

THE DECLARATION OF GENDER JUSTICE IN ISLAM

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS



**STAND
UP
FOR
JUSTICE.**

GENDER INJUSTICES INCREASE HUMAN SUFFERING AND DENY PEOPLE THEIR GOD-GIVEN RIGHTS.

“ The Declaration of Gender Justice in Islam presents evidence and examples from the Qur’an and the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ¹ to reaffirm the equal value, dignity and rights of all human beings irrespective of gender, and to challenge harmful norms, abuse and oppressive power structures. ”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Islamic Relief has assembled a faith perspective on gender injustice in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. We are calling on both Muslim and non-Muslim organisations to support the Declaration of Gender Justice in Islam and work in partnership to tackle one of the greatest injustices of our time.

The Declaration of Gender Justice in Islam is a landmark initiative which presents key faith principles of justice and balance to challenge harmful ideas, cultural practices and social conditions. It affirms the God-given rights of all human beings and our duty to stand for and uphold justice.

Faith actors and organisations play an important role in achieving gender justice, with a long-standing tradition of providing vital support to communities in the form of health and education services, humanitarian relief, and social and spiritual support. Being rooted in the communities we serve, and the trust and access we share with some of the most marginalised people, are among the important reasons why we are well-placed to act for gender justice.

Gender injustices increase human suffering and deny people their God-given rights. Women and girls of various diversities are more affected by inequality and exploitation across education, health and employment, and more at risk of physical and sexual violence, than men and boys. However, gender injustices also harm the physical and mental health and wellbeing of men and boys of various diversities. This reality is far from the Islamic ethos; indeed, it is the kind of oppression and injustice against which God speaks out strongly in the Qur’an.

To create a framework for gender justice in an Islamic context, we held consultations with stakeholders around the world and across sectors including national and international NGOs,

international organisations, faith actors, civil society, UN agencies, business and academia, with people of diverse ages and backgrounds. From these consultations emerged calls to action that address key gender injustice issues related to the themes of economic justice; justice and equity in the family; civil, political and digital rights; education; protection and health; and leadership.

The Declaration adds cultural and religious relevance to these issues for Muslim contexts, whilst addressing key challenges presented by a rising climate of Islamophobia, conflict and anti-immigrant sentiment, all of which exacerbate gender injustices against Muslim women and men around the world.

The Declaration aims to inspire change and mobilise action within communities, as well as through advocacy at all levels – local, national and global. The Declaration also calls on Muslim stakeholders to work in unity, promotes interfaith and cross-sector partnerships, and invites both faith-based and secular organisations to pledge their commitment to ending gender injustices as signatories.

Faith, values and beliefs are an integral part of society and have a tangible impact on the lives of people. Yet, the call for justice is one that transcends boundaries and gives us all a common sense of purpose and identity. It comes at a time in which divisions over our precious, shared humanity are emphasised. This Declaration is a bridge that gives us continuity, consolidation and hope, particularly in these challenging times.

1. ﷺ: an Arabic blessing conventionally attached to the names of the Prophet Muhammad, which translates as “may God’s blessings and peace be upon him”.

BACKGROUND

Around the world today, girls are more than twice as likely as boys to drop out of education when conflict or wars break out. If women could simply complete a primary education, maternal deaths could be reduced by 66 per cent. Women are paid 24 per cent less than men on average for the same work because of their gender. Thirty-five per cent of women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence and 71 per cent of all human trafficking victims are girls and women.²

The current systems and structures of power around the world have marginalised or oppressed the voices, agency and participation of women in both private and public spaces. As a result, in almost every situation of inequality, exploitation or suffering, women and girls of various diversities are the worst affected. There also exists a silent undercurrent of unconscious biases, emerging particularly in relation to women's authority. For women, these harmful biases are real and present: women are judged more harshly but taken less seriously, with their expertise often overlooked. These biases are exacerbated for women of colour.

Gender injustices also impact the physical, mental and spiritual health of men and boys of various diversities. For example, sexual violence perpetrated against men and boys in conflicts is rampant yet frequently goes unaddressed due to harmful gender norms that silence survivors.³ Moreover, more men than women die by suicide every year globally,⁴ and again, stereotypes around masculinity commonly prevent men from seeking support. In the pursuit of balance and justice for all, these are important areas for further research, investigation and action.

