



For Immediate Release
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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

Death of Grand Imam Mohamed Sayyid Tantawi

I was saddened today to learn of the passing of Grand Imam Mohamed Sayyid Tantawi, the head of al-Azhar University in Cairo.

Imam Tantawi was a highly respected cleric and the leader of one of the most important institutions of Islamic learning in the world. As President Obama said in Cairo last summer, Al-Azhar has stood as a beacon of Islamic learning for over a thousand years, and it continues to play a dynamic role today. Imam Tantawi was an important voice for dialogue among religions and communities. Under his leadership, the university co-hosted the President's speech laying out a vision for a "New Beginning" between the United States and Muslim communities around the world. And Americans will always remember Imam Tantawi for his condemnations of violence after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when he said: "It's not courage in any way to kill an innocent person."

We offer our condolences to the Imam's family and friends today, as well as his many students in Egypt and in Muslim communities throughout the world.

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* As of April 2010, the main switchboard for the U.S. Embassy at its new location in Soba will change to **+249-1-870-2-2000**.

For further information, please contact the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section
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