

# ANNUAL REPORT 2006/2007

Muslim American Society - Boston Chapter



Assalamu alaikum,

The Muslim community in America is passing through a defining moment in its history, when our country is asking: what is Islam, and who are the Muslims? We must seize this opportunity to define ourselves through our good works and good character. In MAS, we recognize that the key to success is our ability to work together with all those who share our mission and values. We celebrate the diversity in our community, and welcome every individual, institution, and masjid to join hands and diligently work to fulfill our obligation of ***Conveying Islam and Improving Society***.

To better leverage upcoming opportunities and face increasingly difficult challenges, MAS and the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) are forging a close partnership and strategic alliance, whereby MAS Boston will involve neighboring communities, leadership, and all who want to contribute, to together deliver programs and services in the new Roxbury mosque. This partnership will, God Willing, create a stronger, more united community and enable us to deliver together on a powerful vision for the new center. Indeed these benefits of unity arise from the mandate of Allah SWT that we "hold fast to the rope of Allah, together, and do not disunite."

The ISB Cultural Center is truly a "dream come true". As the largest Islamic center on the east coast, we pray this center will serve as a beacon of light in our society. The past twelve months have been very exciting for all of us. With the help of Allah, we were able to achieve a major victory in settling the ISB Lawsuit by defending our right as Americans to establish a place of worship. This journey has allowed us to make many new friends from other faiths, who came to the aid and support of our community in a time of need. And the beauty is that the dream is only beginning! The completion of the ISBCC represents the "coming out" from the womb. The real opportunities will start once we are ready to pray and gather in this blessed place, and to deliver our vision of ***Conveying Islam and Improving Society*** from this house of worship.

In this report, you will find more details on how close we are to praying in the ISBCC. You will also read about the dozens of programs and services that MAS Boston offers. You will find quality services for all segments in our community: children, teenagers, college students, parents, and families. You will find ways of developing spiritually, acquiring knowledge, serving humanity, engaging politically, having fun, playing sports, teaching and learning. You will also find interfaith programs, initiatives that educate and build communication with law enforcement officials, and political outreach and empowerment projects. You will see an engaging vision that addresses the comprehensive needs of a growing American Muslim Community. All of these programs and much more will be a part of the powerful vision that serves Muslims and those of other faiths which will be delivered through the grand new mosque that Allah has blessed us with.

MAS Boston is determined to work with everyone, to leverage the talents of every individual who desires to contribute to the success of this momentous project, and to model this center as a hub of diversity and cooperation between Muslims in New England. In this blessed month of Ramadan, we are grateful to Allah SWT that he has given us a chance to contribute to such an important project. We ask you to do your part in establishing a house of worship, and being a partner in delivering a vision for a better future for our community in America.

Your brother,  
Hossam Al-Jabri  
President, Muslim American Society - Boston Chapter



# MAS Boston - Chapter Annual Report 2007/2007

## *Table of Contents*

Building our Dream	4
Pursuing Social Justice	10
Conveying Islam	12
Educating the Community	14
Empowering our Youth	16
Press Coverage	18
Statement of Activities	21
Board and Staff	22
Acknowledgements	24



## ISB SETTLEMENT VICTORY

After a long legal battle to overcome a lawsuit contesting the city's sale of land to the mosque, and after a difficult struggle to bring to account media and other entities that had defamed the mosque's leadership by seeking to tie them to "extremists", MAS Boston helped the ISB push towards a settlement that called on all sides to drop all lawsuits securing the mosque.

The Settlement secured Boston Muslims' civil rights to establish a place of prayer and worship. It overcame three years of legal and media attacks against the Muslim community and against mosque leadership.

The settlement also demonstrated to Islamophobes that Muslims will not stand by meekly when unjustly attacked.

## BOSTON MUSLIMS UNITE AT MINARET CAPPING

On June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007 over 2500 Muslims from all backgrounds and all walks of life gathered in peace and brotherhood to watch history being made. The minaret of the ISB was capped and the first call to prayer was made as the nation watched.

The event was covered by the Boston Globe, ABC News national, the Herald, the Associated Press, NBC, and other major media outlets.

Our country witnessed the diversity, the brotherhood, and spirituality of Muslims and saw, by means of example, the beauty of Islamic worship.

## SOLIDARITY DAY: SUPPORT FROM POLITICIANS, INTERFAITH & CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, MAS Boston, with the support of other Muslim leaders, organized Intercommunity Solidarity Day.

