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[Home](#) > Islamic creationism in the news

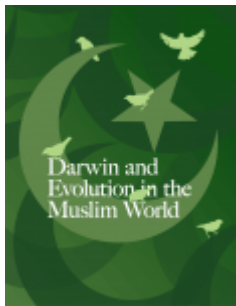
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11.04.2009

## [Islamic creationism in the news](#) [3]



The phenomenon of Islamic creationism was addressed by two major newspapers, [The New York Times](#) [4] (November 3, 2009) and the [Boston Globe](#) [5] (October 25, 2009), in the wake of a recent conference at Hampshire College on evolution in the Muslim world. (Webcasts of the conference presentations will be available on-line by November 15, 2009, according to the [conference website](#) [6].)

The *Globe's* article began arrestingly, with the news that the Arabic-language version of Al Jazeera's website — a major news source in the Middle East — triumphantly misdescribed the recently described early hominid [Ardipithecus ramidus](#) [7] as "evidence that Darwin's theory of evolution was wrong." "'Ardi Refutes Darwin's Theory,' Al Jazeera announced in an Oct. 3 article."

"It's hard to say exactly how much support the theory of evolution enjoys in the world's Muslim countries, but it's definitely not very much," the *Globe* noted. The *Times* added, "The degree of acceptance of evolution varies among Islamic countries," citing Pakistan as a country where evolution is covered in high school biology texts, with the aid of Qu'ranic verses.

In Turkey, however, "the teaching of evolution has largely disappeared, at least below the university level, and the science curriculum in public schools is written in deference to religious beliefs," the *Times* reported. Both articles attributed the disappearance of evolution in Turkish schools to the activities of

Adnan Oktar — widely known by his pseudonym, Harun Yahya.

"Oktar's work is easy to lampoon," the *Globe* commented, but added, "Oktar's main concern — that evolution is the tool of atheists bent on destroying Islam — does resonate there and in other Muslim countries." Moreover, "in the West, where non-Islamic influences are strongest, Islamic creationism may be stronger in reaction to the outside pressure," according to the *Times*.

Islamic creationists "do not quarrel with astronomers and geologists," the *Times* explained, "just biologists, insisting that life is the creation of God, not the happenstance consequence of random occurrences." Both articles also reported that, like their Christian counterparts, Islamic creationists take especial issue with the idea of human evolution in particular.

"[T]he fact that there is a creationist debate at all can be seen as a sort of progress," the *Globe* observed. "In the most conservative parts of the Muslim world, creationism isn't a political or philosophical force because it doesn't need to be — there aren't enough people who believe in evolution, or have even been exposed to it, to require a counter-doctrine."

[General](#) [8]

[2009](#) [9]

[+ read](#) [3]

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[3] <https://ncse.com/news/2009/11/islamic-creationism-news-005141>

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[8] <https://ncse.com/general>

[9] <https://ncse.com/news/2009>