In 2015, 188 countries declared their commitment to working together to transform our world through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There has never before been a commitment of this scale and ambition, with the potential to change our future so drastically within one generation. Whilst one of these crucial goals is SDG 5, 'Gender Equality and Empowering all Women and Girls', gender justice cuts across all 17 goals because it is undeniably a fundamental ingredient in ensuring a sustainable future, free of poverty, for all.

The Declaration therefore aims to complement and build on important preceding declarations, frameworks and goals towards which many Muslim-majority countries, as well as stakeholders who work with Muslim communities, have commitments. These include the Sustainable Development Goals, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security and its succeeding resolutions, as well as the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC)⁵ that was set up by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 2011, with a Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW)⁶ by 2016. These and other such commitments prove the timely and critical need for collective action by Muslims all over the world and across different sectors, cultures and societies.

This Declaration recognises that in order to achieve meaningful gender justice for Muslim women and men, gender justice narratives and work need to be grounded in Islamic principles such as the maqasid al-shari'ah⁷. To achieve this, the gender justice narrative and language used in the declaration has been developed through engaging and consulting with faith stakeholders and Muslim voices, as well as through deconstructing the influence and impact that colonialism and cultural practices have had and continue to have on ideas and practices around gender in the lives of Muslim women and men around the world. To identify the areas of work and calls to action, consultations were held with national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academia, and Islamic scholarship – including Muslim female scholars, activists and women's groups, local communities and UN bodies.



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2. All statistics quoted are from UNICEF's 'The State of the World's Children 2017' report.

3. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297696937_Male_rape_and_human_rights

4. World Health Organisation (WHO), 2018, 'Mental Health ATLAS 2017'.

5. <https://www.oic-iphr.org/en/about>

6. https://www.oic-oci.org/subweb/woman/6/en/docs/final/6wom_opaaw_en.pdf

7. The objectives of Islamic law.



THIS IS A DECLARATION OF OUR COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVING GENDER JUSTICE FOR ALL.

PURPOSE

This Declaration is a reminder of our duty to protect and serve the most vulnerable and marginalised in our societies, and to uphold justice regardless of how powerful the perpetrators of injustice may be. We must be committed to ending human suffering in all its forms by supporting those affected by poverty and socio-economic inequalities, those without equal access to education and employment opportunities, and those whose lives have been impacted by natural disasters, climate change and conflict. Therefore, we must recognise the ways in which gender injustice significantly increases vulnerability and suffering, and root it out of our families, communities and societies globally.

This is a Declaration of our commitment to achieving gender justice for all. It is guided and inspired by Islamic principles of human rights and responsibilities, to call for the equal value of all human beings irrespective of sex, and of the social ideas, roles, characteristics and behaviours we attach to gender.

To realise this, we believe that meaningful and transformative gender justice for all can only be achieved by women and men of various diversities coming together. As Muslims and people of all faiths and none, as governments and communities, as national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, as people of all ages, races, ethnicities and abilities, and as people of endless diversity and differences – to recognise our shared and fundamental human equality, and our desire to build a more just future for all.

VALUE ADD

Gender injustices are exacerbated by further discrimination based on socio-economic conditions, and many other markers of identity. An imbalance of power and greed has allowed narratives to develop which lack the compassion and mercy that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ prescribed for humanity. Muslims must look at this reality as the outcome of humanity's deviation from the justice and balance that Islam requires believers to uphold, and therefore strive to correct it.

The Declaration of Gender Justice in Islam provides religious literacy that is often missing in global discussions on gender and development, yet is desperately needed to help establish gender justice in Muslim contexts. In doing so, it aims to address some of the key challenges we face in an increasingly polarised world, including a growing context of Islamophobia, conflict and anti-immigrant sentiment that exacerbate gender injustices and human suffering. The Declaration seeks to challenge the incorrect assumptions made about Muslim women, and the unconscious bias they feel, in particular around power and authority. The Declaration offers a way to understand the authority gap in their everyday lives, and how together we can begin to work towards intellectual equality. In this way, together we can begin to dismantle bias and promote positive behaviours towards Muslim women. Further, the Declaration seeks to create a narrative and language around gender justice for Muslim women and men that is grounded in the Islamic tradition – not rooted in any philosophies, approaches, cultural ideas or practices which lack a basis in our faith, or stand in opposition to it, whether these are from Muslim-majority countries or high income countries.

