



Associated Press photo

Rev. Terry Jones, right, of Gainesville, Fla., walks to a press conference Wednesday. Jones canceled plans to burn copies of the Quran to protest the Sept. 11 attacks.

## Florida pastor calls off planned Quran burning

Antonio Gonzalez  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — A Florida minister who had created an international furor with his plan to burn the Quran on the ninth anniversary of 9/11 canceled the event under intense pressure Thursday, saying he agreed to back off after reaching a deal to move the location of a controversial mosque near New York's ground zero. The imam planning the New York mosque said no such deal has been reached.

The Rev. Terry Jones announced his decision Thursday afternoon, standing outside his small church alongside Imam Muhammad Musri, the president of the Islamic Society of Central Florida. However, Musri and the imam planning the New York mosque disputed Jones' contention that a deal had been cut.

After the news conference, Musri told The Associated Press there was an agreement for him and Jones to travel to New York and meet Saturday — on the actual anniversary of the 9/11 attacks — with the imam overseeing plans to build a mosque near ground zero.

"I told the pastor that I personally believe the mosque should not be there, and I will do everything in my power to make sure it is moved," Musri said. "But there is not any offer from there [New York] that it will be moved. All we have agreed to is a meeting, and I think we would all like to see a peaceful resolution."

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf said he was surprised by the announcement and that he would not barter.

Jones, the pastor of a Florida Pentecostal church of 50 members, has said that he believes the Quran is evil because it espouses something other than biblical truth and incites radical, violent behavior among Muslims.

Jones on Thursday said he prayed about the decision.

He said that if the site of the mosque was moved, it would be a sign from God to call off the Quran burning.

"We are, of course, now against any other burning of Qurans," Jones said during the news conference.

"We would right now ask no one to burn Qurans. We are absolutely strong on that. It is not the time to do it."

## Pa. mayor pledges to fight ruling on immigration law

Michael Rubinkam  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HAZLETON, Pa. — A federal appeals court ruled Thursday that Hazleton, Pa., may not enforce its crackdown on illegal immigrants, dealing another blow to 4-year-old regulations that inspired similar measures around the country. The city's mayor pledged to take the case to the Supreme Court.

The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia said that Hazleton's Illegal Immigration Relief Act usurped the federal government's exclusive power to regulate immigration.

"It is ... not our job to sit in judgment of whether state and local frustration about federal immigration policy is warranted. We are, however, required to intervene when states and localities directly undermine the federal objectives embodied in statutes enacted by Congress," wrote Chief Judge Theodore McKee.

Appeals courts are split on whether states and municipalities have the right to

enforce laws dealing with immigration. The U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments over a 2007 Arizona law that prohibits employers from knowingly hiring illegal immigrants.

Hazleton, a northeastern Pennsylvania city of more than 30,000, had sought to fine landlords who rent to illegal immigrants and deny business permits to companies that give them jobs. A companion measure required prospective tenants to register with City Hall and pay for a rental permit.

Mayor Lou Barletta had pushed the measures in 2006 after two illegal immigrants were charged in a fatal shooting. The Republican mayor, now mounting his third try for Congress, argued that illegal immigrants brought drugs, crime and gangs to the city of more than 30,000 and overwhelmed police, schools and hospitals.

"Hazleton was the first, and became the symbol of hope for many around the country," he said at a news conference after the ruling was released by the appeals court on its website.



Courtesy of the Associated Press

This aerial photo of Temple, Texas shows flooding caused by Tropical Storm Hermine. Texas Gov. Rick Perry issued a disaster declaration for 40 counties.

## Tropical storm's death toll could rise, Texas officials say

By Paul J. Weber  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

SAN ANTONIO — The death toll from flooding caused by the remnants of Tropical Storm Hermine could increase after authorities near San Antonio acknowledged Thursday that hopes were dim of finding alive two missing swimmers swept away by floodwaters.

Authorities ended foot patrols along the swollen riverbanks and pulled back helicopters making aerial sweeps of the Guadalupe River in New Braunfels, about 30 miles north of San Antonio.

The search went from rescue to recovery after the two men didn't turn up early Thursday, when the river's slowing current would likely have allowed them to climb the banks to safety, fire marshal Patrick O'Connell said.

"We were hoping they would've been able to get to a phone by now," O'Connell said.

The Hermine-fueled flooding caught much of Texas by surprise and forced more than 100 high-water rescues, though not all were successful.

Flash flooding has killed at least two

motorists and others are still missing.

In the San Antonio area, authorities searched Thursday for a man who drove into a flooded road Wednesday. His wife and children were following in a separate car, and the wife called to tell him not to drive into the water, Bexar County spokeswoman Laura Jesse said. Two San Antonio television stations' helicopters were helping search.

Authorities also resumed a search in Arlingon, a woman whose black Lexus sport utility vehicle was swept off the road by swollen Bull Creek.

Hermine packed a relatively light punch when it made landfall Monday night.

Many Texas residents said they felt unprepared for Wednesday's sudden flooding.

Near Alvarado, 20 miles south of Arlington, 15 rescuers tried to save a 49-year-old man who apparently drove his pickup truck into a flooded crossing. One rescuer got to within 50 feet of the man but couldn't continue because it was too dangerous, Alvarado fire Chief Richard Van Winkle said.

The man's body was found hours later after the waters receded.

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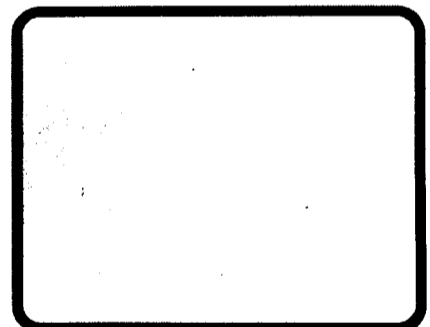
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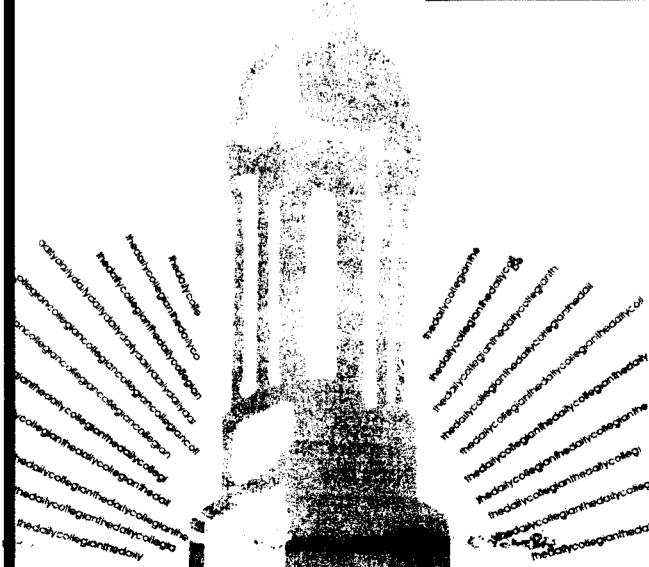
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