

In this Issue

[Recent Events](#)

[Civil Rights Division](#)

[Law and Leadership Summer Program
2013](#)

Quick Links

[Featured Video](#)

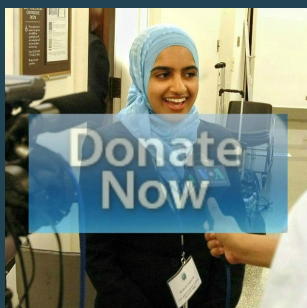
[Foundations of Islamic Law Scholarship
Series](#)

[Alumna Spotlight: Ferishta Stanekzai
\(Afghanistan\)](#)



[Upcoming Events](#)

[Training "Addressing Domestic
Violence in the American Muslim
Community" Atlanta, GA](#)



Our Monthly Newsletter

Assalamu Alaykum!

These are exciting times at KARAMAH. As spring ends and summer begins we are eagerly planning our most important event of the year, our Law and Leadership Summer Program (LLSP). For over a decade, this program has brought together exceptional Muslim women leaders from all over the world for a three-week training. During this time, renowned faculty from all over the United States come to D.C. to help these women understand Islamic law, become more dynamic leaders, and learn to resolve issues in their communities by skillfully implementing the conflict resolution tools they learned in the program with an authentic and empowering Islamic perspective. The truth is, though, that these women teach and inspire us everyday. You will read below about LLSP alumna Ferishta Stanekzai from Afghanistan, who confounds the rhetoric of mainstream media by showing that Afghan women *are* active members and leaders of their society. We at KARAMAH are looking forward to this year's program---so, come along with us.

As we look forward to the coming month, I also reflect on KARAMAH's work in the past few months with our spring lecture series. Through these semesterly series, KARAMAH brings the community scholarship on issues and areas that may not get attention, but are important for our society. In this newsletter, you will see a video from Professor Michael Gomez of NYU. Professor Gomez came to KARAMAH to give us an excerpt of a class he has been teaching about centuries of Islam in America. Many Muslims are unaware that our roots in the U.S. date back centuries. Why is this relevant? Promoting this historical scholarship is not merely an academic exercise, but a powerful tool in advocating for the civil rights of Muslims. Muslims are struggling to claim our right to an American identity--not because we deny our patriotism, but because others want to label us as outsiders. KARAMAH recently received an upsurge in reports further confirming this trend. One report came from a Pakistani American law student who was yelled at a coffee shop to "go back to where she came from." The scholarship of respected academics, like Professor Gomez, are vital to changing this narrative, and KARAMAH is one of the few places where they can find welcoming platforms to engage with diverse audiences.

As I close today, I ask you to support KARAMAH's efforts by investing in the future women leaders from our community. Support another Muslim woman leader by contributing to our LLSP Scholarship Fund. This education is changing the lives of Muslim women and their communities all over the world. This is an effort you can be proud of.

Yours,

Aisha Rahman, Esq.
Executive Director
May, 2013

Report by the Task Force for Detainee Treatment brings constitutional law, international treaty issues to the forefront

Detainee Treatment

Legal Process of the Federal Government After September 11 Rendition and the "Black Sites" The Role of Medical Professionals in Detention and Interrogation Operations True and False Confessions: The Efficacy of Torture and Brutal Interrogations Effects and Consequences of U.S. Policies Recidivism The Obama Administration The Role of Congress

The Report of The Constitution Project's Task Force on Detainee Treatment

Photo courtesy of The Constitution Project

A groundbreaking report was recently issued by the Constitution Project's Task Force on Detainee Treatment. A bipartisan, non-political watchdog organization, the Constitution Project brings together experts from the policy, academic, legal, and military communities to address an array of challenging constitutional issues.

The Task Force on Detainee Treatment, of which Dr. Azizah al-Hibri is a member, worked tirelessly for two years to produce a thorough 600-page [report](#) documenting torture techniques used by American personnel against those held in custody after 9/11. The report, issued on April 16th, 2013, concluded indisputably that the United States engaged in the practice of torture, and that additionally, "cruel, inhumane and degrading" tactics were used by American personnel in direct violation of international treaties and U.S. laws. To read more, click [here](#).

USCIRF Annual Report on religious freedom in Burma, Western Europe



Photo courtesy of Rusty Stewart

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), in which KARAMAH's Chair, Dr. Azizah al-Hibri was a Commissioner for the last two years, recently published its [2013 Annual Report](#). Among other critical analyses, there was significant emphasis placed on Burma and the egregious human rights violations taking place there against Muslim and Christian groups. The Burmese situation today is perhaps the worst worldwide in terms of religious freedom violations, and has caused major tragedies. You can read more about this situation in the report. Additionally, for the first time the report has included a section on Western Europe as an area to be monitored for religious freedom violations. [Read more.](#)

Report on NYPD surveillance tactics reveals marginalization of Muslim individuals and communities



Recently, a coalition of faith-based leaders, attorneys, organizers and advocates published a [report](#) titled "Mapping Muslims: NYPD Spying and its Impact on American Muslims." Among the authors of the report were Nermeen Arastu, a volunteer attorney with the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) and Diala Shamas, a Liman Fellow at the Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility (CLEAR) project at Main Street Legal Services, Inc. at CUNY School of Law. The report detailed specific NYPD surveillance practices targeting American Muslims, reiterating a fact the NYPD itself has conceded-the surveillance campaign has failed thus far to reveal any threats. Complete with interviews of affected community members, the report details also the negative impact these surveillance practices have had on the lives of individuals and the greater Muslim community. Detriments range from students feeling isolated on college campuses, to avoidance of religious spaces for fear of being labeled overtly "Muslim." Read [more](#).