8. "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be they rich or poor, God is a Better Protector to both (than you)." [Qur'an, 4:135]

KEY ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDINGS

God created all human souls in equal value

God (Allah) is the Lord of Mercy (ar-Rahman), the Giver of Mercy (ar-Raheem):

"All praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy"
[Qur'an, 1:1-2]

Who created women and men from a single essence:

"People, be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them spread countless men and women far and wide"
[Qur'an, 4:1]

Into nations and tribes, elevated not by our physical attributes but by our God-mindfulness:

"People, We created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into nations and tribes so that you should recognise one another. In God's eyes, the most honoured of you are the ones most mindful of Him: God is All-knowing, All-aware"
[Qur'an 49:13]

We are of equal value before God, distinguished only by our actions:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he or she is a believer – We will surely cause him or her to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do" [Qur'an, 16:97]

Every human being has innate dignity and God-given rights

Every human being has the right to a life of dignity and respect, simply by virtue of being human, irrespective of gender:

"We have bestowed dignity on the progeny of Adam... and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation"
[Qur'an, 17:70]

"Be you male or female, the one of you is as the other" [Qur'an, 3:195]

Every human being has the right to self-determination

All human beings are accountable for their own actions and advised to be mindful of God, whether in the practice of culture, tradition or other social norms:

"And every soul earns not [blame] except against itself, and no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return, and He will inform you concerning that over which you used to differ"
[Qur'an, 6:164]

God commands us to act kindly and justly

Love and kindness between us are one of God's signs, and a path to knowing God:

"Another of God's signs is that God created spouses from among yourselves for you to live in tranquillity: He ordained love and kindness between you. There truly are signs in this for those who reflect"
[Qur'an, 30:21]

God commands humanity to uphold justice with impartiality:

"You who believe, be steadfast in your devotion to God and bear witness impartially: do not let hatred of others lead you away from justice, but adhere to justice, for that is closer to awareness of God. Be mindful of God; God is well aware of all that you do" [Qur'an, 5:8]

God reminds us to uphold our trust to God, the Prophet ﷺ and to others:

"O You who believe! Do not betray God and the Messenger, and do not knowingly betray your trusts"
[Qur'an, 8:27]

Those with power should not abuse their privilege or oppress others

No human being has the right to deny the God-given and inalienable rights of humanity. In the family, community and society at large, violations of human dignity, the abuse of reciprocal rights and responsibilities, and the denial of the human right to security, protection and dignity, can lead to acts of gender-based violence (GBV), harmful gender-based practices and the abuse of children's rights:

"O My servants! I have forbidden oppression for Myself, and I have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another"
[Hadith Qudsi , Sahih Muslim ¹⁰]

"Indeed, God orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded" [Qur'an, 16:90]

God reminds us that each of us is a steward (khalifa) on the Earth, and that we all have rights and responsibilities to and from one another – young and old, poor and rich, living with and without disability, women and men. We are created equal in value and any worldly positions given to us are tests from God, which we must not abuse:

"It is God who made you stewards on the Earth and raises some of you above others in rank, to test you through what God gives you"
[Qur'an, 6:165]

9. A saying of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in which he narrates God's words.

10. The quote is taken from Sahih Muslim, one of the six major collections of the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ and actions, compiled by the scholar Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj.



