sup>.

The shariah-adherent interpretation of these verses, as given in authentic Quranic exegesis, is that the Jewish people represent "those who have evoked your anger" and Christians represent "those who are astray."

Additionally, because November 14<sup>th</sup> is a Friday, prayers are likely to include recitation of Surah 88, which includes the following verses (with exegesis from Ibn Kathir): *Some faces, that Day, will be humiliated (in the Hell-fire, i.e. the faces of all disbelievers, Jews and Christians, etc.); Labouring (hard in the worldly life by worshipping others besides Allah), weary (in the Hereafter with humility and disgrace).* (Surah 88:2-3)

While we recognize that not all Muslims necessarily view these verses in such divisive ways, given the make-up of the organizing groups, it is a reasonable conclusion that those organizing the November 14<sup>th</sup> event do hold to the traditional

Shariah-adherent interpretation of these verses. As such it represents a potentially offensive denigration of other faiths.

As a result we urge you to reverse your decision to permit these groups to organize prayers for the National Cathedral on November 14<sup>th</sup>. We would encourage you to issue a statement instead in support of Middle East Christians currently under threat from violent jihad, including those targeted by the Muslim Brotherhood, and a statement in remembrance of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek genocide.

Sincerely,

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