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For Immediate Release

Islamic Free Market Institute Calls for Mutual Respect & Understanding between Americans of All Faiths

The Islamic Free Market Institute Foundation (IFMIF) is a Washington, DC-based organization dedicated to help educate Americans about the beliefs of Muslims and the traditions of Islam. In this pursuit of enhanced respect and understanding, IFMIF urges all Americans to condemn bigotry and hate crimes, regardless of the race, religion or ethnic background.

In recent months, writers such as Daniel Mandel (*National Review* 3/13/06), Michelle Malkin (*Townhall.com* 7/6/05), Daniel Pipes and Sharon Chada (*Frontpagemag.com* 5/18/05), and a *Washington Times* editorial (5/15/04) have questioned whether reported numbers of hate crimes against Muslims, Arabs, and those perceived as either are in fact accurate and whether one religious group is victimized more than another. IFMIF believes such discussions are counter-productive and urges all Americans to work towards ending hate crimes against individuals of any group, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation.

The fact is, regardless of the number of such crimes, the victims are real. Just days after the tragedy of 9/11, a Mesa, Arizona man shot and killed Balbir Singh Sodhi, 49, while he was doing landscaping outside his business. His killer stated he acted in revenge for 9/11, even though Sodhi, an American of the Sikh faith, was neither Muslim nor Arab.

Waqar Hasan of Dallas, Texas was murdered on Sept. 15, 2001. The 46-year-old Pakistani, was shot to death in a convenience store he owned. Hasan was murdered by Mark Stroman, who was convicted of also murdering Vasudev Patel days later in nearby Mesquite, Texas.

Cordell noted that Stroman admitted to authorities to blinding a third victim, a Bangladeshi, in between the murders of Hasan and Patel. After his arrest Stroman bragged, "I did what every American wanted to do after Sept. 11th but didn't have the nerve."

The same day, Adel Karas, 48, a grocer from Egypt and a Christian, was killed in San Gabriel, California.

In Texas, mosques in Irving and Denton were attacked. In December, 2001, Federal authorities charged two leaders of the Jewish Defense League (JDL) with conspiring to blow up Arab and Muslim centers and mosques in southern California, including the offices of Congressman Darrell Issa. According to U.S. Attorney John S. Gordon, "Their primary motivation was to send a 'wake-up call' or terrorize Muslims or Arabs and alert the local, if not national, community to the JDL's commitment to attack those targets."

The list goes on: A Chicago deejay, "Mancow" Muller, parodied Elvis's "Burning Love" song with "Burning Mosques.," an Afghan man was set on fire in his Indianapolis restaurant, and a Pakistani was beaten unconscious in a New Jersey parking lot, as his two attackers hurled insults to Islam. In Phoenix, attackers threw homemade bombs into the backyard of an Iraq-American family. In Burbank, Illinois, a man blew up a Palestinian family's van.

In April, 2003, in Florida, Seminole podiatrist Robert J. Goldstein pleaded guilty in federal court to plotting to blow up a Pinellas mosque. Along with a list of fifty other Muslim targets and an arsenal of bombs, investigators found his typed plan of attack: "OBJECTIVE: Kill all 'rags' at this Islamic Education Center -- ZERO residual presence - - maximum effect," the plan read.

That same month, residents of Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood were terrorized for more than a month. When the attacker confessed to the crimes, he said his aim was to kill Middle Easterners, in retribution for 9/11. In fact, only one of the four victims was from the Middle East.

According to the most recent FBI crimes statistics (2004), 7,642 hate crimes were committed against individuals and property. Racial bias accounted for 40.9 percent; religious bias, 31.8 percent; and ethnicity or national origin bias accounted for 15.9 percent.

IFMIF urges Americans to condemn all bigotry and hate crimes, regardless of the race, religion or ethnic background of the victims. Working together with Americans of all faiths who cherish freedom, IFMIF is committed to efforts to prosecute those who seek to do harm to others, including when such attacks are fueled by bigotry and hatred. Through continued dialogue and strict law-enforcement, we hope all Americans may continue to enjoy their rights of life and liberty.

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The Islamic Free Market Institute Foundation (IFMIF) is a Washington, DC-based organization dedicated to help educate Americans about the beliefs of Muslims and the traditions of Islam. Through dialogue, IFMIF strives to help better the relationship between the American Muslim community and all Americans, including policy-makers, elected officials and the media. Please visit our website at www.islamicinstitute.org