Gender-based discrimination has no place in Islam

Gender injustice is rooted in discriminatory and harmful attitudes that deny the human rights protected by Islam. Socio-cultural ideas, norms and practices that violate the rights of others cannot be equated with religion or used to justify discrimination against people based on gender. The Qur'an calls out and questions this discriminatory attitude, and speaks strongly against gender-based violence, addressing the practice of burying girls alive out of fear of poverty:

"And when one of them is given the good news of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide"
[Qur'an, 16:58-59]

*"On the Day of Judgment... when the infant girl buried alive is asked for what crime she was killed"*¹¹
[Quran, 81:8-9]

The Prophet ﷺ consistently emphasised the importance and virtue of raising daughters to counteract gender-based discrimination. He spoke out against and condemned crimes like female infanticide, which was a pre-Islamic custom in the community and is still practised by some communities around the world today. Moreover, the same purpose and key responsibilities for private and public good are mentioned by God for women and men, and their reward is equal:

"The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoy what is right,

*forbid what is wrong, establish prayer, give zakat*¹² *and obey God and His Messenger. On these, God will have mercy. Indeed, God is Exalted in Might and Wise"*
[Qur'an 9:71]

We are obliged to tackle injustice in all its forms

We have a God-given duty to tackle gender injustice globally, and this means overcoming the many other forms of discrimination linked to it. Disparities between men and women vary widely, and disparity exists among women and among men too. Gender injustice is intersectional, and it is exacerbated by other inequalities such as those based on ethnicity, age, disability, political, economic, socio-cultural factors and more:

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be they rich or poor, God is a Better Protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you may avoid justice, and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily, God is ever Well-Acquainted with what you do"
[Qur'an, 4:135]

The Prophetic message is one of balance and justice for all

Challenging patriarchal structures that oppress women and girls is part of the Prophetic example. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did this by declaring women's rights and equal value before God and in relation to men, encouraging the pursuit of knowledge for all human beings irrespective of gender. This also includes respecting and valuing the participation of women in society and work, and emphasising the mutual rights of spouses highlighted in the Qur'an, equating the violation of women's marital rights to a breach of the covenant with God.

"Assuredly, women are the twin halves of men"
[Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Abu Dawood, 34).

"Women have rights similar to those of men equitably" [Qur'an 2:228]

"The most complete of the believers in faith are those with the most excellent character, and the best of you are the best in behaviour to their women"
[Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, 1162]¹³

¹¹. This verse is mentioned to emphasise accountability for the common practice of burying new-born girls alive amongst poorer tribes in the pre-Islamic era of Arabia.

¹². Islamic tax on wealth.

¹³. The quoted saying is taken from Sunan al-Tirmidhi, one of the six major collections of the Prophet's sayings and actions compiled by the scholar Al-Tirmidhi.

CALLS TO ACTION

- National governments
- Inter-governmental organisations
- Civil society including non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Community-based organisations (CBOs)
- Women's organisations, activists and community leaders
- Faith actors and institutions
- Academia
- Businesses across all sectors
- And all those engaging with Muslim communities

Consultations with Muslim stakeholders from around the world have resulted in six key themes being identified as important areas of work in achieving gender justice. Each theme is highly significant within the Islamic tradition with respect to upholding justice

1. ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The significance of protecting and promoting economic rights and responsibilities in Islam is undeniable, and is integral to achieving social justice, including gender justice. In view of this, the longest verse in the Qur'an, which is found in chapter Baqarah (verse 282), is entirely dedicated to financial principles and rulings.

Together we must:

- 1.1.** Mobilise resources, including through zakat ¹⁴ and sadaqah ¹⁵, to tackle socio-economic injustices including extreme poverty and structural economic inequalities. Focus in particular on how these injustices adversely affect women and girls and create better safeguards for those at increased risk due to visible and non-visible disabilities, conflict and displacement, human trafficking and socio-cultural forms of discrimination.
- 1.2.** Increase Islamic banking and microfinance options to support women's financial independence, security and participation in work, as well as support and strengthen women's participation in markets and economic institutions.
- 1.3.** Draw from Islamic economic principles to support the development of alternative economic models that govern business and economic policies, to work towards a more equal economy that is gender just and fair for all.

1.4. Address structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, through shifting social norms and cultural attitudes, recognising women's time, as well as promoting women's power, voices and decision making.

1.5. Empower and support Muslim women to enter diverse careers which match their skills, passions, experiences and potential, and remove the obstacles which prevent them from doing so.

1.6. Promote the equal right to decent work opportunities for all, including a living wage, equal pay for work of equal value, healthy and safe work environments, and security of employment irrespective of gender.

1.7. Disrupt overly rigid traditional working conditions to create flexible, shared and remote opportunities for women and men, so that both are able to balance work and family life.

