

French Imams Join Vatican Official in Condemning Paris Attack

Say That Without Freedom of Speech, World Is in Danger

Vatican City, 8 January 2015 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org))

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue published this morning a joint declaration with four French imams, denouncing Wednesday's attack on the offices of a Paris magazine and reiterating that the world is in danger if freedom of speech is not protected.

The statement is signed by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Bishop Michel Dubost of Evry-Corbeil et Essonnes, president of the Council for Interreligious Relations of the Bishops' Conference of France, the Imams Tareq Oubrou, Azzedine Cami, Mohammed Moussaoui, Djelloul Seddiki, and Fr. Roucou, director of the National Service for Relations with Islam, France.

The imams were with a delegation of the French episcopal conference attending the Pope's general audience on Wednesday, and having meetings with the pontifical council.

The Catholic and Muslim religious leaders called on other religious leaders to promote a culture of peace.

Here is the full text of the declaration from the pontifical council:

As we reach the end of the meeting in Rome of the four Imams of France, who attended yesterday's general audience along with the delegation from the French Episcopal Conference, the participants, shocked by the heinous attack on 7 January 2015 on the offices of the publication "Charlie Hebdo", wish once more to echo the words pronounced by the Pope yesterday and this morning, denouncing this cruelty and blind violence. Like him, we invite believers to show through friendship and prayer their human and spiritual solidarity towards the victims and their families.

In these circumstances, it should be noted that, without freedom of speech, the world is in danger: it is imperative to oppose hate and every form of violence that destroys human life, violates the dignity of the person and radically undermines the foundation of peaceful co-existence between persons and peoples, notwithstanding differences of nationality, religion and culture.

Religious leaders are called upon to further promote a "culture of peace and hope" able to conquer fear and to build bridges between people.

Considering the impact of the media, their leaders are invited to offer information that is respectful of religions, their followers and their practices, thus favouring a culture of encounter.

Interreligious dialogue remains the only path to follow together to dissipate prejudice.