
KARAMAH NEWS

DECEMBER 10, 2015

Dear Friends,

I write, first, to wish you all peace and blessings. These last months, even weeks and days, have been difficult ones for our global community. As our year comes to a close, we at KARAMAH are first and foremost prayerful for change.

Because of recent events, many in our community are feeling the need for rapid response. I recognize that each of us-advocacy groups, religious leaders, political leaders, and individuals have their respective roles in making this world a better place. I believe that good people are working towards the same goal-our essential human rights.

So what is KARAMAH's role? When KARAMAH was founded in the early 90's, the feminist movement had just taken the global stage. Our sisters who had fought alongside our founders in the U.S. were crying out for the liberation of Muslim women instead of deferring to Muslim women to tell their own stories in their own voice. As we worked on global issues of gender equity, we also had to attend to our civil rights at home. This became our primary concern. We had educational concerns as well. For example, we were the first organization to invite various leaders of the Muslim community to the Supreme Court building, where they heard remarks in 1996 by legal scholars and experts on the constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and the separation of Church and State. During the Clinton administration, KARAMAH advocated against the use of secret evidence in criminal proceedings and the use of profiling against people of color, particularly Muslims, which had already begun.

Events developed quickly as we ushered in a new millennium. Soon after September 11, KARAMAH's president met with President Bush at the Islamic Center of Washington, DC, to calm the situation. These were the days of national sorrow and confusion in which we all shared. Our concerns post 9/11 turned to two major issues: the first concerned the expansive definition of "material support" under the law that deemed help even to widows and orphans in Muslim countries highly risky and problematic. KARAMAH, as well as a wide array of American organizations, made repeated efforts to have this definition reexamined. The results in this area were limited. The second related to Muslim, Arab, and South Asian men who were being listed and their movements monitored in the infamous NSEERS program. We joined others to fight against the NSEERS program, which was eventually suspended. Unfortunately, the impact of profiling and NSEERS on our societies continues on till today.

These are a few examples from KARAMAH's history, to remind us all that we have had hard times before and we have survived them. Whether it is in the continued compromise of the civil rights and dignity of black lives, or the potential revival of one of the darkest times in our country-the internment of Japanese Americans-we are in a continued state of struggle.

KARAMAH's vision has always approached challenges with a great deal of thought that defined both our long-term strategy and our role within our global community. This is evident from our lecture series and summer programs. Although this approach is time consuming, it bears stable, substantive and peaceful results. So, we are committed to continuing it and developing it even further by constantly broadening our educational reach, sharpening our educational tools,

and using both to strengthen our civil rights advocacy, as well as advocacy on important social issues, such as domestic violence. With your help and the help of our allies, we intend to continue our advocacy through education in hopes that ignorance will not prevail.

Sincerely,

Aisha Rahman
Executive Director, KARAMAH

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Religious Freedom Event highlights Violations and calls for Respecting the Constitution



"It is apparent that despite religious freedom for all in our country, the reality is religious freedom is only for some." Aisha Rahman, Esq.

On December 3rd, 2015, KARAMAH brought together the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom and senior adviser on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to shine a light on the true state of religious freedom in the United States and Europe. Ambassador David Saperstein and Engy Abdelkader, along with KARMAAH executive director Aisha Rahman delivered introductory remarks. The ensuing conversation was moderated by General Secretary for the Board of Church and Society at the United Methodist Church, Reverend Susan Henry-Crowe. [Read more](#)



Muslim-Jewish Roundtable offers High Level Scholarly Forum



On December 2nd, 2015, KARAMAH held a "Muslim-Jewish Round Table" convening Muslim and Jewish leaders and scholars from faith and academic institutions. This high level scholarly forum was part of KARAMAH's efforts in furthering interfaith understanding. While many forums focus on mere understanding between faiths, KARAMAH designed this forum to elevate the level of discourse to a scholarly level, inviting speakers to delve into nuances often not discussed. The two topics of the day were: The Concept of the "Other" in the Islamic and Jewish Tradition and Family Law: the Cornerstone of Muslim and Jewish Society. [Read more](#)



Arab IVLP Leaders Learn from KARAMAH's Model of Human Rights Advocacy and Awareness

On Tuesday December 1st, 2015 a delegation of 11 leaders from the MENA region visited KARAMAH as part of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program on Human and Civil Rights Advocacy and

Awareness. The visitors came from different countries in the Middle East and North Africa and represented different governmental and governmental and non-governmental institutions. Among the group of leaders were human rights attorneys from Algeria, Kuwait, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, human rights activists from Iraq, Egypt, and the Palestinian territories, and a member of the Tunisian parliament. [Read more](#)



KARAMAH at ABA's International Family Mediator Training

Ms. Rahman relied on [the research of KARAMAH's Senior Advisor on Conflict Resolution, Dr. Amr Abdalla](#). She highlighted the basis of conflict resolution in Islam. On many occasions, the Qur'an and the prophetic example calls on dispute interveners to resort to Islam's

messages of justice, equality and freedom [...] As Muslims aspire to model their behavior after the Qur'an and the Sunnah, it becomes the task of Muslim conflict interveners to replicate the process of restoring the Islamic principles by clarifying to conflicted parties the misperceptions and negative practices that have influenced their lives. [Read more](#)



Domestic Violence through the Lens of Marginalized Communities: Improving Our Response"

On November 6th, 2015, KARAMAH offered a cultural sensitivity training workshop to service providers, attorneys and advocates. Aisha Rahman, Esq., KARAMAH executive director explained the dynamic of violence in marginalized and immigrant homes in an attempt to elucidate the cultural barriers that Muslim and Muslim immigrant survivors face in experiencing and

reporting domestic violence and dispelled some misconceptions about Islam "validating" domestic violence. Julia Bizer, Esq. KARAMAH Family Law attorney, led the workshop participants in a safety planning exercise to identify how they would safety plan for different DV situations. [Read more](#)



Don't Target Our Children: FBI's "Don't Be a Puppet" Website in Schools Must be Dropped

KARAMAH along with the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) and the Sikh Coalition welcome the temporary suspension of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) "Don't Be a Puppet" website. [Read more](#)



KARAMAH is Accepting Applications for Spring 2016 Internship Program

Our internship program is designed to give interns full access to the academic, creative, and administrative operations at KARAMAH. This is a fantastic opportunity for students to expand their knowledge and help make positive change at the same time.

[**Apply now!**](#)



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



KARAMAH Founder speaks to MSNBC about responsible rhetoric in the aftermath of terror.



Domestic Violence: Why doesn't She Leave?



Love Like the Prophet 2015 Highlights

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