


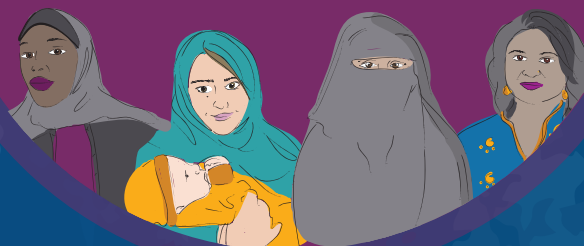


# Rivers of Hope

A Toolkit on Islamophobic Violence  
by and for Muslim Women



*Featuring true stories  
and poetry by Muslim  
women in the GTA*



[riversofhopetoolkit.ca](http://riversofhopetoolkit.ca)

# About this Toolkit

This Toolkit is based on Sidrah Ahmad's Master's Research Project at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. For her research project, she interviewed 21 Muslim women survivors of Islamophobic violence. You'll see quotes from these survivors throughout the Toolkit, but their names have been changed to protect their identities. You'll also see poetry on Islamophobic violence written by Muslim women throughout.

This Toolkit is here to provide inspiration, resources, and information to Muslim women facing Islamophobic violence and people who want to support them.

## Land Acknowledgement

This study was carried out in the Greater Toronto Area, which is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, Anishnawbe, Haudenosaunee, Wendat, and Huron Indigenous Peoples. Islamophobic violence is caused by the same colonial mentality responsible for genocide against Indigenous peoples in Canada. Muslim settlers in Canada must commit to upholding Wampum Belt Treaty obligations with Indigenous peoples of Canada, and to building solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

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# Dear Sister

By Naeema Hassan



I don't think one understands the discomfort one may feel the second they are told that you don't belong here.

In a society where you are told to be who you are is the same environment that will tell you to look like the others in the absent but present world.

Express yourself, believe in yourself! Words of comfort you'll feel... but unfortunately in the land of the "free" your hijab is simply not welcomed here.

Imagine hearing that at 11 years old. See I wore my hijab because I wanted to look just like my mom. My teacher would pull me aside and ask me if my father forced me to wear "that thing" and when I told her I wore it because I thought it looked beautiful, she turned around and whispered "she probably rehearsed those words coming from her mouth".

What you don't understand is that I loved the bedazzled jewels that were stitched into my hijab. And if fashion for you is to show your new hair-do then I going to rock my one-piece crystallized hijab too!

"I want to be a world leader" as my turn came up next following the question "what would you like to be when you grow up". I'll never forget her face... disappointed, disbelieving, it was quite deceiving especially when teachers are the ones that should make your dreams and visions appear clearly...

But I had a dream. Not as big as Martin Luther King but I once believed that I'd be helping out people like me.

I hated when they made it seem like I wasn't capable of achieving... that I wasn't able to own buildings and be the owner and CEO of my own company.

As years went by I had difficulties. Growing up as a teenager hijab became hard for me. All through social media the girls my age were all doing it... it was taunting me, haunting me, slowly but surely corrupting me I was a young Muslim girl who wanted to be like the rest of the world. It didn't help that wearing the hijab was something that you got stared at for.

This is to my young Muslim sisters who are still not sure of what they want to be when In Sha Allah they are somewhere around 24.

Be bold. Never assume that your hijab will stop you from reaching your goals. Remember that Allah (swt) has blessed with the gift of this world so cherish it and nourish it like it's yours.

Never listen to the word Can't and start saying you Can. And to also remember that Allah (swt) doesn't test you beyond what you can bear "ayah".

Dare to be different dare to be YOU and In Sha Allah. Someday myself and our umma will confidently look up to you.

# What is Islamophobia?

Islamophobia is a form of racism (Garner and Selod, 2015). It is a fear or hatred of Muslim people that results in discrimination, exclusion and violence against Muslims. Islamophobia is based on false and toxic ideas that Muslims are less than human, demonic, terrorists, or trying to take over the country. These toxic ideas are spread through the media and social media. Islamophobia mostly affects Muslims, but Sikhs and other groups who have been mistaken as Muslim can also face Islamophobia.

“...If a Muslim kills one person it's called terrorism, when a non-Muslim kills, it's just called crazy killing, so to me that is so unfair. I want to check in the dictionary, it's not that the dictionary says you have to be Muslim to be a terrorist, and so somehow society now have the name terrorism only for Muslims...”  
**-Aissatou**

“Black and brown bodies are the terrorists and white bodies are lone wolves.”  
**-Faiza**

# What is Gendered Islamophobia?

Gendered Islamophobia is a term used to describe the specific kinds of stereotypes and discrimination that Muslim women face (Zine, 2006). Gendered Islamophobic stereotypes include the false and toxic idea that Muslim women are weak, oppressed, repressed, or victims.

