Against cemeteries are always the work of the police, who in this way attempt to set off internal political issues of the country. ‘We are already familiar with this story’, writes journalist Maíra do Amaral, of the Daily Nation newspaper. ‘The militants of the Islamic Centre have been involved by the mass media to explain the causes of the attacks, as if Muslims all over the world were in some way linked to the terrorists and their ideas. Although they were approached with respect on many radio and television programmes, there were clear expressions of discrimination and ridicule of Muslims and their beliefs.

At dawn on Sunday, 14 July 2002, the main cemetery of the Muslim community of Ar-
gentina was the object of an attack. Just a few miles from the centre of Buenos Aires, taking advantage of the fact that the ceme-
tery does not have special security, unidentified persons entered and desecrated about 150 graves. Although the graves were not completely destroyed and the burial bodies remained untouched, it was clear that the intention was to cause as much damage as possible to the maximum number of graves. The Islamic Cemetery of Buenos Aires was inaugurated in 1961, and

Personal experiences

When consulted on the subject of discrimi-
nation, most of the members of the Muslim community tend to say that there is no discrimina-
tion in Argentina. Imam Muhammad Husain, ex-president of the Association for the Spreading of Islam in Latin America and one of the Centre of Higher Islamic Studies in Argentina, has tried on more than one occasion to organize the Islamic com-
munity politically, but his attempts have failed. Husain says that the attack on the Muslims was an anti-Islamic act. The ambigu-
ous message is terrible and de-
termined if the desecration of graves at the Islamic Ceme-
tery was an anti-Islamic action. The ambigu-
ous relationship between misunderstand-
ing, ignorance, and discriminatory attitudes against minorities, and the particularities of Argentinean politics, which always contain elements of violence, do not allow us to ar-
rive at a clear-cut conclusion. In any event, regardless of the intention of those who desecrated the graves, for the Islamic com-
munity this was yet another link in a campaign against Islam that was only enhanced after 11 September. Concur-
rently with the journalist Simon Binnder of the Buenos Aires Herald, one could also say that, more than discrimination, it is unfortu-
nate but true that few Argentines really un-
derstand what Islam is about.4

Notes

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10. ‘Aquí con lealtad y patriotismo el cargo de presidente’, in September 2001, ‘After the at-
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