



KARAMAH

MUSLIM WOMEN LAWYERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

5-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE REPORT

HIGHLIGHTING KARAMAH'S ACTIVITIES FROM 2013 TO 2017

"We have given karamah (dignity) to the children of Adam." (17:70)

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Letter from Our Executive Director

As the Executive Director of KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights, I am constantly impressed by the great work KARAMAH has done over the years. KARAMAH has been one of the pioneers in the non-profit organization world serving the Muslim community. There were so many wonderful events and honors over the years but we could only highlight a few. As a thank you to our long time supporters, we wanted to share this five year retrospective of the great work that was done from 2013 to 2017 here at KARAMAH. We can only continue to do this vitally important work with your support. Please consider a tax deductible donation to support KARAMAH as we continue our mission to educate and empower Muslim women around the world.

Sincerely,



Rahmah A. Abdulaleem, Esq.

History of KARAMAH

KARAMAH was incorporated in 1993 by Dr. Azizah al-Hibri. The name KARAMAH, which means "dignity" in Arabic, comes from the Qur'anic verse 17:70 which reads, "We have given dignity to the children of Adam." The verse establishes the fact that human dignity is bestowed upon all human beings by God, regardless of gender. Dr. al-Hibri wanted to make this idea known, especially to Muslim women, and advance the view that Islam doesn't require a choice between human rights and faith.

KARAMAH's work has led us to working within branches of government in the U.S. and abroad, the media, academics, and a host of other human rights and grassroots organizations. Today, KARAMAH has a talented team based in Washington, D.C. focused on expanding both the educational programs and research endeavors in the United States and around the world.

Our Mission

KARAMAH's mission is to educate both Muslims and non-Muslims about the just, gender equitable foundation of Islam. In particular, KARAMAH's mission is to provide the community with Islamic jurisprudence that emphasizes gender equity and encourages intellectual growth, conflict resolution and leadership development. We couple this education with advocacy that promotes our core value: that dignity is God-given.

2013

KARAMAH Opens a Division in Europe

In March 2013, KARAMAH launched a division in Europe with the EU.

Dr. Azizah al-Hibri, Chair and Founder of KARAMAH and former Executive Director Aisha Rahman traveled to Brussels to celebrate the launch of KARAMAH-EU. While there, Dr. al-Hibri lectured to a diverse crowd at the main Islamic center in Brussels:



Centre Islamique et Culturel de Belgique.

Dr. al-Hibri was the first woman to ever lecture at the mosque. While there, KARAMAH also trained over 50 imams from all over Belgium on gender issues within Islam—specifically the potential damage that can be caused from those not understanding fully Islamic law or civil law. Dr. al-Hibri provided four stories from the US which showcased the actual damage caused in US courts, affecting Muslims' civil rights, by faulty "expert" testimony. In one case, for example,

a leader testified that the mahr was actually a "bride price." Ignorance of this magnitude is compromising the health of the Muslim family all over the world.

KARAMAH-EU will continue to advocate for the rights of women and men, human rights and civil rights, and religious freedom in the EU. The work has universal applicability, but with offices now in the EU, the particular and careful attention that this region needs will be met by KARAMAH-EU's able steering committee.

2014

KARAMAH Presents at UN CSW

In March 2014, representatives from KARAMAH traveled to the UN to educate the thousands of women and men convening at the annual Commission on the Status of Women on two topics. The two topics were “How Education about Islam can Economically Empower Women” and “How Civil Rights Abuses are Keeping Muslim Women on the Margins and Denying Their Access to Education.” Judge Mohamed Ibrahim and Dr. Bushra Jabr presented case studies in Islamic history as well as modern examples of the many women who were economically empowered by Islam and were entrepreneurs in Islam’s early history and today.



Women's History Month Event with featured speaker Raheemah Abdulaleem

On March 19th, people gathered at KARAMAH to celebrate Women's History Month with presentations from three African American Muslim women. The evening included laughter, shared experiences, education, but most of all, inspiration from speakers who've experienced Islam from three different perspectives. As



the featured speaker, Raheemah Abdulaleem, Esq. was a Department of Justice attorney in 2014 and she represented employees in their quest for justice in the workplace. She recounted several stories of Muslims who wanted to exercise their religious freedoms in their place of employment.

What is it like being Muslim on a college campus when most are afraid or embarrassed to be Muslim? What is it like growing up in the Church of Christ and then hearing the "most beautiful sound," the call to prayer (adhan)? Who are the role models for young black women growing up Muslim? Those questions were answered and more as KARAMAH continued its mission to provide a platform for the voices of Muslim women to be heard.

