



## Minneapolis Becomes First US City To Approve Muslim ‘Call To Prayer’ Broadcast By Loudspeaker

### Description

**USA: Minneapolis has become the first large city in the United States to allow the Muslim call to prayer or “adhan” to be broadcast to the wider community publicly by loudspeakers.**

The Muslim call to prayer is an Arabic chant that proclaims that God is great, or *Alahu Akhbar*, and that the Prophet Muhammad is his messenger on earth. Muslims in Minneapolis are celebrating the legalization of the call to prayer which requires Muslims to go to the closest mosque five times per day for prayers.

*“It’s a sign that we are here,”* said Yusuf Abdulle, who directs the Islamic Association of North America, a network of three dozen mostly East African mosques. Half of them are in Minnesota, home to rapidly growing numbers of refugees from war-torn Somalia since the late 1990s.

Abdulle said that when he arrived in the United States two decades ago, *“the first thing I missed was the adhan. We drop everything and answer the call of God.”*

AP [reports](#) the adhan declares that God is great and proclaims the Prophet Muhammad as his messenger. It exhorts men — women are not required — to go to the closest mosque five times a day for prayer, which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

Its cadences are woven into the rhythm of daily life in Muslim-majority countries, but it’s a newcomer to the streets of Minneapolis, which resonate with city traffic, the rumble of snowplows in winter and tornado siren drills in summer.

Americans have long debated the place of religious sound in public, especially when communities are

transformed by migration, said Isaac Weiner, a scholar of religious studies at Ohio State University.

*“What we take for granted and what stands out is informed by who we think of ourselves as a community,” he said. “We respond to sounds based on who’s making them.”*

That’s especially true when the sound is not a bell or a horn, but spoken words, as in the adhan.

“Hearing that voice, it’s a connection to God even if at work or in the fields or a classroom,” said Abdisalam Adam, who often prays at Dar Al-Hijrah. “It’s a balance of this world and the hereafter.”

[Dar Al-Hijrah got a special permit to broadcast](#) for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in spring 2020, when Minnesota was under a pandemic lockdown, so the faithful could hear the adhan from home, mosque director Wali Dirie said.

Soon it was resounding from speakers set up with the help of First Avenue, a nightclub made famous by Prince.

People thought they were dreaming and wept at their windows.

That community need led to the recent resolution authorizing the broadcasts more broadly. It establishes decibel levels and hourly limits in line with the city’s noise ordinance, meaning that the early-morning and late-night calls to prayer are only aired indoors.

At Dar Al-Hijrah now, elders call the prayer three times a day, drawing youth like Mohamad Mooh, 17, who arrived just five months ago. He said he wishes the broadcasts were even louder like back in Somalia, where the early morning calls woke him up.

*“I know it’s a little bit complicated because of the society,”* Mooh added after a recent packed prayer service.

Just like some Americans opposed church bells in the 19th century, the call to prayer has led to disputes over the years, from [Duke University](#) to Culver City, California. In Hamtramck, a small city surrounded by Detroit, councilors exempted religious sounds from the noise ordinance at a mosque’s request. Coming in the aftermath of 9/11, the amendment got embroiled in national controversy, but a referendum to revoke it failed.

In the predominantly Somali neighborhood of Cedar-Riverside, tucked between downtown and two college campuses, Dar Al-Hijrah mosque’s adhan has met no backlash.

Hoping to also prevent it, the Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center in south Minneapolis, which hosts some 1,000 men for Friday midday prayers, plans to hold meetings with neighbors before broadcasting publicly this summer.

*“We want Muslims to fully exist here in America,”* Hussein said, adding that the adhan is the *“last piece to make this home. It’s incredibly important for Muslims to know their religious rights are never infringed upon.”*

by Baxter Dmitry

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