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## **The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

“1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers”

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## **International conference on Islam opens**

URL: [http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0511/051116-islam\\_conference-e.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0511/051116-islam_conference-e.html)

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**16 November, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **International conference on Islam opens**

Top Islamic leaders are defending their religion at an international conference on Islam, being held in Vienna, Austria. Most of the talking has been about how terrorism is giving Islam a bad image. The Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said Islam is being “distorted” by terrorist groups, who “trampled on the rights” of ordinary Muslims. He said he was sad at the current killing and devastation in his country. He blamed al-Qaeda for causing ordinary Iraqis such enormous pain. He urged all Islamic leaders to spread the message from the Koran that “he who kills the innocent will go to hell”.

Mr. Talabani also challenged Europe’s opposition to the US-led occupation of Iraq. He said war against al-Qaeda was the only way to bring peace and freedom to Iraq. He warned that people would suffer worldwide if terrorists defeated freedom in his country. He said terrorism would grow if action was not taken now. Afghanistan’s leader Hamid Karzai supported him by reminding people of the everyday horrors of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. He said the country had “become hell” and that Saddam had “waged a quiet war” against his own people by using chemical and biological weapons.

## WARM-UPS

**1. MY RELIGION:** Chat to your partners about your religion. Why do you follow that religion? Do you think it is better than other religions? Do you like other religions? Would you think about changing to another religion? Does religion do more good than harm in the world?

**2. ISLAMIC INVENTIONS:** Where would we be without the following inventions, all invented by Muslims?

- The windmill
- International banking
- The jury system
- The telescope
- Algebra
- The watch
- Soap
- Glass
- The compass
- The numbers 0 to 9

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Islamic leaders / religion / Vienna / terrorism / rights / Muslims / the Koran / Iraq / Hamid Karzai / hell / Afghanistan / biological weapons / chemical weapons*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. ISLAM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "Islam". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. SECTS:** What do you know about these sects of Islam? Talk to other students and find out what you know about each sect and the differences between them:

*Sunni Shiite Druze Alawi Ismaili Kurds Sufi Wahhabi Ahmadiyyah Kharijis*

**6. ISLAMIC COUNTRIES:** There are 1.3 billion Muslims in the world. The Organization of the Islamic Conference has 57 members. Talk in pairs / groups about what you know about the following:

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Cameroon
- Egypt
- Indonesia
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Maldives
- Palestine
- Senegal
- Saudi Arabia
- Turkey

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Islamic leaders are meeting for a conference in Australia.         | T / F |
| b. Talks have been about how to give Islam a good image.              | T / F |
| c. Iraq's president said al-Qaeda is causing enormous pain in Iraq.   | T / F |
| d. The Koran says, "he who kills the innocent will go to hell".       | T / F |
| e. Iraq's president strongly opposes the US-led occupation of Iraq.   | T / F |
| f. Afghanistan's present strongly disagreed with Iraq's president.    | T / F |
| g. Afghanistan's president said Iraq was "hell" under Saddam Hussein. | T / F |
| h. Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against his own people.       | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| a. defending   | terror          |
| b. talking     | twisted         |
| c. distorted   | beat            |
| d. trampled on | questioned      |
| e. devastation | globally        |
| f. challenged  | walked over     |
| g. defeated    | destruction     |
| h. worldwide   | fought          |
| i. horrors     | sticking up for |
| j. waged       | discussion      |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Islamic leaders are defending    | ordinary Iraqis such enormous pain |
| b. terrorism is giving              | a quiet war against his own people |
| c. trampled on the rights           | Islam a bad image                  |
| d. He blamed al-Qaeda for causing   | the US-led occupation of Iraq      |
| e. he who kills the innocent        | of ordinary Muslims                |
| f. Europe's opposition to           | terrorists defeated freedom        |
| g. people would suffer worldwide if | their religion                     |
| h. terrorism would grow if action   | of Saddam Hussein's Iraq           |
| i. the everyday horrors             | will go to hell                    |
| j. waged                            | was not taken now                  |

## **WHILE READING / LISTENING**

**WHOOPS:** Four of the eight words in bold in each paragraph are mistakes. With your partner(s), find them and agree on better words.

### **International conference on Islam opens**

Top Islamic leaders are **attacking** their religion at an international conference on Islam, being held in Vienna, Austria. Most of the **stalking** has been about how terrorism is giving Islam a **bad** image. The Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said Islam is being “distorted” by terrorist groups, who “trampled on the **rights**” of ordinary Muslims. He said he was sad at the current killing and devastation in his country. He blamed al-Qaeda for causing ordinary Iraqis such **tiny** pain. He **urged** all Islamic leaders to spread the **massage** from the Koran that “he who kills the innocent will go to **hell**”.

Mr. Talabani also **challenger** Europe’s opposition to the US-led occupation of Iraq. He said war against al-Qaeda was the only way to bring **peace** and freedom to Iraq. He warned that people would **surf** worldwide if terrorists defeated freedom in his country. He said terrorism would **grow** if action was not taken now. Afghanistan’s leader Hamid Karzai supported him by **reminding** people of the everyday horrors of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. He said the country had “become **hall**” and that Saddam had “waged a quiet war” against his **own** people by using chemical and biological **medicines**.

