

Islamic TV Host: Murder People Who Insult Muhammad

Britain's broadcasting watchdog has fined an Islamic TV channel 85,000 pounds (\$132,490) for inciting violence after a program host said it was acceptable, and even a duty, for Muslims to murder anyone who insults the Prophet Muhammad.

In a statement, the regulator known as Ofcom (short for Office of Communications) said the fine was imposed due to the serious nature of statements made by a presenter on May 3 last year.

Noor TV broadcasts in English, Urdu and Punjabi. It is based in Birmingham and owned by Al Ehya Digital Television, which broadcasts both in the U.K. and internationally on Sky TV. The station's mission is to "present a balanced, moderate and true face of Islam to both Muslims and non-Muslim communities across the globe."

Birmingham is England's second-largest city, and census figures show approximately 14.3 percent of the population is Muslim. Thousands of young Muslims watch Noor TV.

On the program in question, "Paigham-e-Mustafa," which means "Message from Mustafa," presenter Allama Muhammad Farooq Nizami answered questions from viewers about a wide range of issues relating to Islam.

One caller asked in Urdu what punishment was due for anyone showing disrespect to the Prophet Muhammad.

Sitting alone in the studio, Nizami looked straight into the camera and replied: "One has to choose one's own method. Our way is the peaceful way but when someone crosses the limits, faith-based emotions are instigated. The mission of our life is to protect the sanctity of our beloved Lord. May Allah

accept us wherever there is a need to kill a blasphemer. We are ready, and should be ready at all times, to kill a blasphemer.”

Immediately, several viewers contacted Ofcom and complained.

In addition to imposing a fine, Ofcom ordered the TV station not to repeat the segment and to broadcast a statement of its findings.

Al Ehya Digital fired Nizami in May this year for promoting personal political opinions and supporting a violent act.

In its statement, Ofcom said Al Ehya Digital has not yet broadcast an apology or condemnation of Nizami’s remarks and appears not to have recognized the gravity of the comments made by Nizami.

But despite this, the regulator levied Al Ehya Digital a fraction of the 250,000 pounds (\$389,677) it could have been fined because it wished to protect the station’s right to “freedom of expression.”

A spokesman for Al Ehya Digital was unavailable for comment.

Last December, Radio Asian Fever, in Leeds was fined 4,000 pounds (\$6,235) for breaching broadcasting rules involving a presenter called “Sister Ruby Ramadan.”

She told listeners that homosexuals should be beaten and tortured.