

# International Ulama Conference on Polio Eradication

بين الاقوامى علماء كافرينس برائے اندادِ پوليو  
المؤتمر الدولي للعلماء حول إستئصال شلل الأطفال

15-16 June 2014, Islamabad, Pakistan



## Ulama declare Polio Vaccination Parental Duty, Community Responsibility

*Scholars reaffirm global Islamic solidarity and support for protecting children from polio paralysis and life-long disability*

**Islamabad, Pakistan, 16 June 2014** – Leading international Islamic scholars from several countries Monday called on the entire Muslim World to unite behind polio eradication and declared polio vaccination a parental and community responsibility. The call was made in a declaration issued at the conclusion of a two-day conference in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The parley, which brought together leading Islamic clerics from countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Nigeria, was convened by the International Advisory Group for Polio Eradication (IAG) and co-organized by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) in partnership with the Pakistani Government.

The conference came at a time when polio was nearly eradicated, but some children in parts of Pakistan, Syria, Nigeria and Somalia were not able to access the vaccination they need for protection.

The declaration by Ulama was made against the backdrop of a disproportionate number of children affected by polio from Muslim communities. The conferees called on parents and community leaders to immunize their children against all vaccine-preventable diseases and stated that polio and other vaccines are safe and effective and that they fully conform to Islamic principles.

Participating scholars were welcomed at the conference by Pakistan's Minister of State for Health Ms. Saira Afzal Tarar, who said she wants "Muslim scholars to have a key role in advocating for polio eradication and in inspiring people to take action and protect their children from the crippling disease."

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In his speech, President of Al-Azhar University in Cairo Professor Osama El-Abd told the Ulama conference that Islam places special emphasis on the health of people and avoids anything that harms the individual. “Among the core objectives of Islam is the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage and property,” said Al-Abd. Protecting children from disease is critical to achieving these objectives, and for this reason vaccination against polio is mandatory to protect all Muslim children, added the Islamic sharia expert.

“As an institution working to promote human development, the Islamic Development Bank believes that having a healthy society is an essential requirement for human development,” said the Bank’s President Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali in remarks about the purpose of the conference.

“For this reason, IDB will use its resources and intellectual capital to work side by side with the Government of Pakistan and other governments as well as other international organizations in order to eradicate polio and other endemic diseases, not only in Muslim countries but all around the world,” added Dr. Ali.

The OIC Secretary General Dr. Iyad Ameen Madani called for complete eradication of polio which continues to be a critical challenge for the Pan-Islamic organization. “Ninety-five percent of polio cases reported in 2013 occurred in OIC Member States. In addition, the polio endemic countries in the world and a significant number of the countries where polio starts to spread again are OIC Member States.” The OIC chief however expressed confidence that the OIC region will be ridden of polio in the near future, according to a statement read out on his behalf by OIC Director General Dr. Mohamed Kamran Akhtar.

In his statement, the Secretary General of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy Dr. Ahmad Khaled Babikr said Islamic scholars, Al-Azhar University, and the International Islamic University in Pakistan are united on the imperative of polio eradication.

The Muslim scholars and experts also called on key Islamic organisations, philanthropists and policymakers to join hands and close ranks in pursuit of effective contributions to the much-needed eradication of polio in Muslim countries. They added that “it is the duty of all parents and communities to immunize their children and protect them from all diseases and life-long

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disability, and it is the duty of governments to provide critical health and social welfare services to improve the wellbeing of all children and the population.”

“We strongly reaffirm global Islamic solidarity and support for protecting children from polio paralysis and life-long disability through polio vaccinations, and that these protective measures fully conform to Islamic principles,” the declaration stated.

The Ulama finally took the opportunity to applaud Pakistan’s Government and Ministry of Health for launching its comprehensive five-year plan to strengthen routine immunization services and provide critical health services to all children in Pakistan. They also urged all donor nations to support this critical programme in order to protect the lives of millions of children.

## Notes to editors

The Islamic Advisory Group (IAG), inaugurated in February 2014 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, was the initiative of the Saudi-based Islamic scholarly IIFA, the leading Islamic institution of learning in Egypt Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, the 57-member state Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

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**Islamic Development Bank:** The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is a Multilateral Development Bank established in December 1973. It started its operations in October 1975. IDB's membership has gone from 22 countries at inception to 56 countries currently. IDB Group comprises five entities: Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI), Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD), Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC), and International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC). In addition, the IDB has various specialized funds and programs: Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, Waqf Fund, Awqaf Properties Investment Fund, World Waqf Foundation, IDB Infrastructure Fund, Special Assistance Program, Scholarship Program, etc. It also manages the Saudi Arabian Project for the utilization of Hajj Sacrificial Meat.

**Organisation of Islamic Cooperation:** The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (formerly Organization of the Islamic Conference) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations which has membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world and ensuring to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world. The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 12th Rajab 1389 Hijra (25 September 1969). Website: <http://www.oic-oci.org>

**International Islamic Fiqh Academy:** The International Islamic Fiqh Academy was established in 1982 by a resolution of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC). It has become the jurisprudential Fiqh authority for the Muslim countries. The Academy is a body consisting of scholars and jurists of the Muslim world that focus on new problems presented by the contemporary world and propose Islamic answers to those problems. The Academy comprises of the secretariat & the council of Islamic renowned Ulama & Scholars from more than eight Schools of Thought (Mazahib): Hanafi, Malki, Shafi'i, Hanbali, Isnaashari, Zaidi, Zahiri, Asha'ari etc. They discuss new jurisprudential topics in all subjects, like worship, finance, medicine, relations and issue fatwas on them as decisions, which are accepted and respected by all Muslims in the world.