Solidarity Day brought together about 300 different faith leaders, community activists, politicians, and civil rights leaders to the mosque in Roxbury, to express their support for intercommunity solidarity and their congratulations for the near completion of the mosque.

There was support from the Cardinal, the Massachusetts Council of Churches, from dozens of Jewish leaders and Rabbis, President Emeritus of the Black Ministerial Alliance, the NAACP, the ACLU, City Councilors, State Senator Diane Wilkerson, the Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, the various Imams of the Boston area, and more. All spoke about the importance of intercommunity cooperation, and their joy at seeing the mosque overcome challenges to become established.



## CONSTRUCTION AND FUNDRAISING UPDATE

### Amount fundraised in 2007: \$2.97 million

This amount has already been used towards paying previous invoices and expenses. New funds need to be raised for current outstanding invoices and loans as listed below:

#### Current Outstanding Invoices

<b>Mujeeb Construction</b>	<b>\$1,188,349</b>
<b>IT Marshal</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Architectural Services</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>
<b>Steffian Bradley Associates</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>
<b>John Moriarty Associates</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,354,349</b>

#### Current Outstanding Loans

LENDER	AMOUNT	TERMS
<b>Islamic Development Bank</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>10 Years</b>
<b>Private Lenders</b>	<b>\$95,000</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Private Lenders</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Loans from organizations</b>	<b>\$165,000</b>	<b>End of Ramadan</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,310,000</b>	<b>(\$165,00 by end of Ramadan)</b>

### Summary of Funds Needed to Finish the ISBCC

	Due Now	Due by Dec 2007
<b>Invoices</b>	<b>\$1,354,349</b>	<b>\$1,200,000</b>
<b>Loans</b>	<b>\$165,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,519,349</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>

*Building our* **DREAM**





*Building our DREAM*







## IMAM MASOOD SUPPORT

In November 2006 Imam Masood, leader of the Sharon mosque of the Islamic Center of New England, was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and is currently facing trial for alleged immigration violations and alleged misrepresentation to federal law enforcement officials.

MAS Boston rallied thousands of community members to sign a petition in support of Imam Masood, mobilized the community to write dozens of letters, and motivated hundreds of community members to come to his initial bond hearing. All of this showed the strong community support behind him and the judge released him on bond.

MAS Boston has held two press conferences bringing much media attention to his plight and has also been collecting donations to support the Imam's family of nine since he and all of them are prevented from working to support themselves.

Currently, he is still facing charges and MAS Boston and the majority of the Muslim community continue to stand behind Imam Masood and call for a speedy and humane delivery of justice.

***“ In the summer of 2007, MAS Boston mobilized the Muslim community to raise funds to provide school supplies to 250 children in need in Boston. ”***

## FOOD DRIVES

MAS Boston conducted two meat drives resulting in a total of 540 pounds of beef being donated to shelters and rehabilitation centers in the Boston Area and was featured in the Boston Globe. .

The two meat drives coincided with Eid ul-Adha in January and World Hunger Awareness Day in June. This was part of an organized national effort in which the process of slaughtering, packaging and shipping the meat directly to the recipients was centralized.

## BACKPACK CAMPAIGN

In the summer of 2007, MAS Boston mobilized the Muslim community to raise funds to provide school supplies to 250 children in need in Boston. "Cradles to Crayons", an organization that provides children with basic essentials, has agreed to match the 250 backpacks produced by MAS Boston, which will be prepared and distributed in a joint effort. This brings the total number of children benefiting from the campaign to 500.

Key beneficiaries of the campaign have been families and community organizations in Jamaica Plain, Roxbury and Dorchester. Senator Dianne Wilkerson, Councilor Chuck Turner and veteran activist Mel King have kindly helped the campaign



## BRIDGES

MAS Boston co-established BRIDGES, a monthly forum that brings together Muslim and Sikh leaders with officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security, FBI, State and Boston Police, and US and State Attorney Generals' offices.

The forum works to educate officials about the needs and concerns of the Muslim community and discuss with the community law enforcement concerns relating to terrorism and security.

***“ Islam deeply values a hard day’s work and emphasizes doing justice to workers, paying them well, and paying them without delay. ”***

## SOMERVILLE POLICE CHIEF APPOINTMENT

In July of 2007, MAS Boston representatives attended a meeting on behalf of the Muslim community to help select the next Somerville Police Chief, and thereafter made a recommendation to the city in regards to the position.

