



MEDIA ADVISORY

ZAKARIA AMARA'S CHANGE OF HEART IN PRISON HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR TOLERANCE AND DIVERSITY TRAINING IN CANADA

For immediate release

Toronto – January 18, 2010 – “The apology of convicted terrorist Zakaria Amara highlights the need for diversity training and tolerance to avoid the formation of groups like the Toronto 18,” according to Avi Benlolo, President and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies.

Amara, sentenced today to life in prison for his role as the leader of a plot to bomb downtown Toronto, was by his own admission led down the ‘path of extremism’ due to his ‘isolation from the real world’; it was only after he was befriended by a Jewish inmate that he began to question his own ideology.

“The moral of this story is that being isolated in our communities and cut off from the rich fabric of Canadian society is exactly the problem,” explains Benlolo. What is desperately needed is greater diversity training and more bridge building between our multicultural communities to help turn hostility to understanding and apprehension to acceptance,” he adds.

About Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies is a Canadian human rights organization dedicated to fostering tolerance and understanding through community involvement, educational outreach and social action. It has 25,000 members across Canada, and confronts important contemporary issues including racism, antisemitism, terrorism and genocide. The Center is affiliated with the world-wide, Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, an accredited Non-Government Organization with status at international agencies, including the United Nations, UNESCO, OSCE and the Council of Europe. With over 400,000 members of all faiths around the world, the Simon Wiesenthal Center has offices in New York, Miami, Paris, Jerusalem, Buenos Aires and Toronto.

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