KARAMAH-EU hosts lecture on Islamic law, women's rights with Professor Asifa Quraishi-Landes



Continuing the KARAMAH tradition of furthering education about women's rights in Islam, KARAMAH-EU invited Professor Asifa Quraishi-Landes to speak on Islamic law and women's rights at the Free University of Brussels (VUB). Titled "Islamic Law and its Importance for Women's Rights", Ms. Quraishi-Landes addressed the mechanics and principles of Islamic jurisprudence. Ms. Quraishi-Landes also imparted upon the audience the importance of understanding that women's rights have a strong basis in the Islamic tradition, not just within a secular framework. Stay tuned for more updates from KARAMAH-EU!

Discussing KARAMAH's scholarly approach to civil rights advocacy, Aisha Bahman, Esq. speaks at Richmond Law

Rahman, Esq. speaks at Richmond Law



KARAMAH believes that quality education can change societies. As a human rights organization led by Muslim women lawyers, KARAMAH's work is particularly useful to legal professionals and students, who will be in the best position to use the information as future advocates. With this in mind KARAMAH's Executive Director, Aisha Rahman, visited the University of Richmond's School of Law this month, where she addressed the relationship between family law and civil rights. Many in our communities believe that family law issues are women's issues - that the issues of domestic violence, for example, affect only women. In her presentation, Ms. Rahman linked two family law cases that demonstrate the the civil rights impact family law cases can have on the entire Muslim community in the U.S. [Read more.](#)

What do you know about the history of Islam in America?

Click the image below to watch the video from our spring lecture "Centuries of Islam in America: The History of African American Muslims".



Alumna Spotlight: Ferishta Stanekzai (Afghanistan)

Lack of economic opportunities, harsh living conditions, children on dusty streets working to earn



desperately needed money for their families, and widows struggling for survival-these are among the reasons that Ms. Stanekzai, an alumna of KARAMAH's 2012 Law and Leadership Summer program, decided to create an association where she could help to "bring Afghan people hope once again". Ms. Stanekzai knows that today it is easy for Afghans to lose their sense of hope. She seeks to "uplift them through words of encouragement" and by proving that Afghan women can become leaders and start their own organizations. In her words, Ms. Stanekzai seeks to "make her people smile again."

Ms. Stanekzai helped establish an association by the name of the Helping Hand Society in 2008. The organization is made up entirely of volunteers, and aims specifically to reach and assist Afghanistan's poorest families in the following ways: 1. Increasing families' economic base by contributing to their capital and helping to improve earning capacity; 2. supporting education for children of poor families by enrolling them in school and English courses with expenses paid by Helping Hand Society; 3. offering and supporting healthcare initiatives for people in need; 4. assisting families with little to no income family by providing basic needs (i.e. widowed women, the elderly, etc.).

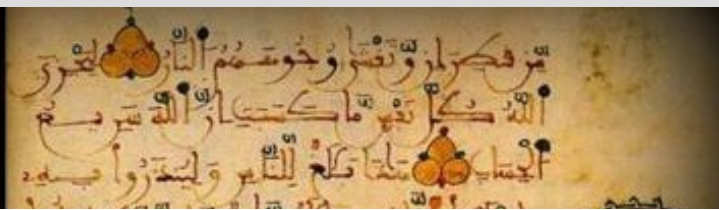
Ms. Stanekzai says that participation in LLSP gave her the opportunity to meet with other Muslim women and provided exposure for the condition of women in Afghanistan. She felt that the world held a certain image of Afghan women as victims. While women in Afghanistan have endured hardship, she says, they have new hope for the future. LLSP gave Ms. Stanekzai the chance to share her challenges, ideas and optimism with other Muslim women from around the globe. The support she received from the program and members of her graduating class has increased her confidence, and equipped her with the tools and networks necessary to make her organization a success.

-Upcoming Events-

May 29-31: KARAMAH Training, "Addressing Domestic Violence in the American Muslim Community" coming to Atlanta, GA!



Don't miss the final article in our
Foundations of Islamic Law
Scholarship Series



"Diversity and Pluralism: A Qur'anic Perspective"

by

Mohammad Hashim Kamali

Click to read more.



**The deadline to apply for LLSP 2013 has been extended for U.S. applicants only.
Click on the image below to learn more and apply online!**

(As of May, restrictions for international applicants apply due to average Visa processing times in proximity to the 2013 LLSP start date. For questions, please contact Eugene Hummel at ehummel@karamah.org)

