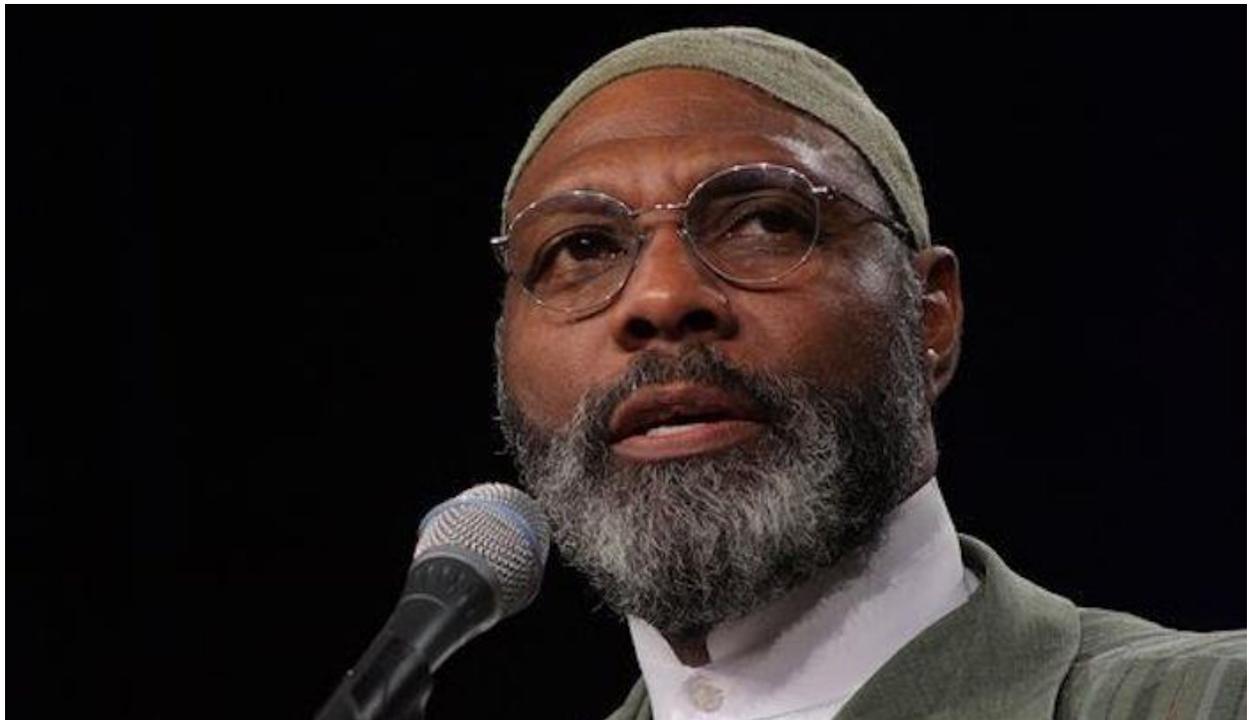


## Support for Jihadists coming to the Heartland?

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Iowa State Representative Ako Abdul-Samad recently announced that he is bringing the American Muslim Alliance (AMA) to Des Moines, where it will have its new headquarters. He also plans for Des Moines to host AMA's national convention in 2018.

Iowans are known for their friendliness and "Iowa nice." So what is this organization they are expected to welcome?

The AMA was founded as a non-profit organization in the 1994 “[with a mission of creating a better understanding of the faith and bring a cohesiveness across religions.](#)” Agha Saeed was its founder and the first chairman.

But over the years AMA apparently fell on hard times. Abdul-Samad [became AMA Chairman in 2015](#). He has been [affiliated](#) with AMA for about ten years, and he now says the organization needs a “[new face](#).”

So what did AMA’s “old face” look like? Consider the following:

AMA wanted Muslim-Americans to get more involved in American politics. But there was a problem in 2000 when they became involved in Hillary Clinton’s New York Senate race. This is from an October 2000 *New York Times* [article](#):

*Hillary Rodham Clinton said yesterday that she would return \$50,000 in political contributions received at a fundraising event sponsored by a Muslim organization based in California.*

*Mrs. Clinton said she was offended by remarks attributed to members of the organization, the American Muslim Alliance. The group’s president [Agha Saeed] has been quoted as defending a United Nations resolution that he said allowed for the use of armed force by Palestinians against Israel, while other members have been accused of making anti-Semitic remarks...“The statements that are attributed to the organization and some of its members are offensive and outrageous,” she said.*

Former New York Mayor Ed Koch later [had this to say](#) about the matter:

*“This was a vicious, dirty trick,” said Koch, referring to Muslim groups opposed to Israel. “Their intent was to smear her and convey that instead of being pro-Israeli, she is pro-Arafat. They are trying to destroy her. It is an obvious dirty trick, and it should get the back of our hand.*

It takes a lot of “offensive and outrageous” remarks for a politician to return \$50,000 in campaign contributions. It would be interesting to know what the AMA and some of its members had said about Jews and Israel.

