Fast-tracking the Islamic Approach to HIV/AIDS – the role of Imams: experience from Uganda

**Speaker:** Sheikh Ali Lubowa – Imam and Hospital Administrator Saidina Abubakar Islamic Hospital.

**Institutions:** Federation of Islamic Medical Associations (FIMA) HIV/AIDS Resource Centre hosted by the Islamic Medical Association of Uganda (IMAU) at Saidina Abubakar Islamic Hospital.
Persistently low youth knowledge levels on HIV underscore the need to scale-up the provision of good sexuality education, both at primary and secondary levels and through non-formal programs that reach out of school children and young people. Ensuring that young people receive a quality education is correlated with better health outcomes, in particular for young women completing secondary education.
Main Point

- It has been observed at the FIMA HIV/AIDS Resource Centre hosted by IMAU, that Imams and Sheikhs can be trained to deliver sermons that explain and expound the Islamic basis for the scientific evidence showing that high levels of practice of the five pillars of Islam is associated with lower HIV infection rates.
Main point

The five pillars include: 1. Believing in Allah and Prophet Muhammad (SAW); 2. Performing regular prayers (Salat); 3. Giving out one’s resources for charity (Zakat); 4. Fasting in Ramadhan; and 5. Performing pilgrimage to Makka (HAJ). These pillars form the backbone of the Islamic Approach to HIV/AIDS.
Main Point

In the Holy Qur’an, Allah commands believers to obey Allah, the Messenger and those charged with authority who include Imams and Sheikhs. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said that scholars who include Imams and Sheikhs are the inheritors of the prophets. It follows that Muslims should listen to and follow guidance from well-educated and well-trained Imams and Sheikhs regarding HIV/AIDS prevention and control.
Imams and Sheikhs should be educated and trained in communicating and delivering sermons and messages to the Muslim community that correctly, consistently and continuously emphasize the role and benefits of high levels of practice of the five pillars of Islam in fast-tracking the HIV/AIDS response to zero new HIV infections among Muslims.
Action required from leaders

- Education and training of Imams and Sheikhs regarding fast-tracking the Islamic Approach to HIV/AIDS, should be supported by individuals, families, communities, government, non-governmental organizations and international organizations including UNAIDS.

- Trainers should be trained to educate and train Imams and Sheikhs. Imams and Sheikhs should be supported with human resources, infrastructure, logistics and financing to facilitate their work of educating the communities.
Action required from Muslim leaders

- Imams and Sheikhs should correctly, consistently and continuously communicate and deliver messages to the Muslim communities that inspire them to struggle to achieve, maintain and adhere to high levels of practice of the five pillars of Islam as a way of fast-tracking the HIV response to zero new HIV infections.
Action required from Muslims

Muslims should listen to and follow the guidance of well-educated and well-trained Imams and Sheikhs on HIV/AIDS issues.
Muslim health–professionals in Islamic Medical Associations should spearhead the training and education of Imams and Sheikhs on fast–tracking the Islamic approach to HIV/AIDS issues, by mobilizing the relevant stakeholders and forming working partnerships with them.
IMAU Training Hospital
IMAU Trained Imam
IMAU mobilized partnership of Govt Minister and trained Imam