1.8. Increase economic opportunities and advocate for non-discriminatory recruitment policies and practices for those most at risk of gender injustices including refugee and migrant women, and women with disabilities.

1.9. Advocate for just and non-discriminatory inheritance laws and practices including equal rights to land ownership and financial assets in line with Islamic principles.

1.10. Promote the recognition and value of unpaid domestic and care work as a public good to be more fairly shared by women and men within households and communities.

1.11. Advocate for gender responsive budgeting (GRB) in the management of public, private and charitable funds.

1.12. Promote takaful¹⁶ co-operative systems in communities as a way of financially safeguarding families against economic shocks which can lead to increased gender-based injustices.

1.13. Advocate for the economic rights of vulnerable groups, in particular women and girls affected by climate change and displacement, through supporting longer-term solutions. These include sustainable economic systems that promote climate justice, access to employment and training opportunities for refugee and migrant women, and access to financial services for all women.

1.14. Promote Islamic scholarly engagement with the concepts of wilayah¹⁷ and qiwanah¹⁸ as constructed in classical jurisprudential texts in relation to economic justice and spousal rights, to ensure the economic rights of women through a shared equitable citizenship.

1.15. Ensure that the concept of qiwanah is articulated in line with today's methods of maslaha (public interest), through the engagement of scholars who can undertake a revived and contextualised ijtihad (scholarly reasoning), to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of shared wealth which does not disadvantage women and girls, and thus creates transformative equity.

^{14.} Islamic tax on wealth.

^{15.} Charitable giving.

^{16.} A cooperative model of Islamic insurance based on mutual guarantee.

^{17.} Islamic concept of 'guardianship'.

^{18.} Islamic concept of 'authority'.

2. JUSTICE AND EQUITY IN THE FAMILY

The Prophet ﷺ said, “The best of you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best of you to my family.” [Sunan al-Tirmidhi]. This well-known hadith exemplifies the value that is placed on justice and equity within the family and as an inseparable component of individual success.

Together we must:

2.1. Clarify and work to end harmful social and cultural gender-based practices through faith-based education and international human rights principles and laws, in particular with the support of fatwa¹⁹ councils and fuqaha.²⁰

2.2. Use faith to promote positive rights and responsibilities within the family (regardless of gender, age or disability), challenging misconceptions and stereotypes around parental and care responsibilities, and advocating for parental leave policies at the national and employer levels that are reflective of this.

2.3. Build partnerships between Islamic legal scholarship and gender justice activists and academics to ensure legal rulings and guidance are responsive to current issues, reflective of the lived reality of women, and can be implemented effectively.

2.4. Develop effective marital dispute resolution and divorce mechanisms that protect women’s rights, as outlined by Islamic principles.

2.5. Condemn and work to end all forms of gender-based violence within families and empower women to seek just resolutions.

2.6. Protect the rights of children, particularly girls, by protecting them from gender-based abuse and promoting equal opportunities for education, health and safety.

2.7. Promote Islamic scholarly engagement with the concept of wilayah to support mutual cooperation, empowerment, protection and justice in the family, and a better understanding of rights and responsibilities in favour of women, including the right to decide if, when, and whom to marry.

3. CIVIL, POLITICAL AND DIGITAL RIGHTS

God calls each of us a khalifa (steward) on the earth and gives us responsibilities towards creation. It is therefore an Islamic right, irrespective of gender, to work for the betterment of humanity and to enter positions through which one can protect this trust and uphold justice. There is an overwhelming lack of regulation in digital spaces to protect the most vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. For instance, 63 per cent of traffickers use technology to recruit and groom their victims.²¹

Together we must:

3.1. Create safe spaces in Muslim communities for gender-based issues to be shared and addressed with confidentiality.

3.2. Advocate for women's equal right to worship and access mosques and religious learning institutions.

3.3. Increase representation of female Islamic scholars and women in faith institutions, including mosques and religious learning institutions.

3.4. Tackle Islamophobia and hate in all its forms, addressing harmful stereotypes and portrayals of Muslim women and men in the media, in particular where this leads to gender-based abuse and abuse of human rights.