Muslim women face higher rates of Islamophobic violence than Muslim men do. This is because they are often more visible as Muslims, but also because of the stereotype that Muslim women are “weak” and are “easy targets”.

“That's I think that's a societal norm: you don't hurt women, you don't oppress women. But when it comes to Muslim women, I think there's a double-standard.”  
**-Nayyirah**

“...because of the stereotype that Muslim women are passive, and that they are submissive and they're oppressed... people are generally more okay with verbally or physically assaulting a Muslim woman, because I think it's like a power dynamic that they think they have in their head...I think that might be one of the reasons people find it okay to do that.”  
**-Shireen**

# What is Anti-Black Racism?

Anti-Black racism is a specific type of racism that only Black people face. Anti-Black racism causes criminalization of Black people, police brutality, and down-streaming of Black children in schools. Anti-Black racism is also present in Muslim communities. Black Muslims often do not receive the same visibility, leadership opportunities, and care as non-Black Muslims. Since Black Muslim women face both anti-Black racism and Gendered Islamophobia, they are more vulnerable to Islamophobic violence.

“You're fearing I'm Black, you're fearing I'm Muslim, whatever it is, we're not safe...”  
**-Warsan**

# Research Shows that Muslim Women Are the Primary Targets of Islamophobic Violence

- In a study by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, they found that in 15 countries in the European Union, there was a common pattern of visibly Muslim women being attacked (Meer and Modood, 2009).
- An American study on Islamophobia found that “a significantly larger proportion of women (86.3%) than men (54.9%) had experienced hate crime” (Abu-Ras and Suarez, 2009).
- A British-based study found that the majority of victims of Islamophobic violence were women, particularly visibly Muslim women (Hopkins, 2016).
- A recent (2015) report on hate crimes in Canada released by Statistics Canada, noted 224 police-reported crimes against Muslims in 2015, and noted that “Muslim populations had the highest percentage of hate crime victims who were female.”

Islamophobic violence against Muslim women is **both** racist violence **and** gender-based violence.



# Snapshot of Research Participants

21 Muslim women survivors of Islamophobic violence were interviewed about they went through. Here's a snapshot of the research participants' demographics:



**AGE - The average age of research participants in this study was 39 years old.**

The youngest participant was 18; the eldest was 58. This matches the latest hate crime statistics we have in Canada, where “between 2010 and 2015, half of the victims (50%) of violent hate crimes targeting Muslims were 35 years of age or older” (Leber, 2017).



**MOTHERHOOD - 14/21 of the participants in this study were mothers** – most with multiple children and a few even with grandchildren. In some cases, young children were direct witnesses to the targeted violence against their mothers.

