



## Islamic Speakers Bureau Tips for Teachers #2

*Understanding Students of Middle Eastern & Muslim Background During Times of Political Conflict That Involve the Middle East or Muslim World Regions*

*Some of your students of Middle Eastern or Muslim background may feel or exhibit any of the following symptoms due to the current political conflicts involving regions of the Middle East and Muslim world. Just knowing about these may help you in your interaction with students of Middle Eastern and Muslim backgrounds & potentially guide your discussions on current events in the classroom, for which tips are provided separately. Not all students of Middle Eastern or Muslim backgrounds will exhibit these feelings. But if you sense that one of your students does, then we encourage you to please be sensitive towards that student and to provide him/her with the best possible learning environment under the circumstances. Thank you.*

1. Some students may be afraid to come to school and their parents may be afraid to send them to school.
2. Some students from recent or even second-generation immigrants from Arab & Muslim countries may come from a family where current events eclipse all other concerns when the child is at home. If bombing of foreign countries is in progress, many families attempt daily or very frequent phone calls to relatives at all hours of the night, causing some relief but often much anxiety.
3. Some students may have relatives who died as a result of the crisis or continuing events. Choose appropriate words of comfort.
4. Some students may be suffering from fatigue, fear, or depression and lack of sleep due to current events.
5. Some students may be and are often afraid of being different and may be very reluctant to express personal views on the situation. Other students may feel an obligation to engage every person in their class in discussion on the issue.
6. Some students may be afraid that their teacher or principal may academically punish them for their views or contrive false or slanted disciplinary reports simply due to their ethnic or religious background.
7. Some students may be afraid of physical violence against them from fellow students.
8. Some students and parents of Middle Eastern & Muslim background expect to be treated unfairly by staff, teachers, and the principal.
9. Some students may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or degraded by statements or responses to current events by peers, teachers, and the school or U.S. government.
10. Some students may think that their own feelings and existence do not matter to peers, teachers, and school officials and they develop feelings of alienation because of current events.
11. Some students may feel generally overwhelmed by current events. Many students of Middle Eastern and Muslim background feel personally embattled in schools when persons of their own background perpetrate acts of violence or cause harm to the United States.
12. Some students feel emotionally torn apart for many, many months. They may exhibit depression, social withdrawal, and feelings of inappropriate guilt, inability to sleep and feelings of isolation.