Racial and Religious Town Hall



On June 1st, KARAMAH hosted a town hall to discuss racial and religious discrimination and profiling. The featured panelists were prominent civil rights leaders familiar with the Muslim community.

The event captured the essence of the Muslim American Stories project. Each speaker was able to reflect on the current state of affairs, but also reflect on the consequences of these violations on our community as a whole.



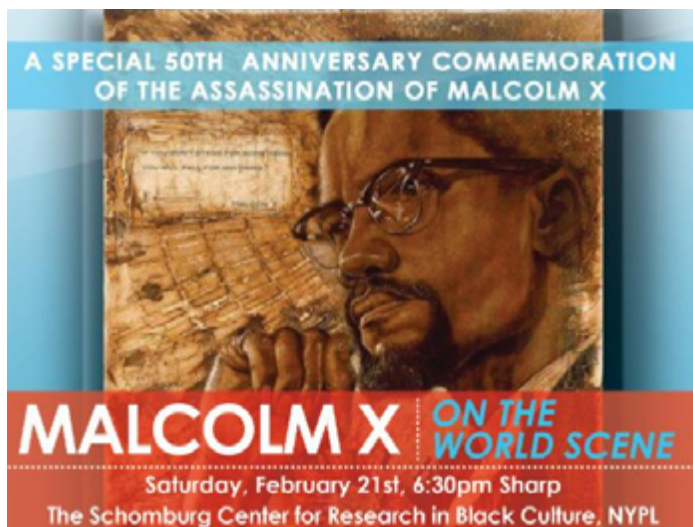
Restoring Human Dignity: Exposing the Truth of U.S. Torture

On June 6th, KARAMAH, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, the Constitution Project, and the Qurtuba Institute hosted a special program at the ADAMS Center titled "Exposing the Truth of U.S. Torture: Restoring Human Dignity." The program featured three speakers: Dr. Azizah al-Hibri, Ambassador Thomas Pickering, and Reverend Ron Stief. Both Dr. al-Hibri and Ambassador Pickering served on the Constitution Project's Task Force on Detainee Treatment.

On June 26th, Dr. Azizah Al-Hibri of KARAMAH, Ambassador James Jones, and Diane Randall of the Friends Committee on National Legislation all presented on issues under the umbrella of torture and government accountability. The event was cosponsored by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, The Constitution Project and Amnesty International USA, the gathering was prompted by separate reports from the Constitution Project's Task Force on Detainee Treatment and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, which showed that the United States has engaged in torture and other un-American activities through the CIA's Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation (RDI) Program. These organizations gathered to discuss the U.S. government's engagement in torture against detainees suspected of terrorism. KARAMAH's dedication to accountability and dignity for all still holds true, summed up perfectly by Dr. Azizah al-Hibri when she said, "We are called KARAMAH because we are dedicated to bringing dignity to all. For someone to deny our dignity, it is to deny theirs, as well."

2015

A Special 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Assassination of Malcolm X



On February 21st, the anniversary of Malcolm X's martyrdom, Dr. Azizah al-Hibri was part of the historic panel that convened at the Schomburg Center. KARAMAH chose to pay homage to brother Hajj Malik El-Shabazz by living as he lived. On the anniversary of his martyrdom in 2015, KARAMAH celebrated his life, legacy, and character. Dr. Azizah al-Hibri, the founder of KARAMAH, first met Hajj Malik during his first visit to

Beirut, Lebanon, in April 1964. Later, when he learned that she was planning to pursue her higher education in the U.S., he invited her to Harlem. When Dr. al-Hibri arrived in the U.S. in 1966, Brother Malcolm had already been assassinated. His legacy is brought her back to Harlem at this event at the Schomburg Center where she met with other brothers and sisters. Dr. Azizah al-Hibri shared memories about the great leader she knew, it was her way of honoring her Brother Malcolm at the fiftieth anniversary of his martyrdom.

Washington, D.C. Summit of Muslim Women Scholars and Leaders

In Spring 2015, KARAMAH held the Muslim Women Leaders and Scholars Summit in Washington, D.C. The summit was convened in order to discuss pressing issues facing the Muslim community in America. The participants of the D.C. Summit were grassroots 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 priorities that needed to be addressed collaboratively for the betterment of our communities and the country. The summit re-affirmed a commitment to equity and justice and the shared belief in transformative education, and in faith as a constructive force in society.

Gender Equality in Islam: A PBS Documentary



The PBS documentary “Gender Equality in Islam” featured KARAMAH and in September 2015 the documentary won the Accolade Global Film Competition Award of Excellence and Women in Film & Television Atlanta (“WIFTA”) Best Short Film Documentary.

