

## We should not go soft on terror, it has no religion: Muslim cleric

Going soft on terror will not make Muslims happy as the perpetrators of such acts do not segregate their targets by religion, the cleric who heads Lucknow's oldest Islamic seminary has said after the daring [Mumbai](#) attack.

'If the politicians of this country think that by shying away from taking on terrorists directly and by going soft on terror they will get kudos from Muslims, they are sadly mistaken,' said Lucknow's Naib Imam Maulana Khalid Rasheed, who also heads the Firangi Mahal seminary.

'It is quite clear now that Indian politicians of all shades were somehow living under an illusion that if they were to turn harsh against acts of terror, they would alienate the Muslims of this country,' Maulana Rasheed told IANS in an interview.

'They ought to realise that the perpetrators of terror do not segregate their targets in terms of religion, and the victims of terror too cut across religious lines. When you count dead bodies, the first thing that hits you is the horror, not the religion of those killed.'

Over 180 lives were lost in the Mumbai attack in which terrorists struck at 10 prominent locations in the city Nov 26 night and carried on for nearly 60 hours.

Maulana Rasheed, who wondered 'when will these politicians change their mindset, said: 'I could see fear and apprehension in the utterances and eyes of each of the leaders - cutting across party lines - as they appeared on various TV channels throughout the three-day-long ordeal in Mumbai'.

He is surprised that some parties thought Muslims in India did not appreciate any criticism of Pakistan.

'What is worse is that leaders of some parties have even begun to think that any criticism of Pakistan would not be relished by this country's Muslims,' he lamented.

'When will they ever realise that by doing so they are clearly reflecting their perverted psyche of labelling all Indian Muslims as pro-Pakistanis, which is the worst abuse for any Indian Muslim.'

Maulana Rasheed is also irked about the centre's move to invite the chief of the Pakistani espionage agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to assist India in tackling terror. Pakistan has responded by saying it is willing to send an ISI representative.

'India's bid to invite the ISI chief after the Mumbai attack is like asking a criminal to help the police contain crime,' quipped the Maulana. He said 'the move has only undermined India's strength and reflects the total lack of self-confidence in the leaders of this country'.

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