MAS Boston's recommendation was based on a review of the candidates' positions on crime prevention, community policing, outreach to immigrant communities, and respect for diversity.

Our involvement in this process represents an important step towards increased involvement of the Muslim community in public decisions that affect us all.

## STANDING FOR JUSTICE WITH SEIU WORKERS

Islam deeply values a hard day’s work and emphasizes doing justice to workers, paying them well, and paying them without delay. SEUI is a union that represents workers in hospital systems, long-term care, property services, and public services.

Over the past year and a half, MAS Boston has helped SEIU 615 on a number of campaigns to support workers rights. MAS Boston played a role in creating pressure to achieve the second best contract in the nation for janitors in Greater Boston. We have also worked to negotiate a higher working wage for security guards at Harvard so that they may be able to better support their families.

Recently, we have been working on the Smithfield Campaign that seeks to put pressure on one of the largest companies in the meat-packing industry to provide better working conditions and for its thousands of immigrant workers.



## SPEAKERS BUREAU

The MAS Speakers Bureau regularly provides speakers to schools, churches, and community organizations on various topics ranging from basic Islamic teachings to specialized topics such as “women in Islam”, and “economic principles”. In the past year, our speakers have given presentations at over 30 institutions, reaching close to 1,000 people.

To meet the tremendous need for Muslim speakers on Islam, MAS Boston conducted its first "Speakers Bureau" training last February. Over 30 community members attended the workshop in which they received training on how to give effective, quality presentations and workshops about Islam and Muslims in schools, community centers, faith groups, social service agencies, and workplaces.

From amongst the attendees ten speakers received further training and have been certified to speak and provide mosque tours on behalf of the Outreach Center.

## PRESENTING ISLAM EVENINGS

The MAS Boston Outreach Center recently started a monthly lecture series on issues related to Islam and Muslims in America. *Presenting Islam Evenings* are public forums for people interested in learning about their fellow Muslim neighbors. The series, held at the MAS Boston Center, invites knowledgeable Muslim speakers from the Greater Boston Area on the third Sunday evening of every month.

Past topics have included “Islam and Pluralism”, “Prophet Muhammad”, “Women in Islam” and “All About Ramadan” and have been attended by community members from various faiths as well as government officials. We look forward to hosting these evenings at the ISBCC in the near future.

***“ Presenting Islam Evenings are public forums for people interested in learning about their fellow Muslim neighbors. ”***

## MASJID VISITS

The MAS Boston Outreach Center conducts mosque visits upon request. Guests tour the ISB, learn about Islam and observe Muslim praying in congregation. These visits are also a main training opportunity for new members of the Speakers Bureau. We look forward to providing these tours at the



## DIVERSITY AWARENESS

In order to increase the awareness of Islam and Muslims at Law Enforcement Agencies, MAS Boston has been working with the Department of Justice to provide Cultural Awareness training for over 800 law enforcement personnel.

Trainees included police officers from the Boston Police Department (BPD) and employees of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

In appreciation of his role in establishing these presentations, MAS Boston presented on behalf of the Muslim community, a token of appreciation to Superintendent Charles Horsely, who was head of the BPD Bureau for Training and Education.

***Coming Soon....***

***PresentingIslam.org***

## LAUNCHING *PresentingIslam.org*

In the coming months, MAS Boston will be launching a major website to educate our broader society about Islam.

PresentingIslam.org is an initiative of the MAS Boston Outreach Center. Its mission will be to present Islam in clear and simple terms, to support new Muslims and to work with others in this effort.

We hope that the beauty, simplicity, and reality of the teachings of Islam will shine forth in a compelling and lucid manner.



## ISLAMIC AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN BOSTON

The Islamic American University launched its Boston branch last year with a 3- credit course taught by Imam Basyouny Nehela on the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). IAU provides an opportunity to pursue Islamic Studies in a structured and organized manner under the supervision of knowledgeable and respected Scholars. Students can supplement their personal studies with online courses or with a face-to-face experience in the company of others that share their thirst for knowledge. Additionally, studies at the IAU eventually lead to a certificate in Islamic Studies.

IAU-Boston continues to provide Islamic Higher-Education for Muslims in the Greater Boston Area. Future IAU courses to be taught at the MAS Boston office include Quranic Sciences, Arabic and Tafseer. We look forward to hosting these courses at the ISBCC in the near future.

