



This copy is for your personal non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies of Toronto Star content for distribution to colleagues, clients or customers, or inquire about permissions/licensing, please go to: [www.TorontoStarReprints.com](http://www.TorontoStarReprints.com)

# Canada tells Muslim speaker to stay home, imam says

Toronto Islamic conference headliner Zakir Naik has been told he will be turned away if he tries to enter Canada, imam Said Ragaeh said Tuesday.

By **JOHN GODDARD**

**NOOR JAVED** Staff Reporters

Tues., June 22, 2010

Muslim televangelist Zakir Naik has been told he will be turned away if he tries to enter Canada, a Toronto imam said Tuesday.

Banned from entering Britain last week, Naik is scheduled to headline the three-day Journey of Faith conference July 2-4 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

But over the weekend, a Canadian embassy official in New Delhi phoned Naik, who lives in Mumbai, to say he will be refused entry, said conference chairman Said Ragaeh.

At the same time, nothing was put in writing, Ragaeh said.

"We have no confirmation yet. No one has told us anything," he said. "There is no file number, no official letter, nothing."

On a Canadian visit last year, Naik received a five-year entry visa, which is still valid, said Ragaeh, who says they will continue to promote Naik as the conference headliner until he is given official notice of the ban.

Last Friday, the new British Home Secretary Theresa May denied entry to Naik saying "numerous comments" of his amounted to "unacceptable behaviour."

He had been quoted as saying: "If (Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden) is fighting the enemies of Islam, I am for him," in a YouTube video titled "Zakir Naik — Specious explanation about bin

Laden.” “If he is terrorizing the terrorists, if he is terrorizing America the terrorist, the biggest terrorist, every Muslim should be a terrorist,” Naik says in the 2007 video.

In other videos, Naik advocates death to homosexuals and to Muslims who leave Islam. In another, he lays out rules on how a Muslim man can beat his wife.

Speaking at a news conference in India on Tuesday, Naik said he would appeal the decision of the British government by approaching the British high court.

His brother Naik Mohammad, told the *Star* that his brother had not been told that he had been banned from Canada. He added that any such ban would not be able to stand up to a legal challenge, because his quotes about terrorism were made 1996, long before bin Laden orchestrated the 9/11 terror attacks.

“In modern democracies, you don’t pass judgment without hearing from the party,” said Mohammad.

Canadian immigration officials would not confirm if Naik has been denied entry into Canada. The Privacy Act prevents government officials from commenting.

Ragaeh said he knows Naik as a man of peace.

“If he did in fact say those comments, then he should not have done so,” he said.

Other Muslims lauded the ban.

“We do not want to see him in Canada,” said Calgary imam Syed Soharwardy, founder of Muslims Against Terrorism. “I am asking people not to blame Islam and Muslims. (Naik and others) are spreading their ideology, not Islam, under the guise of Islam.”

Naik is considered one of the 100 most powerful Indians. His satellite television network, Peace TV, claims up to 50 million viewers in 125 countries.

With files from Rick Westhead