3.5. Develop the civic voice and participation of women in political processes, to ensure laws are inclusive of diverse and faith-based gender needs.

3.6. Support women's equal access to and representation in formal and informal justice mechanisms, both faith-based and secular, at all levels.

3.7. Support the development and representation of female legal scholars on fatwa councils and in community-facing positions.

3.8. Advocate at all levels for policies that increase the diverse representation of women, including older women, women with disabilities, and women from marginalised communities, in national and local decision-making bodies in both government and civil society.

3.9. Recognise and develop the equal role of women in peacebuilding at all levels.

3.10. Protect the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants and survivors of human trafficking to be free from exploitation and gender-based violence.

3.11. Advocate for policies and legal rulings that protect women and girls online, particularly in relation to sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

3.12. Support women's equal access to information, communication and technology, creating spaces for the most marginalised women to make use of information and communication technology (ICT) to improve their access to education, financial institutions and healthcare facilities.

¹⁹ Islamic legal verdicts

²⁰ Islamic jurists

²¹ 20 Thorn (2018). ‘Survivor Insights: The role of technology in domestic minor sex trafficking’ https://www.thorn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Thorn_Survivor_Insights_061118.pdf

4. EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION

The importance of seeking knowledge in Islam, for either man or woman, is paramount. Following the Prophetic example, Aisha bint Abu Bakr, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, became a prominent scholar of hadith, and women such as Fatima al-Fihri founded the world's oldest and continuously operating university, the University of al-Qarawiyyin.

Together we must:

- 4.1.** Increase awareness of education and ensure equal rights and access for all children, in particular girls, to quality and free education.
- 4.2.** Protect children, particularly girls, from falling out of education due to poverty, humanitarian crises and conflict.
- 4.3.** Eliminate all legal, economic and socio-cultural barriers to girls' education, including for girls with disabilities.
- 4.4.** Ensure education facilities are gender-sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments.
- 4.5.** Invest in the development of female Islamic scholarship and increase community-facing opportunities for teaching.
- 4.6.** Ensure equal access of all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education.
- 4.7.** Educate all children, youth and adults on Islamic perspectives on social and gender justice.
- 4.8.** Ensure stakeholders within the media industry are educated on the impact that Islamophobic narratives and divisive language have as they normalise and perpetuate gender-based discrimination, abuse, and violence against Muslim and minority ethnic women.

5. PROTECTION AND HEALTH

The Qur'anic verse, "Whosoever saves a life, saves the whole of mankind" [Qur'an 5: 32] powerfully communicates the importance of protecting human life, and provides inspiration for taking on this responsibility.

Together we must:

- 5.1.** End preventable maternal and neonatal deaths by ensuring the physical and mental health of women in pre-natal, birth and post-natal care.
- 5.2.** Address the unique forms of violence faced by women and girls living with disabilities, who are more likely to be forced to have medical treatment without consent.
- 5.3.** Address harmful stereotypes and norms around masculinity through faith-based approaches and strengthen support for men's mental health and wellbeing.

5.4. End sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in all its forms, including female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual violence and domestic abuse, through faith-based principles and rulings.

5.5. Protect all people, in particular children and those unable to consent, from forced marriage.

5.6. Support the development of faith-based approaches to ensure the menstrual, sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, and tackle harmful cultural ideas and practices.

5.7. Ensure that women are decision-makers in the design of more gender-sensitive water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and services.

5.8. Ensure access to and affordability of appropriate health services for those who are at disproportionately high risk due to their gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, caste, race, disability, age, faith or other characteristics.

5.9. Protect the most vulnerable from the effects of climate change, conflict and natural disasters, in particular women and children, who are 14 times more at risk than men of dying during a disaster ²² – even more so if they have disabilities or are older women.

5.10. Ensure a gender balance at decision-making levels in Islamic institutions and organisations, including mosques, Islamic schools and faith-based organisations. Develop safeguards against the potential abuse of power which can lead to spiritual, physical, emotional, financial and other forms of abuse, and in particular where these intersect with gender-based abuse.

5.11. Uphold the Islamic and universal right to human dignity by eliminating the human trafficking and exploitation of all people.

5.12. Improve legal frameworks and regulation of digital content to prevent the criminal and sexual exploitation of children, including cyber-bullying.

