

Alliance of Inclusive Muslims

Charting a Plan of
Action towards
Realizing Freedom
of Religion or
Belief &
Women's Rights in
Muslim Societies

3 Year Strategic Plan 2022- 2024

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Background

On September 29, 2017, the Alliance of Inclusive Muslims (AIM) was founded in Hammamet, Tunisia as the first umbrella organization to unite progressive Islamic scholarship with numerous grassroots human rights organizations working in Muslim communities across the world.

The purpose of AIM is to consolidate the efforts of these organizations to counter radical, supremacist, and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in the Muslim communities they serve. AIM seeks to challenge theological justifications for hate and supremacism with the progressive values that it deems are inherent in Islam, namely the universality of human rights, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion or belief.

A three-year strategic plan was developed at the founding conference that guided the initial advocacy goals, activity priorities, and the structural/internal development of AIM from 2017 to 2020. That strategic plan can be reviewed in the AIM Founding Conference Executive Summary document on our website.

From 17 to 19 November 2021, 37 partners and allies of AIM and 43 participants convened digitally and in person in Mombasa, Kenya, for the 2021 AIM International Conference. The meeting was organized under the auspices of “Charting a Plan of Action towards Realizing Freedom of Religion or Belief and Women’s Rights in Muslim Societies.”

During the private portion of the conference on 18 November, AIM partners were convened under Chatham house rules to brainstorm and discuss collective and agreed-upon advocacy and activity priorities. These agreed-upon advocacy and activity priorities form the basis for the Strategic Plan outlined below, which will guide AIM’s work over the next three years.

Strategic Organizing Criteria

In executing the three-year strategic plan for 2022 - 2024, the following Strategic Organizing Criteria will undergird AIM's work:

Criteria 1

Develops and disseminates inclusive, human rights-affirming Islamic content and policy positions in multiple languages on issues consistent with AIM's mission, vision, and guiding principles, targeting Muslim communities, particularly youth, across the world by utilizing AIM's offline and online platforms.

Criteria 2

Creates and maintains a variety of media and communication tools, such as AIM's website and interactive knowledge platforms, to provide content in multiple languages and to amplify inclusive and egalitarian Quranic values.

Criteria 3

Addresses the need to subvert narratives and expressions of religious and cultural fundamentalisms that undergird or otherwise justify rights violations against women and girls.

Criteria 4

Realizes impactful legal and religious reform towards the respect, protection, and fulfillment of women's and girls' human rights, and towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Criteria 5

Sensitizes and educates Muslim women, girls, men, boys, and faith/community leaders on women's human rights in Muslim societies.

Strategic Direction 1

Education, sensitization, training, and capacity building activities for all relevant actors and stakeholders towards increasing just and effective engagement of the Kadhi and Sharia courts in East Africa.

AIM partners recognized that many Muslim women in their communities are often denied knowledge and fulfillment of their rights in marriage, including their right to divorce and associated financial rights, despite the fact that these rights are provisioned by religious marriage contracts. They may also experience forced/child marriages and may not be offered adequate redress through religious courts when their rights are violated.

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| 1 | Increasing women's informed access to justice and redress for rights violations through Kadhi courts in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Mali |
| 2 | Training and sensitization of judges, paralegals, ustazah (female religious scholars), registrants of marriage contracts, and other relevant Kadhi court actors and stakeholders |
| 3 | Raising awareness of the general public on women's rights in marriage issues, including divorce, inheritance, and property rights, and capacity building for women regarding their rights in marriage |
| 4 | Lobbying for nationalization of international and regional human rights instruments for the protection of women's & girls' rights, including the CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol of the African Union, with focus on civil and marriage rights |
| 5 | As the convening organization, AIM will support the development of a holistic proposal for funding that consolidates these priorities. |

Strategic Direction 2

Collective empowerment activities targeting women, girls, men, and boys that mutually reinforces positive, rights-affirming femininity and masculinity.

Patriarchal social norms, including cultural and religious fundamentalisms, that are often held by men, boys, religious actors (including faith leaders), and community leaders constrict the ability of women and girls to exercise their rights in public and private. Not only do these norms allow women’s rights violations to continue unaddressed, they also threaten the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, which enshrine gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as core principles in Goal 5, and acknowledge that peaceful, inclusive societies are essential for the realization of sustainable development as per Goal 16.

Engaging relevant stakeholders to increase their conceptual understanding of the human rights of women and girls is necessary so these actors can support and amplify women’s voices in regards to life, livelihood, and decision-making autonomy. Advocacy and activity priorities include:

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| 1 | A pilot project for the implementation of an inclusive-Islam curriculum for children in Kenya and Uganda, in partnership with GlobalOne’s Kenya office |
| 2 | Expansion of #ImamsForShe network in East Africa, to commence with a conference of Chief Muftis and Chief Kadhis in the region. |

Strategic Direction 3

Organizing technical capacity building workshops and creating and sustaining knowledge sharing and exchange spaces and platforms.

AIM partners recognize the need to sustain and expand the AIM website, to create new public online campaigns, and to develop interactive spaces and platforms for knowledge sharing that will encourage regular and sustainable communications between AIM partners.

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| 1 | Organizing grant writing and fundraising workshops to build the capacity of AIM partners to apply to funding opportunities in order to expand and sustain activities |
| 2 | Building a knowledge base of progressive Islamic institutions, universities, and instructors through mapping activities |
| 3 | Mainstream, local, and social media/new media campaigns regarding women's rights issues in Muslim communities; |
| 4 | Piloting a community library/book club in Uganda that convenes Muslim women to discuss and share knowledge regarding their human rights in local languages. |

Acknowledgements



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