



## Position Statement on **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)**

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

**Denounces** and wholly condemns discrimination, violence, and social exclusion on the basis of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE), specifically targeting sexual and gender minorities including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) individuals, with emphasis on discrimination, violence, and social exclusion justified and endorsed by fundamentalist interpretations of faith, cultural relativist discourse, and theopolitical state and non-state agendas. Furthermore, MPV recognizes and asserts that violence in this regard includes physical, mental, systemic and structural violence.

**Affirms** that the instrumentalization of faith and culture as factors for the propagation of and justifications for discrimination, misogyny, and violence is absolutely inconsistent with international human rights norms. MPV asserts that faith and culture can and should be utilized as vehicles for sustainable development in accordance with international human rights law.

**Strives** for the promotion and protection of pluralistic, egalitarian, and inclusive secular societies and for objective, unbiased, gender-sensitized primary and secondary academic curricula. MPV asserts that the elimination of fundamentalist religious narratives in academic spaces is a requisite for the enjoyment of freedom of expression and freedom of and from religion and belief, 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 that is rooted in sound and reliable academia, to counter fundamentalist and extremist narratives and ideologies that propagate and foster atmospheres of discrimination, violence, and social exclusion on the basis of SOGIE, as well as those that seek to undermine or threaten the promotion and protection of pluralistic, egalitarian, and inclusive secular societies.

**Furthermore, MPV affirms that:**

- ⇒ Individuals who express any variety of SOGIE have explicit and inalienable rights as Muslims to practice, express, and manifest their personhood and belief however they choose without fear of physical or mental harm and of state or non-state violence. It is the unfortunate case that currently many Muslim-majority states impose draconian laws and policies specifically targeting sexual and gender minorities.
- ⇒ Islam *forbids* violence, including capital punishment, stoning, flogging, or humiliation of sexual and gender minorities. In Islam, all individuals, including sexual and gender minorities, bear fundamental rights to privacy and physical and mental autonomy.
- ⇒ Islam celebrates all aspects of pluralism and diversity, including sexual and gender diversity: “All act according to their own disposition [shakila], yet your Lord knows best who is on the most guided path” (Qur’an: 17:84); “And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors” (Qur’an: 30:22). Additionally, Islam specifically recognizes individuals who express variant sexualities, genders, and expressions: “the followers (of Muhammad) amongst the men who have no desires for women” (Qur’an: 24:31); “Of the women, those not reproducing who do not wish for intercourse, it is no harm for them to lay aside their clothing as long as they do not overtly display their beauty [in the company of men]” (Qur’an: 24:60).
- ⇒ Islam conveys tolerant and humane approaches pertaining to differences in opinion and with forbearance, “to you your way and to me mine” (Qur’an: 109:6); “there shall be no compulsion in religion” (Qur’an: 2:256).
- ⇒ The Qur’an does not contain language that explicitly criminalizes same-sex acts or love. In this regard, the *hadd* punishments prescribed for crimes of homosexuality and same-sex relations is assuredly un-Islamic and not rooted in any credible interpretation of Qur’anic scripture. Additionally, there is no documentation of the Prophet ever having prescribed punishment for same-sex love.
- ⇒ *Shari’a* legislation stipulating punishment, corporal or otherwise, for same-sex love is drawn from *ahadith* reports, which are of debatable authenticity and value. In fact, through scholarship it has been corroborated that “the most popularly cited hadith to rebuke and criminalize homosexuality is false”, and that this hadith “appears not to have originated with the Prophet himself but rather with a second-generation follower of the Prophet (a follower prone to exaggeration, fabrication, and ideological extremism).”
- ⇒ The Qur’an’s emphasis on the preservation of life directly invalidates capital punishment: “And for you, in the law of equality, there is saving of life, O you with

understanding: so that you may restrain yourselves!” (Qur’an: 2:179) and “not take life which God has made sacred” (Qur’an: 17:33).

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

- ⇒ **Repeal** immediately discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, including religious edicts such as *fatwas* that mandate discrimination and persecution of individuals on the basis of SOGIE, and the criminalization of same-sex love as per accordance with international human rights norms.
- ⇒ **Hold accountable** legal institutions and state law enforcement to ensure they uphold and enforce the rule of law without selective bias and to implement SOGIE-sensitization initiatives for state-actors.
- ⇒ **Support and purposefully engage** and purposefully engage in civil society campaigns that publicly advocate for and disseminate egalitarian, inclusive, non-violent, and critical interpretations and analyses of theological literature and scripture.
- ⇒ **Devise and implement** social protection measures to ensure that sexual and gender minorities are granted fair, safe, and equal access to full economic participation and benefit, decent employment, housing, adequate health care, 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 SOGIE.
- ⇒ **Disaggregate** statistical data on the basis of SOGIE especially as it pertains to incidences of violence and hate crimes religiously justified.

***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. Freedom of expression and conscience are essential for peaceful and sustainable human societies, and 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 inclusive and egalitarian values that benefit all.



**Muslims for Progressive Values** is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization registered under ID # 26-1125983 in the USA



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