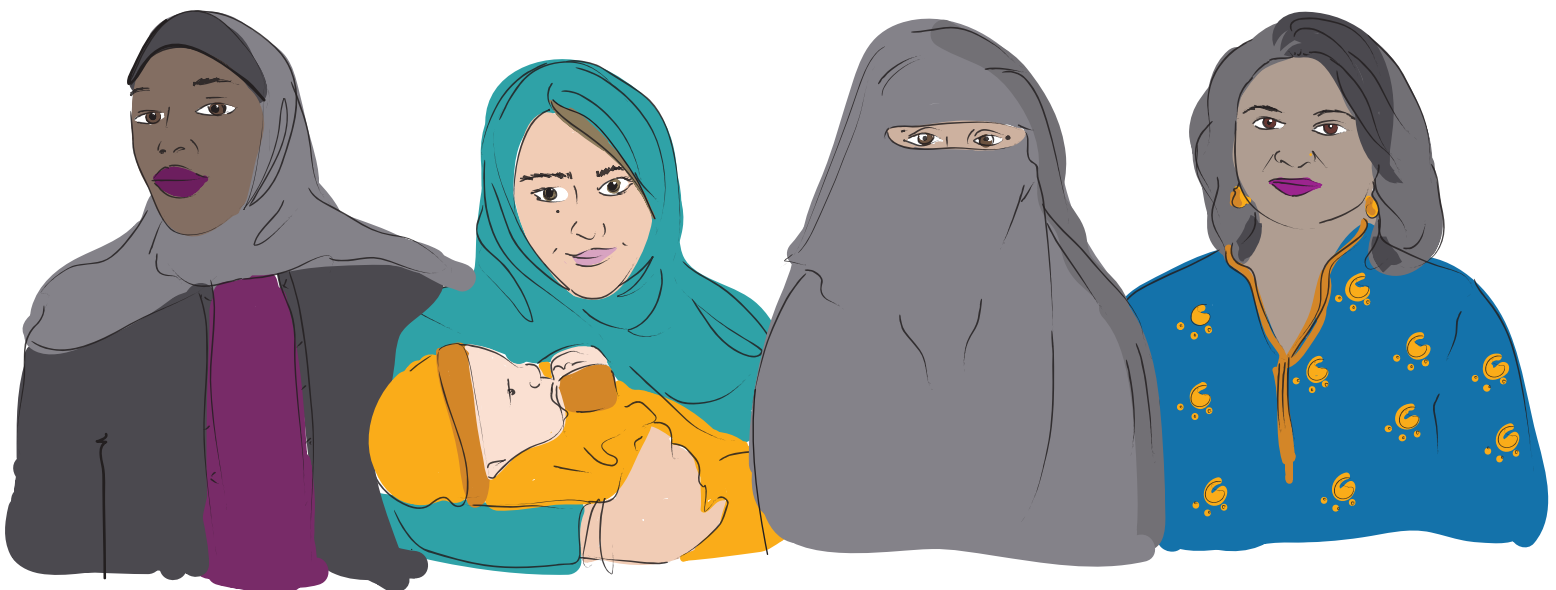


**RACE - 9/21 of the research participants were Black.** Black Muslims face a both anti-Black racism and Islamophobia.

- 6/21 of the research participants were South Asian
- 2/21 were Arab
- 3/21 participants were of mixed racial background and
- 1 participant was Central Asian



**LEGAL STATUS IN CANADA** - Participants were not asked about their legal status in Canada. However, 2 participants expressed fear in speaking back or reporting the incident because of lack of permanent status in Canada.







**VEILING** - 18/21 of the research participants were wearing some kind of clothing that identified them as Muslim (hijab, niqab, and/or abaya) at the time they encountered Islamophobic violence. 5/21 were wearing niqab at the time of the Islamophobic incident. 11/21 were wearing hijab only (not niqab). 3/21 participants were not “visibly” Muslim at the time of the incident, but were identified through other means, such as their last name.



**INCOME** - The intersection between poverty and Islamophobia is underexplored, even though 45% of Muslims in the U.S. live in poverty (Beydoun, 2016). 17/21 participants were low-income. 3/21 participants were medium income and 1 was high income.



**LANGUAGE** - English was not the first language of 15/21 of the research participants, and at least 9 participants experienced language barriers when the incident of Islamophobic violence happened. At that time, they had difficulty communicating with the perpetrator and/or with people they would have wanted to disclose to after the incident.



**ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS** - Participants ethnic backgrounds were Kenyan, Ethiopian, African American, Guinean, Somali, Libyan, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Indian, Uzbek, Bangladeshi, and bi-racial.

## WHAT ABOUT THE PERPETRATORS?

Some participants described the people who harassed or attacked them.

Of the perpetrators who were described:

- 24 were white men
- 4 were white women
- 2 were men of colour
- 2 were women of colour

# A Letter from a Terrorist

By Naeema Hassan



Everytime I leave my home I feel like I'm preparing for my very own funeral. Will I be able to come back to see the smile on my beautiful mothers face, will I be able to hug my youngest sister goodnight, will I return home alive??

Questions that I ask that seem to not have answers. It's as if my hijab has become a target and written on it is "Kill me I am Muslim"

My sisters are being attacked. Young, old, pregnant, no level of sympathy. Fear has developed as our 6th sense -oh how as this even come to be.

Elevated blood pressure levels from mothers and father who  
Fear for their daughters safety as she leaves her home using the words of  
Allah "Bismillah"

Not even a doctor dressed in a white coat can prescribe a medication that can calm their anxious heart, relieve their breathless lungs, and relax their busy and restless minds. This right here my brothers and sisters is Islamophobia. This is hatred, this is terrorism.

The stares. the huffing and puffing as I walk through a crowded train, they look afraid. As if this born Canadian woman was shipped from an ISIS camp, when I'm just trying to get through my day.

I will not apologize for your ridiculous and illogical fears but I will apologize to the Muslim sisters who go through the struggle of victimization every single day, you don't deserve this. I don't deserve this, none of us deserve this.

My sisters our hijab is a God sent jewel that wraps you up so beautifully leaving you Nur shining upon you.

We are liberated and confident and refuse to confide into the society norms that try and tell us what beautiful is.

Ya Muslimah, Ya Muslimah, My sisters, My sisters

Your heroic efforts of representing your deen, your Muslim sisters, an entire nation will not be forgotten by He. For our Lord, is Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem.



