Message from KARAMAH's President

President Saleema Snow - The Board of Directors of KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights is excited to announce the appointment of Rahmah Abdulaleem as its new Executive Director. For the past year, Ms. Abdulaleem served as Karamah’s Interim Executive Director, where she was instrumental in the successful implementation of Karamah’s Institute on Law, Leadership and Conflict Resolution in the Philippines in March and Karamah’s flagship Law and Leadership Summer Program in July.

Ms. Abdulaleem is a frequent presenter at continuing legal education programs and an adjunct professor at the University of the District of Columbia, David A. Clarke School of Law. Prior to joining KARAMAH, Ms. Abdulaleem represented clients in a variety of automotive and pharmaceutical actions at King & Spalding LLP and The Harman Law Firm. In addition, she served for nine years on the Consultative Board of Advisors of the Mohammed Schools of Atlanta including two years as Board Chair where her leadership, fundraising and communications skills were instrumental in the organization’s growth and stability. Ms. Abdulaleem received her law degree from the University of Michigan Law School and her undergraduate degree from Duke University.

#NoMuslimBanEver

On June 26, 2018 the Supreme Court issued a decision in Trump v. Hawaii to uphold the Muslim ban. The Muslim ban discriminates against noncitizen based on nationality and violates the Constitution’s establishment clause which prohibits favoring one religion over another.

For over 25 years, KARAMAH has been working to create a global network of advocates for the rights of Muslim women, to educate public with respect to the rights in legal and social environments. The Muslim Ban stigmatizes and has a disparate effect on the women and children who comprise the majority of refugees trying to enter this country. KARAMAH agrees with the dissent of Justice Sonia Sotomayor which states, "The United States of America is a Nation built upon the promise of religious liberty. Our Founders honored that core promise by embedding the principle of religious neutrality in the First Amendment. The Court’s decision today fails to safeguard that fundamental principle."

Through education, legal, outreach, and advocacy, KARAMAH promotes human rights worldwide, particularly the rights of Muslim women and girls in Islamic and civil law. KARAMAH’s name is derived from the Arabic term for dignity, which is a God-given right. This decision serves as a stark reminder of the necessity of KARAMAH’s important work to ensure that all people are treated with karamah (dignity).
KARAMAH held the highly regarded Law and Leadership Summer Program (LLSP) from July 9th - July 27th, 2018 in Washington, DC. LLSP is KARAMAH’s annual flagship program that seeks to bring together a select group of Muslim women from around the world to study and learn from each other as well as top professors specializing in an array of fields. The program’s objective is to empower and promote women and their rights through education and research. It focuses on three core areas: Islamic jurisprudence, conflict resolution and developing leadership skills.

Thirty eight Muslim women attended this year’s program and had the opportunity to learn from experts, including Dr. Azizah El-Hibri, Dr. Amr Abdalla, Dr. Zainab Alwani, Professor Abed Awad, Ms. Ghada Ghazal, Imam Mohamed Magid, and Professor Saleema Snow. Various topics were covered, such as Muslim Women’s Rights, Islam and Domestic Violence, Interfaith Relations in Islam and Women in Paradise: The Puzzle of Hoor Eine, Spiritual Leadership and Sufism. Dr. Amr Abdalla conducted interactive Conflict Resolution workshops during the program.

LLSP consists of two sessions: the Executive and the General. The executive session is only a week, but makes up for its short time with its intensive lectures and training. It is geared towards mid-career professionals who are unable to take as much time away from their home and work lives but would still like to benefit from the program. The participants of both session themselves are truly what made this year’s-and every year’s- program one to remember. The participants embodied diversity in every sense of the word, in terms of race, nationality, regional, academic and career backgrounds, and even age. With no specific target age, KARAMAH’s LLSP contained candidates ranging from ages 17 to 65.

For some, this program aided in reinforcing their faith in the beauty of Islam, for others, rediscovering it. The religion of Islam has been persistently hijacked by a variety of its adversaries including terrorists and misogynists and LLSP helps to reclaim it. There was substantial knowledge delivered by the lawyers, professors, deans, Imams and Islamic scholars debunking myths about Islam and Sharia, and educating these women on their rights. LLSP successfully cultivated an environment where Muslim women could feel safe and express their beliefs and ideas freely.
KARAMAH meets with ARMM Delegation from the Philippines!

This April, KARAMAH met with a small delegation of mayors and vice governors from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in the Philippines to discuss issues of local governance in the United States. The United States Embassy in the Philippines requested that the delegation meet with KARAMAH representatives while in Washington, D.C., for an introduction into KARAMAH’s work, including our mission and goals and details about how our education and outreach has “created positive change and awareness for the rights of Muslim Women” (Steven Washington, Program Officer for IVLP at the U.S. State Department). At the meeting, along with the discussion on KARAMAH’s contributions to its community, representatives also spoke about the Institute on Law, Leadership and Conflict Resolution in Quezon City in the Philippines (in partnership with the U.S. Department of State and Miriam College-Women and Gender Institute). The meeting was successful and beneficial for both parties, as we were able to learn a great deal from the ARMM delegation while simultaneously aiding them in accomplishing a few of their objectives for their U.S. trip.

KARAMAH’s Community Service

KARAMAH deeply values the importance of staying connected with the community. This year KARAMAH partnered with Masjid Muhammad to host a free iftar dinner for the community. We also partnered with Masjid Muhammad to put together Eid gifts and care packages for our senior citizens.

On May 17th, we hosted our annual Iftar at the El-Hibri Foundation where founder, Dr. Azizah al-Hibri, and Imam Mohamed Magid, spoke about the various programs KARAMAH was involved in the early part of 2018.
USCIRF Summit on International Religious Freedom

On April 18th, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) hosted a summit commemorating the 20th anniversary of the passage of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. The summit included a plenary session to explore the “State of the Union” of international religious freedom which was preceded by two panels discussions on strategies for achieving positive change for religious freedom and prisoners of conscience around the world. KARAMAH was happy for the opportunity to attend this summit as well as participate in the panels, particularly the one on women and religious freedom. The panels were led by distinguished guests, who are experts of strategies for conflict resolution in their field namely, Farahnaz Ispahani, Wilson Center Global Fellow and ISCRIF commissioner Thomas Reese.

Inter-Agency Meeting at the DOJ

KARAMAH was invited to attend the Department of Justice’s Interagency Meeting with Muslim, Arab, Sikh, South Asian and Hindu (MASSAH) Communities on June 27th. The meeting was chaired by the Civil Rights Division’s Acting Assistant Attorney General, John Gore. It consisted of representatives from a number of agencies, namely, the CIA, the FBI, the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Education, and more who were invited to speak with MASSAH community leaders to discuss important matters plaguing their communities. The community groups were asked to submit these vital matters to the committee agenda in order to maximize the efficiency of the discussion by ensuring that the committee tackled the most pertinent issues in our communities. Some of these issues included hate crimes against Muslim women, resources for immigrant domestic violence survivors and TSA policies on turbans. It was our pleasure to bring awareness to some of these issues and address ways to eradicate them with individuals and organizations that can make a great impact.

Introducing KARAMAH’s New "DeBunking the Myth" Series

KARAMAH is excited to introduce our new current issues series “Debunking the Myth”. In this series we provide research that debunks false and non-credible information concerning Islam that negatively or unfairly affects Muslim Women. We have completed two issues of this series thus far. The first issue addresses the myth that Islam requires female genital mutilation, while the second addresses the popular hadith refered to as The Angels Hadith. FGM paper is currently available for download on the website.

"So be patient. Indeed, the promise of Allah is truth..."

QURAN, SURAH AL-RUM (30:60)