## MALIK ACADEMY

Malik Academy is an elementary school serving students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Its mission is to prepare students for future success by focusing on a love and understanding of Islam. Malik Academy stresses the comprehensive nature of Islam by integrating it into all areas of academic development, social interaction, personal growth, character, values and moral behavior. Through this balanced focus, the school hopes to guide students to have a strong relationship with their Creator, have a healthy connection with all parts of the community, develop an understanding of how to excel in academic pursuits, and focus on multi-cultural acceptance and understanding so they can successfully represent Islam honorably within American society. Malik Academy currently serves approximately 50 students of diverse ethnic backgrounds and is currently pursuing national accreditation for its early childhood program.

“ *Malik Academy stresses the comprehensive nature of Islam by integrating it into all areas of academic development, social interaction, personal growth, character, values and moral behavior.* ”



## MAS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Leadership Institute was established in April 2007 to develop future leaders, improve organizational effectiveness, apply leadership skills and techniques in the non-profit community, and to foster the spirit of teamwork and collaboration across different communities in greater Boston.

To date, the leadership institute has held a 4 session negotiation workshop designed to help participants a) see and assess how they deal with conflict b) learn new negotiation strategies, and c) provide a specific process to produce more productive, collaborative negotiations.

Also, in conjunction with World Boston, the Leadership Institute has hosted delegations of Muslim leaders from 6 African countries and from the UK who have come to the US to meet with Muslim leaders in the US, on invitation from the State Department.

## MAS QUR'AN INSTITUTE

The MAS Qur'an Institute in Boston provides a variety of courses to support the recitation, understanding and memorization of the holy Qur'an while engaging participants with personal and spiritual development that promotes better citizenship.

***“ The MAS Qur'an Institute provides a variety of courses to support the recitation, understanding and memorization of the holy Qur'an while engaging participants with personal and spiritual development. ”***

## MAS COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

The Council of Islamic Schools provides an umbrella structure that offers effective educational leadership and acts as a resource center for Islamic Schools in New England.

Its goals include fostering cooperation among schools, networking and sharing of resources, reviewing and improving curricula, facilitating the development of a unified curriculum in Arabic and Islamic studies, facilitating state accreditation and providing professional development workshops.

In the past year MAS-CIS has held the Islamic Classroom Management workshop, attended by approximately 100 educators from 11 schools.

In September, MAS-CIS held the "Teaching the Arabic Language" workshop, more than 50 Arabic teachers and educators attended from more than 12 part-time and full-time Islamic schools in the region.



## MAS SCOUTS

MAS Scouts serves children ages 6-11 and strives to teach them the core values of Islam at a young age. Scouting activities also provide the youth with an opportunity to learn important life skills and develop key qualities such as leadership, social conscience, and teamwork.

MAS Scouts in Boston currently has two troops operating in the Randolph area (south of Boston). One troop is a “Brownie” troop, and the other is a “Junior Girl Scouts” troop. The troops meet biweekly for various activities.

## Tarbiya & ‘Ilm Camp and Retreats

The TI camps immerse young people in a week-long, transformational experience, designed to spark spiritual awakening. For one week, youth live with mentors, learn from scholars, and engage in spiritual, physical, and team-building activities. In addition to the camps, MAS Boston also offers an annual weekend retreat for college students and young professionals.

In 2007, the MAS retreat brought over 100 young people to Cody, NH for a weekend of reflection on the concept of *Tawakkul*. Our invited guests included Imam Azeez from Sacramento, CA and Br. Ibrahim Ramey, who currently serves as the Director of Human and Civil Rights of MAS.

## MY Excursion

MY Excursion was a special summer event which brought over 40 college students and young professionals to the scenic Loon Mountain Resort in New Hampshire. Activities included hiking nature trails, exploring glacial caves, and enjoying gondola rides. The trip provided an opportunity for all to enjoy and reflect on the beauty of Allah’s creation, while strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood.

“

***Reviving our spirit is the first step in reviving our community.*** ”

## MY Revive

MY Revive is a monthly gathering for youth to reconnect and revive their faith. A night of prayers, reflection and bonding helps to invigorate, recharge and inspire the youth to get closer to the Creator. Reviving our spirit is the first step in reviving our community.

