

## Muslim Women in Canada under Attack

### Hold on to the Rope of Allah (swt)

In the past few months, we have seen a sharp increase in attacks against Islam and Muslim women in particular. Verbal abuse, hijabs pulled off, death threats and even physical assaults; these are just a few of the barrage of crimes perpetrated on our fellow Muslim sisters throughout the country. Indeed, they are singled out by the Islamophobic hysteria that is sweeping through the country. All this simply for adhering to their Deen of Islam by wearing the hijab. For example, six Muslim sisters at McMaster University were forced to move out of their home after they found a knife stuck in a wall of their home. This was after a sister – born in Canada – was attacked by two men after picking up her children from school. She was repeatedly kicked in the stomach, punched in her face, while being called a ‘terrorist’ and told to ‘go back to her country.’

Over the Harper-years, there was a steady increase of anti-Muslim rhetoric. Harper and the Conservatives during the Canadian Federal elections of 2015 made the dress for Muslim women a political football in order to score and win racist Canadian votes. Despite these years of anti-Muslim propaganda, Canadians still lived up to their social values of inclusion and tolerance by throwing Stephen Harper and his Conservative Party out of power. Canadians effectively said, “No” to the use of divisive politics to gain political power.

Nevertheless, the hatred of Islam engendered over the past few years has not gone away. The media continues to portray Islam in a negative light and fails to even recognize that this is a problem, given how both in Canada and the US voters are responding positively to the anti-Islam rhetoric – be it the 32% that voted for Harper or those who support Donald Trump. Those who swallow this poisonous message are not content to just vote for such individuals, but are willing to verbally and physically assault our sisters!

As Muslims living in the West, we cannot be intimidated into silence or worse -- compromise our Deen. For example, we should not let go of our obligations – whether it is praying at work or wearing the hijab. The hijab is clearly the dress code for women in our Deen as Allah (swt) revealed:

﴿وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ﴾

**“And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; And (for women) to draw their head-coverings (khumur) over their necks and upper chests (Juyub).” [TMQ 24:31]**

We must continue to hold on to our Islamic beliefs and abide by our Islamic obligations, just as the Prophet (saw), his companions, and the early believers in Makkah held onto their Deen despite facing severe persecution at the hands of the Quraysh. Both brothers and sisters should remember the actions of the first martyr of Islam Sumayyah (ra), who endured unbearable torture for being a Muslim but never once renounced her Islam, preferring death rather than compromising her Islamic belief. Thus, we must be courageous in this difficult climate. Allah (swt) revealed:

﴿إِنَّمَا ذُلُّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا مِنِّي إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

**“It is only Shaytan that suggests to you the fear of his Auliya’ (supporters and friends) so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers.” [TMQ 3:175]**

We must not let the agenda driven media define for the masses what Islam stands for. Rather, we should engage our Canadian neighbors, colleagues, and fellow students and speak to them about Islam. Many Canadians recognize it is unacceptable to target women with violence. Consequently, sisters may find it to easier (than brothers) to engage such people, to make them aware about Islam. Furthermore, sisters who proudly wear the Islamic dress can effectively dispel negative perceptions by illustrating that they wear such dress as a commitment to Allah (swt). Simply by engaging and being confident dispels many negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslim women. Many people are confused about the rhetoric they hear in the media. They find it hard to reconcile the propaganda against Islam with the reality of the brothers and sister they know who adhere to the commands of Islam in public. We should expect to be asked hard, emotionally charged questions. In fact, we should welcome the opportunity to have frank, open and respectful conversations. We need to prepare ourselves by increasing our knowledge of the Deen and the local current affairs in order to effectively address the public’s questions and be effective ambassadors for Islam by:

- **Engaging the wider society about Islam:** We should be ready when the media goes on an attack against Islam to engage with the non-Muslims we know and discuss with them about Islam. However, rather than waiting, it is better to proactively engage the people we know and discuss with them Islam.

- **Correct their understanding of Islam:** When it comes to violence, we should explain that killing innocent civilians is haram. We should also be prepared to discuss women issues. For example, we should explain how Muslim sisters wear hijab as obedience to the Creator, not to men and discuss how Islam organizes the relationship between men and women in a way that nurtures harmony in the family.

The situations sisters find themselves in in Canada and the West in general is the result of the absence of a protector. The Muslimahs are especially in need of the Khaleefah; the likes of Khaleefah Mutasim (rh) who mobilized an entire army to secure the safety and dignity of Muslim women who were violated by Roman soldiers. It is only through the Khaleefah that the affairs of both Muslim women and men will be best taken care of. May Allah (swt) bring this shield for the Ummah and protect our Ummah from harm.

﴿إِنَّمَا الْإِمَامُ جُنَّةٌ يُقَاتِلُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ وَيَتَّقَى بِهِ﴾

**“Indeed, the Imam (Khaleefah) is a shield, from behind whom you fight and by whom you are protected.” (Muslim)**

15 Rabii' al-Awwal 1437 AH

26 December 2015 CE

**Hizb ut Tahrir**

**Canada**