

**Rahmatan lil ‘Alamin (Blessing for All Creation)  
Global Counter-Extremism Network**

**Egypt**

CAIRO, Egypt – In May of 2008, LibForAll Foundation expanded its operations to Egypt, home to al-Azhar – the world’s oldest university – and one of the key centers of Sunni Islam. A LibForAll delegation traveled under the auspices the Egyptian and Indonesian foreign ministries, for the purpose of interviewing key religious leaders for LibForAll’s *Lautan Wahyu (Ocean of Revelation)* television series, and to expand LibForAll’s network in the Arab heartland.

The Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar University and Grand Imam of al-Azhar Mosque – Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi (below, right) – blessed LibForAll Foundation’s activities, and its mission to promote a pluralistic and tolerant understanding of Islam, at peace with itself and the modern world.



From right to left: Grand Shaykh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi; LibForAll CEO C. Holland Taylor; Shaykh Mohamad Gameaha of al-Azhar; Indonesian embassy representative; Indonesian film director Uli Rahman

As Al-Ahram – one of the oldest (est. 1875) and most widely-read newspapers in the Arab world – reported: “LibForAll Foundation is an NGO that cares deeply about Islam and Muslims. The foundation strives to express, clarify and widely disseminate a true understanding of Islam not only to non-Muslims, but also to Muslims in general. LibForAll aims to present the moderate and tolerant face of Islam, and explain the importance of [Muslims] returning to the essence of Islamic teachings which, until now, have been poorly understood by many groups [both in Islam and the West].”



Journalists including *Al-Ahram* reporter Alaa Amer (center), interviewing C. Holland Taylor



The LibForAll film crew interviewed a number of key Muslim figures in Egypt, including Dr. Kamal Abdul Magd (above), and Dr. Hassan Hanafi (seated, right), two of the nation's most widely-published experts on Islam.

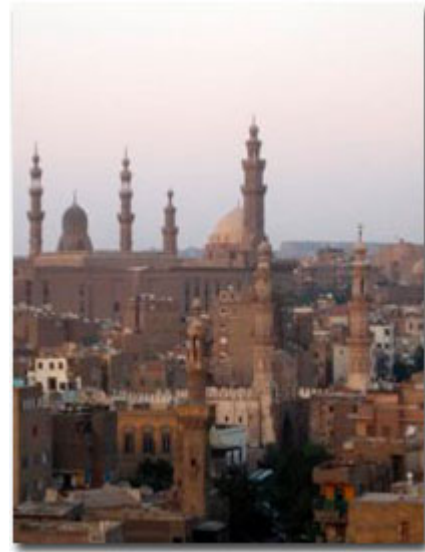


Sites filmed for the television series include the tomb of Sayyid Hossein, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (left) and the mosque of al-Azhar (below)





LibForAll crew filming the pyramids in Giza (above) and the skyline of Islamic Cairo (right)



President of al-Azhar University and Chairman of the Egyptian Parliament's Committee on Religion Ahmed Omar Hashem (left) welcomed LibForAll's presence in Egypt, and offered full cooperation in future activities. Dr. Hashem has been deeply involved in Egyptian efforts to persuade former Islamic Jihad terrorists to renounce the ideology of religious extremism.

The Deputy Minister of Religious Endowments (right) likewise praised LibForAll's work, setting the stage for continued expansion of LibForAll activities in the Middle East, where government cooperation can prove vital in efforts to impact society as a whole.





Maryam Ishaq al-Khalifa Sharief – great-granddaughter of the 19th century Sudanese nationalist leader known as al-Mahdi – provided LibForAll’s television series with a deeply illuminating view of Islam as *rahmatan lil ‘alamin* (a blessing for all creation), rooted in a pluralistic, tolerant and profoundly spiritual worldview.

“When asked his opinion about the actions of Muslims that violate the teachings of Islam, the Grand Shaykh replied that this constitutes a gross error which stems from Muslims’ own lack of knowledge and understanding of Islam, and the importance of good acts in keeping with its teachings. In fact, within Islam, good acts [towards others] are no less important than the act of worshipping God Himself.”

~ *Al-Ahram*, May 27, 2008