MAS Boston hosts MY Revive programs on the second Saturday of every month. Over 100 youth and college students have attended these programs this year.



## MY Give

The essence of MYG is to *Serve the Creator by serving His creation*. To demonstrate the relationship between faith and activism, MYG mobilizes young people and instills the Islamic spirit of social responsibility. The MYG project organizes regular community service activities for volunteers, from building low-income housing to planting trees.

A recent project of MY Give was a day of volunteering with the reVision Urban Agriculture Project, in conjunction with reVision House, a shelter for homeless young women and their children in Dorchester. The goal of the urban farm is to increase access to affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate food for shelter residents and community members through a community-supported farm and greenhouses.

## MY Maestros

MY Maestros was a Boston-wide talent show put on by and for Muslim youth. The show was hosted by Muslim comedian Mohammad Amer, and the performers included youth of all ages and backgrounds. Talents on display included martial arts, poetry recitation, spoken word, stand-up comedy, hula-hooping, and acting. The event was attended by over 200 community members and families.

***“ To demonstrate the relationship between faith and activism, MY Give mobilizes young people and instills the Islamic spirit of social responsibility. ”***

## MY Usra Program

The usra is an empowering self-development program in which groups of youth, under the guidance of a trained mentor, explore their faith, build their connection with God, and together practice what they learn. The usra, Arabic for 'family', gives young people strong bonds of friendship, guidance, and support. A time-tested method, the MY Usra Program empowers hundreds of young American Muslims each year.

MAS Boston recently launched three MY usras, serving approximately 25 youth. Additional usras will be starting this fall, insha'Allah.

# From sacrifice, Muslims feed the hungry

By Alex Bowers, Globe Correspondent | February 4, 2007

The Muslim American Society wanted to celebrate the recent Eid ul-Adha holiday both traditionally -- through the sacrifice and sharing of meat -- and in a new way: Helping the local homeless.

The result was 300 pounds of halal beef -- that is, ritually fit according to Islamic law -- that arrived last month at the Pine Street Inn and fed more than 600 people after being transformed into shepherd's pie.

The Eid holiday, which began on Dec. 31, commemorates the willingness of the Prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son for God and occurs at the end of the Hajj, the holy pilgrimage to Mecca.

"The whole event of Hajj is a remembrance of the Way of Abraham," said Ahmed Elewa, outreach coordinator of the Muslim American Society's Boston Chapter.

Traditionally, Muslim families sacrifice the best of their herds during the Eid holiday -- a cow, sheep, goat, or camel -- and distribute the meat among relatives, friends, and the less-fortunate.

This year, seven members of the society's Boston chapter, based in Cambridge, donated \$150 each to buy shares that purchased one head of cattle, said Bilal Kaleem, executive director of the Boston chapter. The Muslim American Society Service Corps, headquartered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, launched the program across the country this year by coordinating donations and arranging to purchase cattle from an Iowa beef farm.

The animals were slaughtered under the guidance of Imam Ahmad Elkhaldy, the national director of the MAS Service Corps.

"The sacrifice has to be halal, which means that when the animal is sacrificed, it has to be done in the name of God," said Kaleem, adding that it must also be treated humanely, including shielding it from other animals being killed, making sure it has enough water, and draining its blood properly. The society also specifies that the cattle is grain-fed and given no hormones and no pork-based feed.

"We chose the Pine Street Inn because we really like their approach," Kaleem said. They aim to preserve the dignity of those who happen to be currently in a less-privileged situation. It's not a handout. They treat people well."

Ahmed Elewa, outreach coordinator of the Muslim society's Boston chapter, recounted that in the story in the Koran that Eid celebrates, God asked Abraham to prove his submission and surrender to God's will by ordering him to sacrifice his son, which most

Muslim scholars hold to be Ishmael, while the Bible holds Isaac to be the son (both Ishmael and Isaac are esteemed prophets in Islam). Moments before Abraham struck his son, God told him that he had passed the test of devotion, and provided an animal to be sacrificed instead.

The beef arrived at the Pine Street Inn on Jan. 18 and was served for dinner a week later.

"In the wintertime, especially after a stretch of cold weather, every night we're full" for dinner, said Isaac Ryan, the cook who turned the donation into meals.

He noted that a standard beef recipe at the inn calls for up to 400 pounds of ground meat. While menus are planned a month in advance, the inn adapts quickly to local generosity to serve its clientele.

