

KARAMAH NEWS

SPRING 2016

Dear Friends,

The year is quickly passing, and it is difficult to believe that we are already approaching the blessed month of Ramadan in just a few weeks. KARAMAH has remained busy, as ever, to advance our goals of dignity for all, informed scholarship on Islam, and advocating for the civil rights of American Muslim women.

This spring, KARAMAH Founder Dr. Azizah al-Hibri spoke at The Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University panel on "*Shari'ah* and the Promotion of Nationality Rights and Gender Equity in the Middle East and North Africa ("MENA") Region." Likewise, I joined Interfaith Voices to discuss how faith community leaders in America can play a more active role in combatting and ending domestic violence.

Building on this premise, you'll read below about KARAMAH's segment during the Peaceful Families Project's workshop to train American Muslim imams on the basics of the law - and what pitfalls they might run into while doing their job. I also had the privilege of speaking with students from Manhattan Country School about immigration and family law-they were traveling to DC to advocate on behalf of refugees. These young people have a voice, and they lent it to do what they could to ensure that each of us enjoys our God-given dignity.

Finally, KARAMAH is pleased to announce the addition of a new team member. Qasim Rashid, a long time friend and supporter of KARAMAH, has joined us this month as our Director of Civil Rights & Policy. His addition to KARAMAH provides us additional legal expertise on advancing our goal of civil rights for American Muslim women.

One last, but certainly not least important, note. I had the distinct pleasure to know and talk with Ambassador Clovis Maksoud during my time here at KARAMAH. He was a dear friend to us and his wisdom, kindness, and gentility were felt in every moment spent with him. Our time with him was too short, but I am proud that his many legacies, particularly his belief in women's rights and gender equity, will live on.

Best,
Aisha Rahman
KARAMAH Executive Director

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**On Developing a Jurisprudence of Necessity
to Grant Stateless Children Nationality
Through the Mother**



On April 7, 2016, KARAMAH Founder Dr. Azizah al-Hibri spoke at The Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University panel on "*Shari'ah* and the Promotion of Nationality Rights and Gender Equity in the Middle East and North Africa ("MENA") Region." Mr. Amit Sen, UNHCR's regional protection officer on statelessness for the Middle East and North Africa, joined Dr. al-Hibri on the panel.

The panelists examined the issue of statelessness emanating from the current refugee crisis in the MENA

focusing on the nationality laws of the region. Nationality laws in the MENA are hybrid legal systems drawing norms from both secular and religious traditions.

[Read more](#)



KARAMAH Participates in Interfaith Voices' Religious Leaders as First Responders to Domestic Violence

On May 12, 2016, KARAMAH's Executive Director Aisha Rahman participated in Interfaith Radio's "Religious Leaders as First Responders to Domestic Violence," a panel discussion about the work of faith-based leaders in

eradicating the epidemic of domestic violence in America. Below is Interfaith Radio's description of the event:

How do ancient religious texts and practices protect-- or endanger-- victims of domestic violence? Often, victims of abuse will go to a pastor or a rabbi before they go to the police. But experts say without proper training, well intentioned religious leaders sometimes do more harm than good. We speak with a group of interfaith advocates who are trying to change that. To listen in, visit Interfaith Radio's website.

[Read more](#)



KARAMAH Trains Imams and Leaders at "Preventing and Responding to Domestic Violence" Workshop

During the weekend of April 16-17, 2016, KARAMAH's Executive Director Aisha Rahman trained imams and leaders at the Peaceful Families Project and United Muslim Relief National Imam Training Workshop: "Preventing and

Responding to Domestic Violence." The two-day training helped a room of a dozen imams and community leaders address the intersections between domestic violence and family issues within Muslim communities. KARAMAH's portion of the training focused on legal issues that imams need to be cognizant of and consider as they are advising their congregations.

[Read more](#)



Dr. Azizah al-Hibri and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick Laud Marrakesh Declaration at National Press Club Newsmaker Event

At a Newsmaker event on May 10, 2016 at the National Press Club, KARAMAH Founder Dr. Azizah al-Hibri and former Archbishop of Washington, DC Cardinal Theodore McCarrick praised the results of the Marrakesh conference

on the rights of religious minorities in Muslim countries convened by King Mohammed VI of Morocco in late January. Attended by Cardinal McCarrick and Professor al-Hibri along with hundreds of religious scholars and clergy representing a broad range of religions and schools of thought within Islam, the historic three-day conference led to the Marrakesh Declaration, a document calling for an end to bigotry and condemning the use of violence and terror in the name of religion.

"By their actions [extremist groups like Daesh] have tried to destroy the very religious freedom

which the Koran and the Prophet himself have declared to be the essence of Islamic belief," said Professor al-Hibri at the Press Club event. "How can we educate about Islamic justice without addressing this important issue? That can only be accomplished by knowledgeable Muslim jurists... teaching [their] views to the public." The Marrakesh Declaration, she explained, is one step in educating the public about the right to freedom of conscience in Islam.