“Gender Equality in Islam,” first aired last April 2015 on PBS as a special episode of the show “To the Contrary.” The documentary covered KARAMAH’s work in the U.S. 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 culture-based misinterpretations of women’s status in Islam for the betterment of themselves and their communities.

Love Like the Prophet

In October 2015, KARAMAH conducted its third annual “Love Like the Prophet: Ending Domestic Violence in the Muslim Community” event series. This annual



series of community events is aimed at addressing domestic violence in the Muslim community. Because most of KARAMAH's calls on this issue come from local mosques, KARAMAH brought the series to three different Muslim communities in Washington DC, Maryland, and Virginia

in collaboration with Make Space, Masjid Muhammad (The Nation's Mosque) and The Islamic Society of Baltimore. Each event promoted discussion within our communities about this issue and shed light on resources available to survivors.

Domestic Violence Through the Lens of Marginalized Communities: Improving Our Response



On November 6th, KARAMAH offered a cultural sensitivity training workshop to service providers, attorneys and advocates titled “Domestic Violence Through the Lens of Marginalized Communities: Improving our Response.” Former Executive Director Aisha Rahman, Esq., and Julia Bizer, Esq. KARAMAH Family Law attorney presented the workshop. KARAMAH has offered cultural sensitivity training workshops throughout the years in order to increase the cultural sensitivity of service providers, attorneys and advocates and to provide them with a basic knowledge of Islamic

family law so as to provide more comprehensive services to marginalized survivors of domestic violence, particularly Muslim survivors.

The Status of Religious Freedom in the United States and Europe



On December 3rd, KARAMAH organized an event focusing on the current state of international religious freedom in the United States and Europe. Featured the following speakers: David N. Saperstein, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Engy Abdelkader, Esq., adviser with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and former Executive Director Aisha Rahman, Esq. The event was moderated by Reverend Susan Henry Crowe.

Muslim-Jewish Roundtable Offers High Level Scholarly Forum



On December 2nd, 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. 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. 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.

2016

Karamah Welcomes Baroness Manzila Uddin

KARAMAH's International Research Division welcomed Baroness Manzila Uddin to Washington, DC. Baroness Uddin is one of the leading women pioneers of East London. She has been an advocate of women's rights since her early teens,



leading the movements for social justice and human rights with a focus for the empowerment of women. Baroness Uddin has been responsible for leading and developing numerous women-led projects of national significance including founding Britain's first women's education and training center. In recognition for her

contribution to the community and championing women's rights, she was appointed by Her Majesty the Queen, as the first Muslim to take her seat in the House of Lords, UK Parliament in 1998.

KARAMAH Panels in 2016

Religious Leaders as First Responders to Domestic Violence

In May 2016, KARAMAH's former 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.

Anti-Muslim Bullying

On October 27th, KARAMAH joined a group of civil rights advocates and attorneys to discuss the issue of increased anti-Muslim bullying in school. The event was organized by the Capital Area Muslim Bar Association and was co-sponsored by the American Bar Association.

KARAMAH joined to prioritize the issue of anti-Muslim bullying in schools and hopes that conversation is just the beginning of creative strategies regarding equal access to education that is free of bullying and discrimination.

Civil Rights Panel

On December 6th, KARAMAH hosted a critical and timely event on civil rights in America. Titled, "The Original Justice League: Prophet Muhammad(sa) and the Fight for Civil Rights," this panel event was held at the Library of Congress. Panel speakers included KARAMAH Chair Raheemah Abdulaleem, NAACP DC Director Hilary Shelton, and Indiana Congressman Andre Carson.

The event focused on the dire need of civil rights in contemporary society, particularly focusing on gender equity, racial equality, and religious freedom. Setting this stage, Ms. Rahman expounded on the example of Prophet Muhammad(sa) as a champion of civil rights throughout his life.

CSW Parallel Event: A New Generation of Muslim Women Change-Makers



Each year, KARAMAH holds a parallel event at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) session that is held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York with the attendance of representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world.

KARAMAH hosted a parallel event to the UN CSW60 on March 23rd, with the co-sponsorship of Women in Islam, Inc. The event was titled: “The Law and Leadership Summer Program: Training a New Generation of Muslim Women Change-makers.” Speakers at the event were: KARAMAH former Executive Director Aisha Rahman, Founder of Women in Islam, Inc. and KARAMAH Board Member Ms. Aisha al-Adawiya, KARAMAH Board Member, Lawyer and Specialist in Islamic Law Mr. Abed Awad, and alumna of KARAMAH’s 2014 Law and Leadership Summer Program Ms. Zara Iqbal, esq., who is also a manager at Advanced Bio Behavioral Sciences. The theme of the 2016 UNCSW session was “Women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development.”