"Our kitchen staff is very nimble," said Shepley Metcalf, communications director at the Pine Street Inn. "We really couldn't run without the kinds of donation that this group made.

"It's our favorite kind of donation when you're making as many meals as we are," said Metcalf.

He said the kitchen staff prepares as many as 2,100 meals each day for inn guests, satellite shelters, and other shelters that purchase meals through Pine Street's kitchen and food service training program.

The Muslim American Society's Boston chapter, established four years ago, encourages Muslims to get involved in their communities.

"It's great to mobilize the Muslim community here to donate locally," said Kaleem, who hopes that the success of this year's pilot program will encourage the Muslim tradition of charitable giving to the local community.

"There is no difference in hunger whether a person is Muslim or non-Muslim." ■

# Canopy's rise signals end of mosque's plight

By Brian R. Ballou, Globe Staff | June 10, 2007

As a crane hoisted a 5,000-pound, copper canopy toward the top of a red brick tower in Roxbury yesterday afternoon, thousands of area Muslims looked upward, some with tears running down their cheeks.

"This is the moment we have been waiting for for two decades," yelled Yousef Abou-Allaban, chairman of the Islamic Society of Boston.

In the crowd of several thousand, many people held up cellphones and cameras to snap pictures of the topping-off.

Traffic on nearby Malcolm X Boulevard came to a stop. The top, adorned with an American flag waving in the cool breeze, was finally set in place at 1 p.m.

The capping of a mosque's minaret has special significance in Islam, signaling that the building is completed, said Abou-Allaban. But the capping of the 140-foot tower at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center had even more significance for local Muslims because of the controversies that had dogged the project.

"Allah . . . was probably testing us to see how much perseverance we had," Abou-Allaban said. "There were all kinds of tests, and who knows, we may have tests coming in the future," he said.

A lawsuit dismissed earlier this year questioned the sale of the land to the Islamic Society in 2003, contending that the Society had bought the land from the city at an unfairly low price. The Society dropped its own lawsuit last month, alleging that media outlets and others had defamed it in an attempt to derail the mosque project.

The daylong ceremony yesterday started with a 1-mile march beginning at Washington Park and ending at the mosque, a red-brick structure with a large dome near the intersection of Tremont Street and Malcolm X Boulevard.

The march, slated to start at 10:30 a.m., got off to a late start. At the beginning, there were only about 20 people holding white placards, huddled under trees to avoid a constant drizzle. About an hour later, the crowd had grown to about 300, and the parade began.

As boys passed out green and yellow fliers with information on the day's events to onlookers, men in flowing robes were followed by women pushing strollers or hand-in-hand with children. All chanted, "Allahu akbar" [God is great].

About a half-hour after it started, the parade reached the 70,000-square-foot mosque, where organizers estimated about 2,500 people were waiting.

The crowd included local Muslims who hail from countries in Africa and the Middle East, as well as American-born black Muslims. Most people took off their shoes and sat cross-legged on a large blue tarp covering an expanse of gravel that is soon to be paved over to become the mosque's parking lot.

Bilal Kaleem, associate director of the Boston chapter of the Muslim American Society, was enthusiastic about the diversity of the crowd.

"This shows the blessing and mercy of Allah, and this is that beauty of universal brotherhood and unity." ■

# With holidays, a vow for better Jewish, Muslim relations

## Pledge follows rift surrounding mosque

By Michael Paulson, Globe Staff | September 12, 2007

A group of local Jewish and Muslim leaders have signed a joint statement urging better relations between the two communities, which have suffered a serious rift over each other's response to controversial remarks by onetime leaders of a large mosque under construction in Roxbury. The cautiously crafted statement, which is being released to coincide with tonight's start of both Rosh Hashana and Ramadan, commits the leaders to "strive to address disagreements and community concerns in ways that promote reconciliation rather than conflict."

That pledge appears to be a response to the mosque dispute, in which the breakdown in relations was so bad that it led to litigation, much of which was dropped in May. The statement also decries "all forms of terrorism, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim prejudice, or any other form of discrimination or stigmatization against any racial, religious, or ethnic group." The statement includes the signatures of 20 individuals from each faith. On the Muslim side, it includes the leaders of every prominent local Muslim institution, including five imams. On the Jewish side, where community institutions are under pressure from an Israeli advocacy group called the David Project to be skeptical of the motivations and backgrounds of Muslim leaders, the statement was signed by a number of prominent lay leaders but not by the staff who run mainstream organizations.

