

# ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION of NORTH AMERICA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

## Renowned Philosopher Dr. Cornel West Meets Michigan Leaders to Discuss the Palestinian Plight

Dearborn, MI - On Tuesday, December 19, Imam Mustapha Elturk, Ameer of IONA, and Naveed Ashraf, Director of Operations at IONA's masjid, recently attended a luncheon with a distinguished guest, Dr. Cornel West. The luncheon, organized by the Michigan Task Force for Palestine, gathered nearly two dozen influential leaders from Michigan's diverse community, including Khalid Turani, President of the Michigan Task Force for Palestine, Imad Hamad, Executive Director of the American Human Rights Council, and Abdallah Sheikh, a founding member and President of the Arab and Muslim Political Action Committee (AMPAC).

Dr. Cornel West, a notable American philosopher, theologian, and political activist, shared insights on the current situation in Gaza and the West Bank during the luncheon. Drawing from his background as a Christian Baptist, Dr. West, who previously marched in civil rights demonstrations, expressed admiration for iconic figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. He refrained from joining the Black Panther Party due to his Christian convictions, instead opting to serve in prison and church programs.

Known for his outspoken advocacy on the Palestinian cause, Dr. West has actively voiced his support for Palestinians without fostering hatred toward any community. His recent address in New York at demonstrations calling for a ceasefire in Gaza emphasized the importance of compassion for Palestinians while rejecting animosity toward others. He stressed, "Supporting Palestinians doesn't mean hating someone else; we aim to end the vicious Israeli occupation."

Dr. West has a history of engaging in civil disobedience, standing in solidarity with suffering Palestinians and Israelis. He has called for divestment from companies profiting from the Israeli occupation and advocated for justice for Palestinians.

A Harvard graduate in Near Eastern languages and civilization, Dr. West earned his Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from Princeton University, becoming the first African American to graduate from Princeton with a PhD in philosophy.

Imam Elturk praised Dr. West's commitment to advocating for the marginalized. "I have always admired Dr. West for his voice of the voiceless, speaking out on issues of injustice, racism and the plight of the Palestinians," Imam Elturk said. "We studied and analyzed his work in the Master's program for Social Justice at Marygrove College. He will get my vote" Imam Elturk added.

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(L to R) Imam Mustapha Elturk, Dr. Cornel West, and Naveed Ashraf

IONA's mission is to transform its members and help transform the surrounding communities to righteous, God-fearing people, who collectively strive for the highest moral standard and constantly seek forgiveness from our Creator to earn His pleasure. We seek His compassion and mercy in this life and in the hereafter. We rejuvenate our soul through internal struggle and spiritual exercise in worship of our creator God. The strength of our belief in God gives us the courage to establish good and forbid evil, thus promoting a system of justice for all mankind.