



## **MPV's Statement on the Attack on Salman Rushdie**

We are very happy to hear the latest news of Salman Rushdie's health condition and we wish him a full recovery. For years, Salman Rushdie has made use of a basic human right - that of freedom of expression - and to see him harmed because of this should elicit outrage and outbreak from us all. For far too long, individuals and institutions have manipulated religious texts to justify violence against individuals like Mr. Rushdie, and so many more in the Muslim world, simply for expressing themselves and verbalizing their beliefs about their faith or non-faith. As an American organization, we have argued against this type of violence and the multitudes of human rights violations that are so often associated with accusations of apostasy and blasphemy.

As a matter of fact, the Qur'an adamantly insists on critical thinking (Qur'an 8:22), the right to believe or disbelieve (Qur'an 2:256), and the right to express oneself (Qur'an 4:140, 10:99). Sadly, what is consistent in much of the Muslim world, and in Muslim societies in the West, is the oppression of thought and the right to think freely and to express these thoughts, whether intellectually or artistically. Even more devastating is that this oppression that is conveniently disguised in the name of Islam, a disguise that tarnishes a religion that affirms and protects freedom of speech and expression and critical thinking. <sup>6</sup>

We recognize that there is a long road ahead of us to cultivate a global society that applauds true freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion and belief, but we are not discouraged. Instead, we welcome the opportunity to be a part of making our society one that embraces pluralism and supports the right of *ijtihad* (critical thinking) for all.

We'll be taking another step on this long road towards supporting these universal freedoms on September 14 at our forum "Addressing Apostasy and Blasphemy in Muslim Societies". If you'd like to join us on this journey, we invite you to [RSVP](#) for the forum and attend in person on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., or virtually.

To learn more, please visit our [website](#).