



MUSLIMS FOR  
PROGRESSIVE VALUES

## **Our Stance Against Domestic Violence, Acid Attacks, Honor Killing, Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage**

**January 14, 2010**

We the undersigned affirm that:

- Assaults on women and young girls, especially domestic violence, acid attacks, honor killings, FGM and forced marriage that have become a growing problem in some Muslim countries, are barbaric, inhumane and completely contrary to Islamic teachings.
- Islam never condones humiliation, beatings, mutilation, or outright murder, especially not as a means to exert one's own authority, or to enforce one's own opinions upon other people. Rather Islam teaches us to approach differences in opinion with tolerance and forbearance, saying even to the clear disbeliever, "To you your way, and to me mine" (109:6) and "There shall be no compulsion in religion" (2:229).

In particular, men are commanded to treat women 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). In fact, in Surah Baqara the importance of kindness is emphasized 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 treat 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).

In light of the clear teachings that women are to be respected and treated with kindness -- not subjected to the vilest attacks, endangered by the very individuals who should have their best interests at heart, or murdered by those who should love them the most dearly-- and at the prompting of our consciences, our reason, and the Quranic verse which says "O ye who believe! Be staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or your parents or your kin" (4:135), we call upon the governments of Muslim countries to:

- Enact laws prohibiting and criminalizing domestic violence, acid attacks, honor crimes, female genital mutilation and forced marriages
- Strengthen laws against domestic violence, acid attacks, honor killing, FGM and forced marriages with stiff punishments and/or fines
- Ensure that these laws are enforced and that perpetrators are brought to justice consistently and swiftly
- Provide resources for women who must flee dangerous familial situations, such as protection orders, safe houses and long-term shelters
- Engage in educational campaigns to foster a national culture of respect for women's human, civil, and Islamic rights
- Allocate resources and funding to eliminate violence against women and girls, and
- Provide leadership in condemning acts of violence against women and girls.

Only when women and girls can live with dignity, in safety, not fearing bodily harm from family members, and with freedom of conscience as the Qur'an demands, can a country rightfully call itself "Islamic."