KARAMAH believes that gender equity and women’s empowerment are crucial for achieving the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. We believe that, once women know their rights, they become powerful agents of change – one of the pre-requisites for sustainable development.

Groundbreaking Lecture: The Dars Hassani Lesson



"We can either choose the model of kibr, hatred and disdain, and reject the opportunity of ta'aruf, or we can choose the model of tawadu' and ta'aruf and seek knowledge wherever we find it, so long as it is consistent with our values."
-Azizah al-Hibri

During Ramadan, KARAMAH Founder and Board Member Dr. Azizah al-Hibri was invited by King Mohammed VI of Morocco to deliver a religious dars/ lesson at the religious and scholarly

forum of "Al-Dourous Al-Hassaniyah" held at the Royal Palace of Casablanca, Morocco. Dr. al-Hibri's lecture was titled "Arrogance and Its Modern Manifestations." Dr. al-Hibri was the first American Muslim woman ever to deliver such a lecture.

Al-Dourous Al-Hassaniyah is a Ramadan tradition that started in 1963 by the late King Hassan II of Morocco. For over 50 years, this forum has hosted prominent Muslim scholars and jurists from diverse sectarian and ideological backgrounds to discuss issues and concerns of the Muslim ummah. The Dourous are attended by the Moroccan King, the royal family, religious scholars, high-ranking state officials, and members of the Muslim countries' diplomatic missions to Morocco.

Dr. al-Hibri discussed arrogance not only as an individual attribute, but as a collective one that influences political life. She posited that this issue of arrogance and other moral issues can lead to the breakdown of societies and the demise of civilizations. Dr. al-Hibri started out by defining arrogance as "the will to rise above others on this earth which is a forbidden evil because it prevents an individual or a group of people from listening to and following the guidance of Qur'anic verses."

2017

Immigration Teach-Ins at George Washington University & UDC Law

KARAMAH Director of Civil Rights and Policy, Qasim Rashid, spoke at The George Washington University on February 2nd at a panel titled "Rights in 2017: Immigrants, Individuals, and the Law." On February 8th, Mr. Rashid spoke at UDC Law regarding the executive order on refugees and travel.

In 2017, KARAMAH researched in depth and published an amicus brief on the Muslim Ban, which explored: the constitutionality of the issue, the historical legacy of the issue and how other similar programs have lead to the compromise in various groups' civil rights and civil liberties, and most importantly, the disparate impact that this ban has on women and children. As always, KARAMAH remains an advocate in this space for those who are facing increased persecution.

United Nations 61st Commission on the Status of Women in New York City



On March 20th, KARAMAH hosted a parallel session at the United Nations 61st Commission on the Status of Women in New York City. The topic was "The Power of the Purse: Muslim Women's Legacy of Economic Empowerment." KARAMAH's panel featured board members Sister Aisha al-Adawiya and Abed Awad, LLSP alumna Fatima Salaam, and KARAMAH former Executive Director Aisha Rahman.

KARAMAH's presentation focused on the historical legacy of Muslim women's empowerment, including exploring how Islam gave women legal agency in a tribal society, discussing how Islam's position on Muslim women's economic rights was revolutionary, and providing numerous examples of medieval Muslim women leaders.

Ethics of Disagreement with Dr. Zainab Alwani

On May 18th, KARAMAH explored the Ethics of Disagreement and how to remain united even when we disagree with one another. KARAMAH board member and Islamic scholar, Dr. Zainab Alwani, presented on her father's groundbreaking books which outlines the juristic methodology around how to approach disagreement and discussed how communities can return to the Quranic basis of unity.



Karamah's Continuing Legal Education Series

Islamic Family Law: What Every American Lawyer Needs to Know

KARAMAH's expertise lies in providing quality education on both Islamic and U.S. civic law. This includes examining how different issues are addressed under each system. Gender and family law are two of KARAMAH's most important focus areas. KARAMAH educates with the best scholars and experts from our Jurist and Leader Network. This is especially important when discussing issues wrought with misconceptions and misinformation. KARAMAH welcomed its former Vice President, attorney and Shari'ah expert Abed Awad, Esq. to address the topics of basic Islamic family law based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, validity of Islamic marriage contracts in American Courts and the legal strategies on enforcing the Islamic marriage contract at the time of marriage and at the time of divorce.