



# Political Islam Online



## The Al-Jazeera Network Apologizes for Broadcast of Arab-American Psychiatrist Criticizing Islam



Today Al-Jazeera apologized to their viewers for their broadcast of a debate between the controversial Arab-American psychiatrist *Wafa Sultan* and Egyptian Political analyst *Tal'at Remih*. The interview, which aired March 4<sup>th</sup> on their weekly program "Counter-trend," depicted a combative *Sultan* who described the Danish cartoons of the Prophet as "the first crack in the wall of a prison imposed by Islam and through which a sunray is allowed after a lengthy period of darkness... in order for Muslims to reexamine their teachings about terrorism." Al-Jazeera cancelled the re-broadcast of the program usually scheduled for the following day and apologized to their audience while at the same time insisting on their journalistic integrity. [PI Online](#) analyzed more than 930 commentaries posted by the predominantly conservative participants in Al-Jazeera.net over the past 24 hours – the majority (97%) considered the broadcast an insult to Islam and many of viewers (84%) blamed Al-Jazeera and the host *Faysal Al-Qasim* for inviting her despite her well-known views and for not terminating the broadcast when *Sultan* began to criticize the prophet and Islam.

Source: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/19840B5E-1347-4A29-B12E-0F3847836199.htm> Date : 3/6/2008



## Al-Sadr Decides to Seclude Himself and Acknowledges Dissension in the Ranks

In a statement issued this Friday, the *Shi'a* leader *Moqtada Al-Sadr* told his supporters that his absence from the scene over the past 9 months is a personal choice he made to allow himself time to concentrate on his Islamic studies and on reorganizing his movement. He acknowledged, however, that dissension among the ranks of *Al-Mahdi's* army exists. He states that many of those closest to him are pursuing their personal agenda by establishing an independent and dominant faction. He is also quoted as attributing his reclusion to his lack of success in liberating Iraq and his need to renew his religious devotion to God in accordance with his father's teaching. It is know that *Al-Sadr* has for some time feared for his life. He is believed to be in the city of *Qum* in Iran, although his spokesman has denied it. While *Al-Sadr* extended the *Al-Mahdi's* Army truce for six more months, it is unclear how much power he still exercises over the army and how many splinter groups have formed that could undermine the truce.

Source: <http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&issueno=10693&article=461809> Date : 3/9/2008



## First Woman Allowed to Perform Marriages in Egypt

By a court decree, *Amal Sulayman* became the first woman to hold the title of *ma'dhun*, a position which allows her to perform the registration of Islamic marriages. *Sulayman* was selected among eleven applicants in the *Sharqiyah* province, among which she was the only woman. She was quoted as saying that she was proud of her appointment, which represents a sign that women are being treated by the government as "citizens rather than females." The married woman and mother of three stated that with her masters degree in law and religious principles she was the best qualified for the job. Several Muslim scholars, from *Al-Azhar* in Egypt and from other Islamic countries, objected to the appointment. In Islam, the marriage registration can be performed anywhere, but it has become customary for some to execute it in a Mosque. It is this fact that raised the controversy because, under Islam, menstruating women are not allowed to go to the Mosque, pray or touch the Quran. The decision was also criticized by those who object to the appointment of women judges in Egypt and consider the job of *ma'dhun* part of a judge's role. In contrast, the few Muslim scholars who were in favor of the appointment, indicated that they consider the position of *ma'dhun* to be an administrative rather than a legal one. It is also worth noting that, despite such arguments, last year Egypt appointed thirty women as judges.

Source: <http://www.middle-east-online.com/?id=59137> Date: 3/7/2008 and <http://www.alwafd.org/v3/News/NewsDetail.php?id=1375&type=accident> Date: 3/8/2008

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