On the [AMA website](#) is a picture of Mohamed T. (M.T.) Mehdi standing with Malcolm X (here is a [screenshot](#) of this as of June 25th). Mehdi played a major role in the founding of the National Council on Islamic Affairs and was influential in Malcolm X being allowed to make a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964 after converting to Islam.

But Mehdi was an interesting figure for other reasons. He actually said that Sirhan Sirhan was [justified](#) in his 1968 killing of Robert Kennedy:

*Apologists for Sirhan quickly sprang up. For example, Mohamed T. Mehdi, secretary-general of the Action Committee on American-Arab Relations, published “Kennedy and Sirhan: Why.”*

*According to Mehdi, Sirhan’s act had a rational rationale: “The one and only reasonable explanation for Sirhan’s decision is to bring the tragedy of Palestine to the attention of the American people so that the people of the United States would not continue the strange policy of helping Zionist Jews of Europe and elsewhere go to the home of Christian and Moslem people of Palestine.”*

*Mehdi concluded that Sirhan had acted in justifiable self-defense: “[W]hen Robert F. Kennedy supports Israel against the Arabs, he is assuming the role of an Israeli high ranking official.... Sirhan was defending himself against those 50 Phantom jets Kennedy was sending to Israel.”*

Mehdi later said that both Kennedy and Sirhan were “[victims of Zionism](#),” and that Sirhan was a “[political prisoner](#)” who should be released.

In 1975 Mehdi [had this to say](#) about the PLO killing of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich:

*“We have condemned the PLO terrorism at Munich and we have condemned the causes.” He said the Israeli athletes had displaced Palestinians at the games. “Israel can never ever have peace if they continue to steal land,” Mehdi said.*

And Mehdi [later](#) “became an adviser to Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, the radical Muslim cleric linked to the World Trade Center bombing.”

This is an interesting background for someone so prominently displayed on the AMA website.

As a non-profit organization (EIN 94-3208595), AMA is required to file an annual report with the Internal Revenue Service (a Form 990). However, the last time the AMA filed a Form 990 was in 2010. Why have there been no filings since 2010, and does the AMA still have non-profit status?

Over the years the AMA has taken on some interesting causes:

## Dr. Aafia Siddiqui (“Lady al-Qaeda”)

On the [AMA website](#) the first of a series of rotating pictures is one of eight individuals on-stage in front of a banner stating: “Due Process & Equal Justice, The Tragic Case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, 26 August 2012” (here is a [screenshot](#) of this as of June 25th). This banner referred to a seminar put on by the “[Aafia Movement](#).” So who is Aafia Siddiqui?

Siddiqui was born in Pakistan in 1972 and later moved to the United States to attend college, earning a doctorate from Brandeis University. She was married and had three children. After the 9-11 attack she divorced her husband and moved back to Pakistan. While there she [reportedly](#) married a nephew of Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the mastermind of the 9-11 attack.

She disappeared for five years. In 2008 she was captured by Afghan authorities while carrying handwritten notes about mass casualty attacks on several New York City locations. U.S. officials went to question her. She grabbed an Army officer’s rifle, screamed “Allah Akbar” and “Get the f— out of here.” She opened fire, missing the officials. One returned fire and wounded her twice.

In 2010 she was tried in U.S. federal court on attempted murder and assault charges. As a [Newsweek article](#) described it:

*There, she did herself no favors. She was outspoken, demanding that anyone of Jewish origin be excluded from the jury. “If they have a Zionist or Israeli background...they are all mad at me,” she told Judge Richard Berman, who had to ask her to leave the court room at some points because of her outbursts. “They should be excluded if you want to be fair.... This is a verdict coming from Israel, not America...”*

A jury found her guilty and she was sentenced to 86 years in prison.

