


Update: R.I. imam: bin Laden's death 'good news' for all

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NORTH SMITHFIELD, R.I. -- The leader of an Islamic mosque in North Smithfield says the death of Osama bin Laden is "good news" for all Americans.

Mufti Ikram ul Haq, the imam for Masjid Al-Islam in North Smithfield, said that based on conversations with other Muslim leaders in Rhode Island, he could state Monday that "we all feel that this is a great milestone in the war against terrorism."

"Finally, people can have a sigh of relief from all the pain that all of us have been going through in the country," he added. "It is an achievement, and we congratulate President Obama."

The mufti said Muslims here hope that bin Laden's demise will also reduce the world's anxiety and help bring the world some peace. "This guy was the mastermind, and now that he is finished we may see the peace we all have been hoping for. It may destroy the emotions of anybody wanting to bring harm or disorder anywhere in the world. That's what we pray for."

Imam ul Haq disputed, however, the assertion of officials in the Obama administration that the burial of bin Laden at sea was in accord with Islamic law. From the Islamic perspective, he said, "a burial at sea may take place when someone dies on the ocean, but if someone has been killed on land, he should be buried on land."

Later Monday, the Rhode Island Council for Muslim Advancement expressed "great relief from the constant fear perpetrated by terrorist acts that have taken the lives of innocent American citizens."

In a statement signed by Imam Farid Ansari of the Muslim American Dawah Center, Imam Abdul Hameed of the Islamic Center of Rhode Island in Providence, and by Imam ul Haq, the council went on to say: "We applaud the efforts of President Obama in his relentless efforts to bring to justice those who were responsible for these crimes for which they will be duly punished."

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