Encourage all to nurture safer communities

Dr. Tom Palaima
Regular Contributor

Dwight D. Eisenhower was quoted as saying, "If we all learned by heart the Constitution, we would not need to use it." This sentiment is echoed by community leaders and mental health professionals today. The Colorado theater shooting is a stark reminder that the Constitution is not always enough to prevent harm. While some have criticized the Constitution for its failure to prevent this tragedy, others have pointed to the need for a stronger sense of community and social cohesion to address such issues.

The tragedy in Aurora, Colorado, has sparked discussions about the role of the Constitution in preventing future incidents. Some have argued that the Constitution is not sufficient to address the complex issues surrounding gun control and mental health. Others believe that stronger community norms and social cohesion can help prevent such tragedies.

It is important to remember that the Constitution is just one part of the solution. We must also address the root causes of violence, including mental health issues, access to firearms, and a culture that often glamorizes violence. By working together, we can create safer communities for all.

Teach your children to love and care for their friends. Tell them that troubled people need help and that we can all work together to prevent tragedies. By creating a culture of kindness and empathy, we can make our communities safer for all.

We must also continue to support our schools and communities in providing resources and support for those who need it. By working together, we can make a difference and create a brighter future for all.

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Muslims in north debate fasting time

With Ramadan falling in summer, residents near Arctic could go 20 hours sans food

By David Mac Dougall
Associated Press

ROVANENIEMI, FINLAND — How do you observe dawn-to-dusk fasting when there is neither dawn nor dusk? It's a question facing a small but growing number of Muslims celebrating the holy month of Ramadan on the northern tip of Europe, where the sun barely dips below the horizon at this time of year.

In Rovaniemi, a northern Finland town that straddles the Arctic Circle, the sun rises around 2:30 a.m. and sets about 11:30 p.m. That means Muslims who observe Ramadan could go without food or drink for 20 hours.

"I think it has some common sense," said Mahmoud Said, 27, who came to Finland from Kenya three years ago. "To Said, that means fol- lowing the fasting hours of the nearest Muslim country: Turkey.

"It involves 14 or 15 hours of fasting, which is OK, it's not bad," said Said. He esti- mates there are a little over 100 Muslims in Rovaniemi, mainly from Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan.

There is no unanimity on how to deal with the fast- ing issue, which is becoming more pressing as more Mus- lim immigrants find their way to areas near the Arctic.

In Alaska, the Islamic Community Center of Anchorage, "after consulta- tion with scholars," advises Muslims to follow the fasting hours of Mecca, Islam's holly- est city.

The Dublin-based Eu- ropean Council for Fatwa and Research, however, said that Muslims should follow the local sunrise and sunset, even up north. "The question on how to do this in the north has been going on for a few years," said Omar Mustafa, chair- man of the Islamic Associa- tion of Sweden. "We fast ac- cording to the sun. As long as it is possible to tell dusk from dawn, this applies to 90 percent of Sweden's Mus- lims.

The few Muslims who live so far north that they are awake in 24-hour daylight

should follow the daylight hours of the closest city in Sweden where you can tell dawn from dusk, he said. Kaltouma Abuak and her family came to Finland from Sudan's Darfur region four years ago. She opted to ob- serve the local sunrise and sunset times before breaking the fast. She said, "To Said, that means fol- lowing the fasting hours of the nearest Muslim country: Turkey.

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