[Read more](#)



KARAMAH Speaks to Students Advocating for Syrian Refugees

On April 6, 2016, KARAMAH hosted a group of 40 students from the Manhattan Country School. The students came to Washington D.C. to participate in the American Immigration Lawyer's Association National Day of Action and were involved in an activism project to advocate on behalf of Syrian refugees. Aisha Rahman,

Executive Director of KARAMAH, worked with the students on several topics to help them understand the myriad issues which can make difficult the process of accessing justice, especially for immigrants.

[Read more](#)



KARAMAH President Featured in Harvard Law Today

KARAMAH President Raheemah Abdulaleem was recently featured in Harvard Law Today for her work as a civil rights attorney in the White House. Ms. Abdulaleem wrote on the White House blog about her personal experiences with discrimination as a hijab-wearing Muslim-American woman, while representing the Office

of Administration in issues such as equal employment opportunity compliance and fiscal and appropriation law.

"Outside of work, Abdulaleem serves as president of KARAMAH, a nonprofit group based in Washington which provides accessible legal scholarship to Muslims and non-Muslims about issues related to Islamic law, family law, and civil rights law. She has taught courses on leadership during the group's summer law and leadership program for Muslim women from the U.S. and abroad." To read more, [visit the Harvard Law Today website](#) .

Aisha Rahman Speaks at Legislative Evening at the Islamic Society of Baltimore

A promotional graphic for a legislative evening event. The background is dark blue with white text. On the left, there are three small portrait photos with captions: Dr. Zainab Chaudry, CAIR; Aisha Rahman, Esq., KARAMAH; and Tajbil Sheikh, Student. The main text reads: "2016 LEGISLATIVE EVENING BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER SATURDAY APRIL 23, 2016 5:00 PM AT THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE".

2016 LEGISLATIVE EVENING
BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

SATURDAY APRIL 23, 2016
5:00 PM
AT THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE

Dr. Zainab Chaudry, CAIR
"Islamophobia in the 2016 Election & Importance of Voting"

Aisha Rahman, Esq., KARAMAH
"Understanding your Islamic and legal rights: the Karamah approach"

Tajbil Sheikh, Student
Ghadeer Mansour, Student
"Eid Holidays & Bullying in Schools"

On April 23, KARAMAH Executive Director Aisha Rahman spoke at the 2016 Legislative Evening at the Islamic Society of Baltimore. The outreach event was intended to create a space of dialogue and communication between local lawmakers and legislators throughout the state of Maryland. Ms. Rahman focused her speech on her own personal journey to her current work promoting

gender equity from an Islamic framework at KARAMAH. She reinforced the need for Muslim communities to strengthen their understanding and relationship with Islam. KARAMAH believes that through proper knowledge and education of Islam, society can be reminded of its obligation to promote justice and equity. Islam, she mentioned, is also self-reflective and encourages all people to stand up for truth by eradicating patriarchy, xenophobia, racism, and other injustices.

[Read more](#)

ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT



Ailya Vajid, a Brilliant Embodiment of Scholarship, Service, and Leadership

In so many ways, Ailya Vajid represents the intersection of scholarship, service, and leadership which KARAMAH encourages and instills in young women. A 2011 graduate of the Law and Leadership summer program, Ailya has devoted her life to strengthening and empowering young Muslims. Currently she serves as a Multifaith Advisor in the Chaplains' Office at Gustavus Adolphus College and as Associate Chaplain for Muslim and Interfaith Life at Carleton College.

Much of Ailya's work and interests stem from her background in Islamic studies and scholarship. In addition to graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Religion and Islamic Studies from Swarthmore College, and a Masters of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School, Ailya has spent time in both Syria and Yemen to pursue research and study Arabic. She has also spent time in Karachi, Pakistan, working for girls' education.

[Read more](#)

WELCOME TO THE KARAMAH TEAM!



Qasim Rashid, Esq. Joins KARAMAH

Qasim Rashid, Esq. joins KARAMAH as Director of Civil Rights and Policy. Qasim holds a Bachelor's of Science in Marketing from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a juris doctorate from the University of Richmond School of Law. He is also a visiting fellow at Harvard University's School of Islamic Studies. [Read more](#)

SAVE THE DATE

**September 17-18, 2016: Legal Workshop
The Islamic Marriage Contract:
What Every Lawyer in America Needs to Know**

Speakers:



Aisha Rahman, Esq.
KARAMAH Executive Director



Abed Awad, Esq.
KARAMAH Board Member
Lawyer and Specialist in Islamic
and Middle Eastern Law

STAY CONNECTED:

www.karamah.org



KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights is a nonprofit organization committed to promoting human rights globally, especially gender equity, religious freedom and civil rights in the United States. It pursues its mission through education, legal outreach and advocacy. Have any questions or concerns? Email karamah@karamah.org