



MUSLIMS FOR  
PROGRESSIVE VALUES

Position Statement on

## Violence against Women and Girls

**Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) hereby,**

***Denounces*** and wholly condemns misogyny and violence against women and girls with emphasis on acts endorsed or authorized by means of radicalized or extremist traditions of faith and/or culture, including patriarchal *theo-political* state and non-state agendas. Furthermore, MPV recognizes and asserts that violence against women and girls in this regard includes physical, mental, systemic, and structural violence, and is ubiquitously manifested as:

- Acid attacks
- Domestic violence/assaults
- 'Honor' killings
- Female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C)
- Female infanticide
- All forms of forced and child marriages
- Sexual harassment and assault
- Sexual violence in conflict
- Trafficking

***Affirms*** that the utilization of faith and/or culture as drivers for the propagation of and justifications for violence against women and girls is absolutely inconsistent not only with existing international human rights conventions, but with traditional Islamic values. MPV asserts that faith and culture can and should be utilized, with respect and recognition given to nonviolent and egalitarian traditions of faith and culture, as vehicles for sustainable development in accordance with international human rights law.

***Strives*** for the promotion and protection of nonviolent egalitarian, inclusive, and secular societies, by way of unbiased and gender-sensitized primary and secondary academic curricula, elimination of dogmatic religious narratives in academic spaces, as well as freedom

to publicly engage and disseminate critical analyses of theological scripture without fear of physical or mental harm.

**Offers** a foundation for the critical analysis of Qur'anic Scripture rooted in sound and reliable academia, to counter extremist narratives and ideologies that propagate and enable atmospheres of misogyny and violence against women and girls, as well as those that seek to undermine or threaten the promotion and protection of nonviolent, egalitarian, inclusive, and secular societies.

**Asserts** that it is only when women and girls can live with dignity, in safety, not fearing bodily harm from family, community members and state actors, and with freedom of conscience as the Qur'an demands, that a country can rightfully call itself "Islamic."

**Furthermore, we the undersigned affirm that:**

- ⇒ Violence against women and girls, have become ubiquitous and entrenched issues in certain Muslim-majority states and within Muslim communities around the world. These acts of violence are barbaric, inhumane, and in complete contradiction to the Qur'anic worldview of humanity.
- ⇒ Marriage as mandated in the Qur'an is between two *consenting adults*, officially formalized in the *nikah* contract, where the woman dictates the terms of the marriage, including the *mehr* (dowry), and requiring the signature of two witnesses.
- ⇒ The infamous Qur'anic verse 4:34 does not allow the husband to strike the wife into obedience, but instructs the husband to "walk away"<sup>1</sup> in a dispute.
- ⇒ The Qur'an commands men to uphold women and girls with respect and kindness: "Live with them [your wives] in kindness; even if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike something in which Allah has placed much good" (4:19).
- ⇒ *Surah Baqara* emphasizes the importance of kindness and forbearance with direct reference to marriages where conflict has arisen: "Then keep them in kindness or part from them in kindness" (2:229).
- ⇒ The Prophet left no room for doubt as to how men should interact with women, saying, "The most perfect of believers in belief is the best of them in character. The best of you are those who are the best to their women" (Tirmidhi 1/217).

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<sup>1</sup> Verse 4:34 of the Qur'an has been subject to gross misinterpretation. In particular, the Arabic word *daraba* (da-ra-ba) has been widely translated in English in a misogynist manner to permit the beating of one's wife. Such translation, however, contradicts the many other meanings, one of which is "to walk away". For a thorough analysis on this verse, visit: <http://www.quranverse434.com>

- ⇒ *Shari'ah law* stipulating the denial of fundamental and civil human rights for women and girls is not founded in Qur'anic scripture, but rather is drawn from man-made legislation throughout the centuries that reflect patriarchal values rather than Islamic values.

***Lastly, MPV implores governments and policy makers to:***

- ⇒ **Introduce and reinforce** legislation to address and criminalize domestic violence, acid attacks, 'honor' killings, FGM/C, female infanticide, sexual assault and harassment, trafficking, and all forms of forced marriages; establish the minimum age of consent for marriage as eighteen years old; and introduce and reinforce legislation to secure and protect the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of women and girls.
- ⇒ **Repeal** *immediately* discriminatory laws, policies, practices, and *fatwas* that institutionalize the denial of fundamental and civil human rights for women and girls, including those of which that enable violence against women and girls and other forms of gender-based discrimination, in accordance with international human rights law.
- ⇒ **Hold accountable** legal institutions and state authorities to ensure they uphold and enforce the rule of law without selective bias and to pursue gender-sensitization initiatives for state-actors.
- ⇒ **Devise and implement** social protection measures to ensure that women and girls are granted fair, safe, and equal access to full economic participation and benefit, decent employment, adequate healthcare, and secular education without fear or threat of physical or mental harm, as well as to ensure the aforementioned public services are not denied to any individual on the basis of their gender.
- ⇒ **Disaggregate** statistical data on the basis of gender, especially as it pertains to economic participation, all forms and incidences of violence as defined above, and the enjoyment of the aforementioned public services.
- ⇒ **Support and purposefully engage** in civil society campaigns that publicly advocate for and disseminate egalitarian, inclusive, nonviolent, and critical interpretations and analyses of theological literature and scripture.

***In conclusion,***

We at MPV understand the sensitivity and complexity of these matters. Sensitive and complex as they are, we believe these matters must be approached critically and analytically as imperatives to spiritual, human, and societal development. The rights of women and girls *must* be realized so they may live their lives with dignity, in safety, and without fear of bodily or mental harm from society or family members. The realization of these rights is integral to the Qur'anic view of humanity. We welcome and encourage all who are interested in engaging us in this discussion, and insist upon the facilitation of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Let us reclaim our faiths and our cultures and utilize them to strive for the realization of humanitarian values that benefit all.



**Muslims for Progressive Values**  
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organization registered under  
ID # 26-1125983 in the USA  
and is a founding member of  
**Alliance of Inclusive Muslims**  
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