Among the Jewish signers are eight former presidents of the Jewish Community Relations Council and Combined Jewish Philanthropies, as well as several prominent business people active in the Jewish community and Rabbi Ronne Friedman of Temple Israel, who had broken off his congregation's partnership with the Muslim community over the mosque controversy. The statement was also signed by the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis, which is sending it to all of its members, and by the Muslim American Society, which is sending it to all area mosques.

The statement is being criticized by the David Project, which cites concerns about the Muslim signers' affiliations. The David Project had been the leading critic of the Islamic Society of Boston's plans to erect a mosque at Roxbury Crossing, asserting that some of the mosque's founding leaders had made remarks that were anti-Semitic or supportive of terrorism. In response to those assertions, the Islamic Society filed a lawsuit in 2005 against the David Project and two media outlets, saying that those allegations were defamatory, but dropped the suit in May after a suit challenging the mosque's construction was also dropped.

David Project president Charles Jacobs, reiterating the assertion that was the central issue in the defamation case, said in an e-mail yesterday: "Regrettably, the evidence that both the leadership of the Islamic Society of Boston and of the Muslim American Society have been supportive of organizations and individuals who themselves support terror, anti-Semitism, and/or hate speech is abundant and continues to grow. We believe that the wiser course is to defer statements of this sort, laudable as they may seem, until the ISB and MAS answers those questions."

But the signers said they thought it was important to start talking now. "The statement calls on leaders and followers in both communities to renounce terrorism and hatred and calls for the building of bridges, and I find it hard to disagree with that," said Rabbi Eric Gurvis, the president of the Board of Rabbis and the rabbi of Temple Shalom in Newton. "Those who point fingers and say, 'You can't trust this one, you can't trust that one,' that's part of why we've got conflict all around the world to start with. At some point, we have to at least start to talk to one another."

M. Bilal Kaleem, executive director of the Muslim American Society's Boston chapter, said the letter was welcome in the Muslim community. He rejected the criticism from the David Project. "In working toward this statement, Muslim leaders and Jewish organizers very much expected that there would be strong attempts by some to hurl accusations in order to sabotage any attempts at dialogue, cooperation, or increasing trust between the two communities," he said. "And, indeed, if there are concerns, we feel that the best way forward to increase trust is for leaders from both communities to regularly meet and dialog and frankly raise with each other any questions they have, in addition to getting to know each other as fellow citizens."

Michael Paulson can be reached at [mpaulson@globe.com](mailto:mpaulson@globe.com). ■



# STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

*Modified accrual basis for year ended December 31, 2006*

## Support and Revenue

Program Fees	\$ 82,519
Contributions	104,806*
Special Events	70,973
Grants	53,500*
Federal Government	50,000
Cambridge Community Foundation	3,500
Other income	2,499

---

**Total support and revenue** **314,297**

---

## Expenses

Program Expenses	188,325
Operations, Facilities & Management	95,248

---

**Total Expenses** **283,573**

---

**Increase in Net Assets** **30,724**

**Net Assets - Beginning of Year** **85,172**

**Net Assets - End of Year** **115,896**

\* As per accrual accounting standards, includes funds due in 2007 and not yet received in 2006