In 2012 Agha Saeed [stated that](#) “our most highly respected Sister, Dr. Aafia, is the most prominent ‘prisoner of war,’” and the AMA appears to have participated in the seminar that year calling for Siddiqui to be freed.

Also in 2012 a [press conference](#) was held in which supporters of Siddiqui called for her release, and also called on the Pakistani government to issue visas to a list of individuals, including Ako Abdul-Samad, so they could

*visit Pakistan and educate the Pakistani public about the reservoirs of goodwill for Dr Aafia that exist even in the united States.*

In 2013, both Saeed and Abdul-Samad signed a [letter](#) to “President Barack Hussain Obama & Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif” calling for an end to the “injustice” and to allow Siddiqui to return to Pakistan.

It is interesting to note that according to [Newsweek](#) and the [Washington Post](#), ISIS, the Taliban, and other terrorist groups made repeated request for Siddiqui in hostage exchanges.

### **Dr. Mazen al-Najjar**

In April 2013, then-AMA Chairman Agha Saeed wrote an article titled [Political prisoners in the USA](#). In this article he reflected on a time back in 2000 when he discussed the plight of his “dear friend,” Dr. Mazen al-Najjar, who had been in federal prison for three years without having a trial. Saeed considered al-Najjar to be among the “dozens of Muslim American political prisoners” in US prisons.

But al-Najjar was not exactly a “political prisoner.” According to a November 2001 [statement](#) released by the U.S. Department of Justice:

*The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) today arrested Mazen Al Najjar, in Tampa, Florida. The arrest is based on a final order of deportation...Al Najjar was ordered deported because he violated his visa and was ineligible for any form of relief from deportation. Al Najjar also had established ties to terrorist organizations and held leadership positions in the Tampa-based Islamic Concern Project (ICP) and the World and Islam Studies Enterprise...*

*The ICP and the World and Islam Studies Enterprise are front organizations that raised funds for militant Islamic Palestinian groups such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas. The PIJ, designated by the Secretary of State as a terrorist organization, has claimed responsibility for several acts of terrorism including at least two deadly attacks on Israeli citizens this month. Furthermore, Al Najjar’s Tampa-based ICP was responsible for petitioning for other known terrorists to obtain visas to enter the United States.*

Saeed’s “dear friend” was deported to Lebanon in 2002.

### **Sami al-Arian**

In 2003 federal prosecutors in Florida filed an indictment against al-Arian alleging he was the leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in the United States and complicit in the murder of civilians. PIJ was founded in the Gaza Strip in the 1979 with the goal of destroying Israel; it had been declared a terrorist organization under the Clinton

administration. After a lengthy trial, the jury acquitted Al-Arian on 8 out of 17 charges, and failed to reach a verdict on the rest.

In 2006 al-Arian [agreed to plead guilty](#) to one count of conspiracy to provide services to the PIJ; he also admitted that Mazen al-Najjar, Saeed's "dear friend," was associated with the PIJ. He was sentenced to 19 months in prison, to be followed by deportation. But in 2008 a federal grand jury indicted him on two counts of criminal contempt for refusing to testify in a case that involved local Muslim groups and their ties to terrorism. In 2014 the contempt charges were dropped. The next year al-Arian was deported to Turkey.

A May 2008 [online article](#) at the Free Sami al-Arian website included this statement:

*Agha Saeed, chair of the American Muslim Taskforce for Civil Rights and Elections and a colleague of Dr. Al-Arian's for many years, reflects on the current situation. "Today, Dr. Al-Arian, one of the most prominent political prisoners in the United States, symbolizes the struggle for freedom of Palestine. Tomorrow, let me predict, based on his heroic sacrifices, he will be recognized as a major 21st century civil rights leader in the United States."*

In 2012 Agha Saeed [referred to al-Arian](#) as "the most distinguished political prisoners [sic] in the United States." Saeed also [referred to him](#) as among "the canonical figures" and "the legendary rights leaders."

On the [AMA website](#) there are two pictures of Saeed and Abdul-Samad standing in small, friendly groups with al-Arian (here is a [screenshot](#) of this as of June 25<sup>th</sup>). There appears to have been no reluctance on the part of Saeed and Abdul-Samad in getting their picture taken with al-Arian.

Ako Abdul-Samad wants to put a new face on the AMA he is moving to Des Moines. Considering the earlier anti-Jewish and anti-Israel rhetoric, and support for those involved with terrorist organizations, perhaps Abdul-Samad should instead be concentrating on a new heart for the American Muslim Alliance.