

# Denounce terrorism, Muslim leaders told

BY GALGALO BOCHA

Muslims clerics have been urged to denounce terrorism without the fear of being killed by the terrorists or extremists.

A visiting prominent Sudanese scholar, Dr Essam El-Bashir, said it was the responsibility of Muslim leaders to dialogue with the terrorists and radicals to persuade them to abandon their activities.

Dr El-Bashir spoke on Saturday at Jamia Mosque, Nairobi, during a public lecture on global challenges facing Muslims. Kenyan Muslim scholar Ibrahim Lethome asked him to offer guidance to Kenyan clerics afraid to condemn terrorism due to threats from terrorists and radicals.

"In Sudan, we had armed men who killed but we approached and guided them constructively. They first dismissed us as pro-government scholars but agreed to hear us out. They wrote down their grievances and we replied showing them how they violated pertinent teachings of Islam and the Koran," said Dr El-Bashir.

He added: "It was not an easy task but we made a breakthrough and some reformed before we concluded our mission. They embraced us with tears regretting killing innocent souls and they are now agents of change in Sudan."

The senior lecturer on the Koran and Islamic Sciences university insisted told local

Muslims clerics not to be afraid of terrorists whom he described as stray believers who needed spiritual guidance to help them regain their lost senses.

"They have certain sincerity but gone astray because of many reasons and more importantly lack of understanding of right Islamic teachings. You are the ones to help them change," added Dr El-Bashir.

He told the leaders that they will end up indirectly contributing to the spread of terrorism and radicalisation if they feared denouncing them publicly.

The scholar further proposed vetting of contents of Islamic books used in various institutions to eradicate false doctrines.

He said the true teachings of Islam required Muslims to exercise tolerance and live peacefully with their neighbours. He also cautioned Muslim street preachers against engaging in unstructured religious debates with their counterparts from other faiths.

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**Essam El-Bashir, Sudanese scholar**