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **International conference on Islam opens**

Top Islamic leaders are \_\_\_\_\_ their religion at an international conference on Islam, being held in Vienna, Austria. Most of the talking has been about how terrorism is giving Islam a \_\_\_\_\_. The Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said Islam is being “distorted” by terrorist groups, who “\_\_\_\_\_ on the rights” of ordinary Muslims. He said he was sad at the current killing and devastation in his country. He blamed al-Qaeda for causing ordinary Iraqis such \_\_\_\_\_ pain. He urged all Islamic leaders to spread the message from the Koran that “he who kills the \_\_\_\_\_ will go to hell”.

Mr. Talabani also challenged Europe’s \_\_\_\_\_ to the US-led occupation of Iraq. He said war against al-Qaeda was the only way to \_\_\_\_\_ and freedom to Iraq. He warned that people would suffer worldwide if terrorists \_\_\_\_\_ freedom in his country. He said terrorism would grow if action was not taken now. Afghanistan’s leader Hamid Karzai supported him by \_\_\_\_\_ people of the everyday horrors of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. He said the country had “become hell” and that Saddam had “\_\_\_\_\_ a quiet war” against his own people by using chemical and biological \_\_\_\_\_.

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'Islamic' and 'leader'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WHOOPS:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "ISLAM" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about Islam.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| • defending | • challenged |
| • image     | • war        |
| • distorted | • grow       |
| • sad       | • horrors    |
| • pain      | • hell       |
| • hell      | • weapons    |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think are the main issues at the conference?
- c. What do you think the conference will achieve?
- d. Is it important that the presidents of Iraq and Afghanistan are at the conference?
- e. What do you think al-Qaeda thinks of the leaders of Iraq and Afghanistan?
- f. If Iraq's president wants US troops to stay in Iraq, shouldn't European countries agree?
- g. Do you think the Sunnis and Shias can leave peacefully, side by side?
- h. What do Western nations need to do to make relations with Muslim nations and people better?
- i. What questions would you like to ask Iraq's president?
- j. What do you think his answers would be?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think Islam is given a bad image in the Western media?
- d. Do you think terrorists have "distorted" Islam?
- e. What do you know about the history of wars between the Christian and Muslim worlds?
- f. Would the world be safer if Saddam Hussein were still in power?
- g. Do you think Iraq will be a safe country soon?
- h. Do you think other countries in the Middle East will change?
- i. Do you think Afghanistan is a success story?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?



## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the conference on Islam in Vienna. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

**3. MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS:** Make a poster outlining the history between Muslims and Christians. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

**4. PREDICTIONS:** Make a list of predictions about the future of the Middle East and the war on terror. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Discuss which of your predictions are most likely to come true.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. F      c. T      d. T      e. F      f. F      g. T      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| a. defending   | sticking up for |
| b. talking     | discussion      |
| c. distorted   | twisted         |
| d. trampled on | walked over     |
| e. devastation | destruction     |
| f. challenged  | questioned      |
| g. defeated    | beat            |
| h. worldwide   | globally        |
| i. horrors     | terror          |
| j. waged       | fought          |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Islamic leaders are defending    | their religion                     |
| b. terrorism is giving              | Islam a bad image                  |
| c. trampled on the rights           | of ordinary Muslims                |
| d. He blamed al-Qaeda for causing   | ordinary Iraqis such enormous pain |
| e. he who kills the innocent        | will go to hell                    |
| f. Europe's opposition to           | the US-led occupation of Iraq      |
| g. people would suffer worldwide if | terrorists defeated freedom        |
| h. terrorism would grow if action   | was not taken now                  |
| i. the everyday horrors             | of Saddam Hussein's Iraq           |
| j. waged                            | a quiet war against his own people |

### WHOOPS:

#### International conference on Islam opens

Top Islamic leaders are **defending** their religion at an international conference on Islam, being held in Vienna, Austria. Most of the **talking** has been about how terrorism is giving Islam a bad image. The Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said Islam is being "distorted" by terrorist groups, who "trampled on the rights" of ordinary Muslims. He said he was sad at the current killing and devastation in his country. He blamed al-Qaeda for causing ordinary Iraqis such **enormous** pain. He urged all Islamic leaders to spread the **message** from the Koran that "he who kills the innocent will go to hell".

Mr. Talabani also **challenged** Europe's opposition to the US-led occupation of Iraq. He said war against al-Qaeda was the only way to bring peace and freedom to Iraq. He warned that people would **suffer** worldwide if terrorists defeated freedom in his country. He said terrorism would grow if action was not taken now. Afghanistan's leader Hamid Karzai supported him by reminding people of the everyday horrors of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. He said the country had "become **hell**" and that Saddam had "waged a quiet war" against his own people by using chemical and biological **weapons**.