#### MAS BOSTON BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2006-2007

##### President

Hossam AlJabri

##### Vice President

Abdul Badi Abou Samra

##### Treasurer

Hassan Elalami

##### Clerk

M. Bilal Kaleem

Eman Atef

Basyouni Nehela

Abdullahi Aweis Abu

Mona Abo-Zena

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2006-2007

M. Bilal Kaleem

Nancy Khalil

Omar Abdala

Loay Assaf

Mohammed Morgan

Sameh El-Difrawy

Abdullahi Aweis Abu

#### MAS YOUTH DEPARTMENT

Nancy Khalil, Director

Siama Muhammad

Dunia Ramadan

Faisal Anwar

Naima Oriyane

Salman Shazeeb

#### MAS FREEDOM FOUNDATION

Omar Abdala, Director

Salimah Hankins

Ceylan Rowe

Shimon Warden

Shahinaz Bedri

Khaled Attia

#### MAS OUTREACH DEPARTMENT

Ahmed Elewa, Director

Mohamed Khafif

Younes Jabir

Nur Aziz

Ryan Tarpine

Siham Byah

Shahinaz Bedri

Naima Oriyane

Ahmed Rashed

Hoda Elsharkawi

#### MAS - ISBCC FUNDRAISING DEPARTMENT

Anwar Kazmi

Isslam Elhadidy

Loay Assaf

Mohamed Morgan

Usama Elkatta

#### MAS SCOUTS

Sana Ali

Dalal Adadjani

Sumbul Raza

Aicha Borgmann-Traiba

#### MAS TARBIYA DEPARTMENT

Abdullahi Aweis Abu, Director

Basyouni Nehela

Dunia Ramadan

Eman Atef

Fayez Khwaja

Sameh El-Difrawy

#### MAS QUR'AN INSTITUTE

Zakaria Erritouni, Director

Loay Assaf

Asma As-Shaqrah

Mouad Bouazizi

Aisha Shillingford

#### MALIK ACADEMY

Sameh El-Difrawy

Mona Abo-Zena

Aicha Borgmann-Traiba

Mohammed Amin Maati



### MAS COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

Mohamed Abdelrahman, Director  
Abdul Badi Abou Samra  
Mona Abo-Zena  
Ziad Jamous  
Faisal Anwar  
Asma As-Shaqrah  
Salwa Abd-Allah

### STAFF 2006-2007

M. Bilal Kaleem, Executive Director  
Ahmed Elewa, Outreach Coordinator  
Salimah Hankins, Freedom Foundation Lead Organizer  
Aisha Shillingford, Executive Administrator  
Isslam Elhadidy, Event Planner/Fundraising Coordinator  
Fuzieh Jallow, Administrative Assistant

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We at MAS Boston would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who supported and joined us in our mission over the past year. Our gratitude goes first and foremost to Allah (swt). In addition, there are hundreds of individuals and institutions who have helped us and collaborated with us this past year. Below are mentioned just a few of those to whom we owe our deepest appreciation:

Dorie Krauss	Fouzia Hakim	Honorable Walter Fauntroy
Lisa Gallatin	Boston Kabob	Sami Angawi
Mike Felsen	Siham Byah	Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ali
Salwa Abd-Allah	Ceylan Rowe	Jawad Benazzi
Issac Hodes	Sami Abdallah	Khansaa Elguenaoui
Joseph Berman	Daniel Rowe	Naima Oriyane
Margarie Dove	Ahmed Rashed	Najwa Lamnii
Moshe House Boston	Ayah Ziade	Johannah Segarich
David Dolev	Isra Ziade	Fatimah Iliasu
Labid and Alison	Anna Dirks	Fuzieh Jallow
Two Rams Entertainment	Imam Abdullah Faaruq	Anwar Kazmi
Paul Saba	Imam Taalib Mahdee	Jessica Masse
Dr. Nabeel Khudari	Mohammed Lazzouni	Aziz El-Madi
Jerome Maryon	Prem Singh	Dr. Asmal Abdul-Cader
Rev. Jack Johnson	Swapna Nair	Khir Abdelaziz
Rev. Dr. Tina T. Saxon	Muhammad Ali-Salaam	Abdelhamid
Imam Khaled Nasr	Younes Jabir	Islamic Center of Burlington
Howard Cooper	M & M Cleaning	Islamic Center of New England
Max Stern	Patty Papa	Masjidun LihamdiAllah
David Rich	Ali Noorani	Masjid Al-Qur'an
Mujeeb Ahmed	Senator Dianne Wilkerson	Imam Muhammad Masood
Rabbi Moshe Waldocks-	Councilor Chuck Turner	<a href="http://Supportthemosque.org">Supportthemosque.org</a>
Driss Barhaoui	Mel King	Western Union
Manikka Bowman	Valerie Lowe-Barehmi	Dunkin Donuts
Councilor Felix Arroyo	Father Raymond Helmick	Typhoon
Amelia Peabody Foundation	Marjan Halal Market	Workmen's Circle
Latifa Ziyad	Dayib Café	Nancy Murray
Rabbi Moshe Waldoks	Father Edward O'Flaherty	Rabbi Barbara Penzner
Geoffrey Lewis		



**Muslim American Society—Boston Chapter**  
**10 Garfield Avenue**  
**Somerville, MA 02145**  
**617.623.3004**  
**[www.masboston.org](http://www.masboston.org)**