

## *Women's rights, really?*

### *Tackling multiple discrimination of Muslim women, inequality and abuse - speaking out against Islamophobia*

**28 January 2017, 4:00-6:30pm, Maryam Centre, East London Mosque**

All women and men should have access to their rights and equal opportunities and be free from abuse. However, a violation of fundamental rights of women directly impacts their opportunities to find employment or undertake further education in order to fit into society. The agenda for gender equality has been long standing but many of its gains exclude some groups of women such as Muslim women.

With the rise of Islamophobia, Muslim women have become a direct target of verbal and physical abuse and hate crime. This form of discrimination should be distinguished from the mainstream as a combined gender-religion based violence which is observed not only in the UK but all over the world. In addition, alongside gender and religion, recent reports also include ethnicity as a form of discrimination and in the economy refer to this multiple discrimination of Muslim women as "triple penalty"<sup>1</sup>. Muslim women face systematic and structural barriers in employment and education. These limitations are reflected in the UK Census data<sup>2</sup> which demonstrates that Muslim women are one of the least economically active citizens.

In the UK national context, where gender equality is heavily advocated by the civil society, the treatment of Muslim women in public remains questionable. The elimination of double standards in gender terminology and efforts to combat gender injustice require further action. This seminar will discuss a dichotomy in gender-religion based discrimination and will provide a space to acknowledge the facts, concerns and recommendations to effectively and inclusively respond to the violation of UK Muslim women's rights. This seminar is a deserved platform for a public debate necessary to be true to gender equality agenda and to emphasize further barriers which hinder achievement of this equality by women who wish to demonstrate their faith in their daily lives.

#### **Agenda:**

15:30 Registration

16:00-16:10 Welcome and introduction

16:10-16:45 Panel debate

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/women-and-equalities-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry/>

<sup>2</sup> 2001 Census, UK



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Panelists (10-12 min each):

- **Dr Konrad Pędziwiatr**, Cracow University of Economics – *European Islamophobia and its impact on Polish converts in the UK and in Poland.*
- **Faeza Vaid**, Executive Director, Muslim Women’s Network UK – *Challenging negative stereotypes of Muslim women in order to combat discrimination faced*
- **Shenaz Bunglawala**, Head of Research, MEND – *Islamophobia and its disproportionate impact on Muslim women, reporting methods and preventive measures*
- **Sufia Alam**, East London Mosque and Maryam Centre - *The nature and consequences of Islamophobia on Muslim women’s well being*
- **Alaa Al-Samarrai**, Assistant Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain, tbc.
- **Imam Fadel Soliman** - Bridges Foundation - *Women’s Rights between culture and religion - how cultures affects women in society*

16:45-17:10 Maghrib prayer/break

17:10-17:40 Panel debate continued

17:40- 18:10 Questions and Answers

18:10-18:25 Summary of recommendations

18:25-18:30 Closure



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