

### Monthly Newsletter

**June 2015** 

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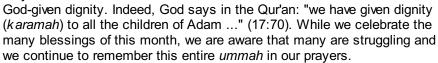


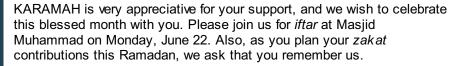
Dear Friends.

On behalf of the entire KARAMAH family, I want to wish all of you a very happy and blessed Ramadan.

This blessed month could not have come at a better time. Our global communities need to heal. Every day, it seems, there are new reports of the various struggles and violence afflicting our communities both in the U.S. and globally. Even today we are saddened by the news of a potential hate crime at a house of worship in Charleston, S.C.

This Ramadan, KARAMAH is recommitting itself to advocating for justice. We remind ourselves of our duty to advocate for our collective





Best,

Aisha Rahman Executive Director







Earlier this spring, KARAMAH held the Muslim Women Leaders and Scholars Summit in Washington, D.C. The Summit was convened in order to discuss pressing issues facing Muslim communities in America. The participants of the D.C. Summit are grass roots community leaders and Islamic scholars. They included leaders from the legal, educational, mental health, social services, and governmental fields as well as other disciplines and backgrounds.

After intense deliberations, and through *shura*, the process of consensus, the participants agreed upon the following priorities that need to be addressed collaboratively for the betterment of our communities and the country:

- 1. Strengthening **institutional structures** that promote inclusive, healthy cultures based on collaboration and mutual respect.
- 2. Protecting and improving the **health and wellness** of our communities by reexamining the physical and mental ills that afflict us and addressing the stigmas surrounding certain issues.
- Advocating for transformative justice which includes our basic civil rights, racial equality, gender equity and justice in all areas of human rights affecting our communities
- 4. Strengthening **community relations** and enhancing inter- and intra-faith relations
- 5. Enhancing **Islamic literacy** by educating ourselves about Islam and ensuring that the institutions from which we seek knowledge are held to a high standards.

Read the D.C. Summit Statement of Priorities

# Supreme Court Ruling an Epic Win for Religious Freedom



KARAMAH welcomes the U.S. Supreme Court ruling (8-1) in favor of Samantha Elauf, a Muslim American woman who wears a headscarf. Ms. Elauf was denied a job by Abercrombie & Fitch Co. on the grounds that her headscarf violated the company's "look policy." The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) sued Abercrombie on behalf of Ms. Elauf and prevailed. The Supreme Court ruled that "an employer may not make an applicant's religious practice, confirmed or otherwise, a factor in employment decisions." KARAMAH was a signatory to two amici curiae briefs for the EEOC in this case. We celebrate this important victory which ensures religious freedom and protection in the workplace.

**Read the Supreme Court's Decision** 

# Did you Watch PBS Documentary Featuring KARAMAH?



Last April, PBS broadcast a special episode of its show *To the Contrary* with Bonnie Erbé titled "Gender Equality in Islam." The documentary covered KARAMAH's work in the US and globally. KARAMAH scholars from around the globe were interviewed about our vision: that we live in a world in which all human beings, regardless of gender or other differences, enjoy their God-given right of dignity. KARAMAH believes that through education, women will be empowered to transform archaic, culture-based interpretations of women's status in Islam, to the betterment of themselves and their communities. This documentary showed KARAMAH and its impact around the world, featuring especially our work in Asia and North Africa.

**Watch it Now!** 

### The Status of Women and Democracy: A Discussion with U.S.-MEPI Leaders for Democracy Fellows



On Monday, May 18th, KARAMAH's executive director Aisha Rahman and family law staff attorney Julia Bizer met with eight fellows from the U.S.-Middle East Partnership

Initiative's Leaders for Democracy Fellowship (LDF) program to conduct a workshop educating the group about gender equity in Islam, Islamic principles of democracy, and Muslim women's financial rights. The fellows hailed from numerous countries in the Middle East including Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, and Syria, and the topics of discussion focused on misinterpretations of Islamic law and obstacles to Muslim women's empowerment in the U.S. and globally.

**Read more!** 

# Save the Date: Iftar at Masjid Muhammad on June 22nd



Please join us on Monday June 22nd for KARAMAH's Annual Community *Iftar* at Masjid Muhammad in Washington D.C. We are looking forward to breaking our fast with you.

Find more information about the event here!

### You Can Still Apply to LLSP!



We are still accepting applications from American Muslim women interested in participating in KARAMAH's <u>Law and Leadership Summer Program (LLSP)</u> July 27th- August 15th, 2015. We already received numerous applications from around the globe and we are happy to report that LLSP this year will have participants from Western Europe, South East Europe, Africa, Central Asia and North America.

#### **Apply today!**

#### Meet our Fantastic Summer Interns



Caitlin McCallister University of Richmond



Akua Amaning John Marshall Law School



Eman Humsy Mount Holyoke College



Taryn Armstrong The University of British Columbia



Lorentz Hansen The University of Chicago

Read more about our interns <a href="here">here</a>
Do you want to intern at KARAMAH as well? <a href="Apply here!">Apply here!</a>

## Join us in Welcoming our New Staff Members!



El Batoule Alaoui Managing Director



Julia Bizer, Esq. Staff Attorney



Hind Essayegh Communications Associate

### Support KARAMAH

"Who is it that would loan God a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is God who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned." (Qur'an, 2:45)

Support KARAMAH while buying Ramadan or *Eid* gifts online.

Donate through **AmazonSmile** OR **on our Website** 



#### KARAMAH ON THE WEB











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