A MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
RAHMAH ABDULALEEM

It is a privilege to come aboard as the Interim Executive Director of KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights at this point in our history. For almost 25 years, KARAMAH has provided gender-equitable Islamic jurisprudence along with civil rights advocacy and family law representation. With the ever-changing environment in the United States and around the world, KARAMAH undertook a strategic planning process to focus the organization on its future growth and development. In 2016 and 2017, the Board of Directors decided to recommit KARAMAH to its roots in providing cutting-edge and timely Islamic legal scholarship as there were so many pressing issues that required KARAMAH’s unique perspective on Islamic jurisprudence.

KARAMAH is indebted to our former Executive Director, Aisha Rahman, who led KARAMAH over the past six years. To start the year off with our new focus, we released the first paper of our Debunking the Myth Series entitled Debunking the Myth that Islam Requires Female Circumcision. The important work that KARAMAH does is essential to the community. I look forward to helping KARAMAH continue to lead the way in providing advocacy, education, and scholarship in gender-equitable Islamic jurisprudence.
On January 9th, our Interim Executive Director presented on Domestic Violence, Muslims and the American Legal System to a group of Iraqi nationals interested in improving upon resources for domestic violence survivors in Iraq.

- On February 13, 2018, our Interim Executive Director attended in an interagency meeting at the Department of Justice to discuss issues effecting Muslim women throughout the country. Representatives from multiple government agencies and various organizations representing Muslim, Arab, Sikh, South Asian and Hindu (MASSAH) Communities participated in this meeting.

On February 6, religious leaders from around the world, including our founder, Dr. Azizah al-Hibri, gathered at the Alliance of Virtue Conference to create an initiative, called The Washington Declaration, based in faith, that prescribes behavior and action for a world of tolerance and acceptance. **Click Here** to read the entire declaration.
On Wednesday, February 28th, KARAMAH hosted an event where it gave the inaugural presentation from its Current Issues called "Debunking the Myth That Islam Requires Female Genital Mutilation." Our founder, Dr. Azizah al-Hibri and our Associate Research Director, Ghada Ghazal, cowrote our paper on Female Genital Mutilation, and presented it at the El Hibri Foundation.

Our attendees included prominent NGO leaders, community activists and government representatives who all enthusiastically praised the presentation. The presentation was also viewed on Facebook Live over 1400 times.
Through scholarship and use of the Qur'an, the *hadith*, KARAMAH debunked the myth that Female Circumcision, or female *khitan*, is required by the religion of Islam. Stay tuned for our upcoming publications on topics such as *hoor 'iyn* and angels cursing women for not obeying their husbands' sexual demands. Details on these papers to come! Keep an eye on our website for more information.

On March 22, we presented our first paper from our Debunking the Myth series with our Interim Executive Director, Rahmah Abdulaleem, and our Associate Director of Research, Ghada Ghazal at the United Nations 62nd Committee on the Status of Women. Check out our Facebook page for the full video and see our pictures above! If you want access to the full paper, click **HERE** to be sent a PDF copy.
March 2018 Institute on Law, Leadership, and Conflict Resolution in the Philippines

From March 5 through March 16, 2018, KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights presented its Law, Leadership and Conflict Resolution Institute at Miriam College in Quezon City, Philippines in celebration of International Women's Month. This Institute was organized by KARAMAH in partnership with Miriam College and their Women and Gender Institute. The Institute’s participants were mostly from the Philippines but there were also participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Singapore for a total of 37 participants. KARAMAH customized, revamped and streamlined the Institute that was patterned after its highly regarded Law and Leadership Summer Program to touch on issues, topics and concerns that were specific to the Philippine Muslim Community in the time allocated for the Institute. KARAMAH provided the Institute’s participants with cutting-edge Islamic jurisprudence from credible moderate Muslim scholars to address the longstanding grievances and inequities experienced by the Muslim community in the Mindanao region of the Philippines. KARAMAH's moderate Muslim scholars throughout the Institute were able to counteract some of the misinformation that have been advocated by radical Muslim Imams and extremist recruiters.

Participants graduating from the Philippines Institute on Law, Leadership, and Conflict Resolution

Interim Executive Director Rahmah Abdulaleem smiles with a participant on graduation day.
In addition to the Institute, we conducted a one day Imams’ conference that was attended by over 100 Imams from throughout the Philippines. While in the Philippines, KARAMAH participated in several parallel events outside of the Institute. KARAMAH worked closed with the Embassy to schedule events that would enhance exposure to KARAMAH’s gender-equitable Islamic jurisprudence to the broader Muslim community in the Philippines. It was clear the effect the Institute had on the participants during the graduation ceremony for the Institute. Hearing participants from the different regions talk about what they learned during the Institute was inspiring. This Institute was a special project for KARAMAH and is definitely something to be replicated in other countries were moderate Muslim voices are needed to counteract the extremists who are trying to misrepresent the religion of Islam.

A picture from our joint session with the Imams Conference and the participants.

Dr. Zainab Alwani presents at the Philippines Institute for Law, Leadership, and Conflict Resolution.
Don't forget about KARAMAH's 16th annual LLSP Program is accepting applications until May 15, and our 2nd annual Executive Session is still accepting recommendations as well. Click HERE for more information!