5.13. Protect the health rights of economic migrants subjected to unfair working conditions, and those vulnerable to sexual abuse and gender-based violence.

5.14. Protect vulnerable groups, in particular children and women, who are on the move – including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and migrants – from sexual exploitation, gender-based violence, forced marriage, human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery.

5.15. Protect those at high risk of suffering sexual violence and human trafficking in conflict settings, and ensure policies, programmes and support services reach and respond to all survivors.

5.16. Remove the social and cultural stigmas around sexual violence and domestic abuse, and promote better support and services for both male and female survivors.

5.17. Address underlying causes of mental ill health – particularly for survivors of SGBV and human trafficking – and provide psychosocial support for refugees and IDPs.

²² Gender and Disasters. (2010). [PDF] New York: UNDP.
<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/disaster/7Disaster%20Risk%20Reduction%20-%20Gender.pdf>
[Accessed 10 Jul. 2018]

6. TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

Through the meticulous documentation of the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ we are provided with a model of ethical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual leadership that is critical in transcending superficial and discriminatory ideas of superiority based on gender, race and other types of diversity.

- 6.1. Derive Prophetic approaches to leadership from the life of the Prophet Muhammad that can help to develop gender-transformative leadership amongst men and women, to promote gender justice within the family, community, market and wider society.
- 6.2. Create an environment where gender equality is respected, and in which diversity, inclusion and representation are part of the cultural norm of organisations and society.
- 6.3. Promote women's authority in leadership positions and ensure they are regarded as intellectual equals, their expertise is recognised and respected, and their views are valued and given due consideration and credibility.
- 6.4. Develop female Islamic scholarship that contributes to Islamic thought leadership, and addresses social issues affecting Muslim women and men through faith-based approaches.
- 6.5. Promote women's participation, space and leadership in Islamic institutions and beyond by promoting legal frameworks including laws and policies to ensure the full participation of women in politics without discrimination.
- 6.6 Encourage women's leadership in political and public spaces by creating synergies which strengthen networks that encourage women to participate in politics and support the sharing of knowledge and experiences.
- 6.7. Support both male and female Islamic scholars to address and delink harmful ideas and practices related to gender norms from Islamic teachings.
- 6.8. Develop gender-transformative policies and approaches for employee development within faith institutions and faith-inspired organisations in order to ensure intellectual equality.
- 6.9. Create gender-responsive budgets, and invest in training and developing women as decision-makers, to increase representation within organisational leadership at senior management and board level.
- 6.10. Support youth organisations to adopt gender transformative policies and approaches at leadership levels.
- 6.11. Develop faith-based gender-transformative approaches to safeguarding that are survivor-centred, and ensure that the leadership at faith-based organisations is appropriately trained and meaningfully embedding positive change into policies and processes.



“Assuredly, women are the twin halves of men”

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

**STAND
UP
FOR
JUSTICE**

THE DECLARATION OF GENDER JUSTICE IN ISLAM

THE DECLARATION OF GENDER JUSTICE IN ISLAM
ACKNOWLEDGES THE VOICES OF MUSLIM WOMEN
WHO WISH TO SEEK JUSTICE AROUND THE WORLD.

WE AFFIRM

that discrimination against women has no place in Islam
and that God created all people with equal value.

WE RECOGNISE

that global discriminatory systems – patriarchy, structural racism, colonialism and
others – have oppressed Muslim women and communities, and that redressing
the power balance is essential for meaningful change.

WE ASSERT

that religious literacy, grounded in authentic faith teaching
and shaped by communities, is vital to achieving justice for women.

WE BELIEVE

that harmful biases around women's authority must be dismantled because female
leadership is essential to making change happen and addressing women's needs.

WE CALL

on all organisations working with Muslim communities to adopt the Declaration as a
blueprint for change, and dedicate themselves to removing the obstacles that block
pathways to justice.



STAND UP FOR JUSTICE NOW



**STAND UP FOR JUSTICE
IS LED BY WOMEN AND SUPPORTED
BY ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE**

For more details on the Declaration of Gender Justice in Islam and Islamic Relief's gender justice work and policies, visit www.standupforjustice.com