# Types of Islamophobic Violence

“It’s happened, happened, happened.... oh my God, many times. Yes sister, oh my God, I don’t know how many times! Frequently it happens, sister. It’s very... you know, what can I do?”  
-Hanifa

**Warning:** This page may be upsetting to read. If you need support, please see the support resources section on page 19.

Islamophobic violence can look like many different things. All of them are wrong and unacceptable. Here are the different types of Islamophobic violence reported by participants in this research project:



- **Islamophobic attempted murder:** trying to run a Muslim woman over with a car – **1 incident**



- **Islamophobic physical assault:** attempts to physically hit a Muslim woman or pull off her hijab or niqab – **2 incidents**



- **Islamophobic sexual assault:** targeting a woman for sexual assault because she is Muslim; sometimes this can involve saying Islamophobic words before, during, or after a sexual assault – **2 incidents**



- **Islamophobic intimate partner violence:** when someone’s romantic partner makes Islamophobic comments and justifies domestic abuse using Islamophobia – **3 cases**



- **Islamophobic verbal assault:** making cruel, rude, harassing, mocking, or threatening statements to Muslims. Verbal assault can be yelled, said at a regular tone of voice, or even whispered – **26 incidents**



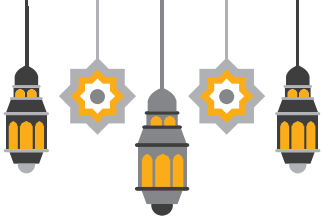
- **Islamophobic shunning:** this is when Muslim women are ignored and excluded from social groups, or pulled away from in a crowd – **4 incidents**



- **Coordinated attacks by hate groups:** this is when a hate group comes together and commits verbal or physical Islamophobic violence at a mosque or Muslim gathering – **1 incident**



- **Online Islamophobia:** these are comments, posts, images and videos that attack Muslims – **multiple incidents**



# Survivor Stories

“And she looks at me, says “this area used to be a really nice area.” And I’m like... “Used to be? What happened?” She’s like, “You know... all those, um... non-whites moved in here.” And I looked at her and I’m like, “non-whites?” And she’s like, “yeah, you know... those scarf people.” And I just, I didn’t know what the hell to say. I was just like... literally I was at a loss for words...”

**-Alison**

“They told me “go back to your country! Go back, Pakistani! Go back, Afghani! Go back!” you know?...From the bike sometimes, the motorcycle, there was two... one driving the other sitting and then like show me the finger [makes middle finger gesture] “Go back, go back, fuck you, go back, Afghani! Go back, Pakistan.””

**-Zainab**

“Everybody who were in the event were scared, they were terrorized, they [the white supremacists] were shouting and they were disturbing and we couldn’t continue the programs...it was very intimidating for everybody...”

We tried to continue, they just disturbing, and shouting about Islam and saying negative about Islam and we’re trying to make them understand, their heart is sealed, there is no conversation.

They look like vicious. Like you could tell they come with something, like they are here to attack or something. It was very terrorizing experience and it’s unfortunate it’s happening here.”

**-Aisha**

“He said, “who are you to be here in Canada and study politics?” And then he was screaming at me, and he said in Afghanistan women are not allowed to go to school, the Taliban shoot them, so that’s my place where I’m supposed to be, so I have to go back to my country and I have no right to study here in Canada. And so he was screaming at me, I couldn’t say anything, I was really scared.”

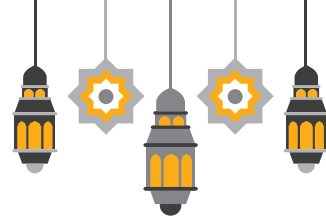
**-Shahnozah**

“I didn’t have people believe me that I was raped, because “Muslim girls don’t get raped”, according to a lot of white therapists...it’s just like nobody believes Muslim women! Like people don’t believe women in general, but people will not believe like Black, Indigenous, women of colour. Like they will not.”

**-Stephanie**

“He throw the punch to me but he missed. And the guy was so strong ...And that time, I was so scared if the guy hits me... he almost punched me...if this guy hit me, I could have died. Yeah...that is what happened to me. I was scared.”

**-Safiya**



# Survivor Stories

“Before I could shut the [car trunk] door, the man had now parked right behind me and had gotten out of his car. He slammed my trunk door shut, tried to tug at my hijab, at which point I leaned back, and then he went straight for my face with his fist.

Luckily, knowing self defense, my immediate reaction was to go into taekwondo mode and grab his wrist and push it away from my face before the punch could hit me. I then pushed his arm away and noticed him coming at me with his other arm. By this time, another man got involved and pushed the man off of me.

Then a police officer showed up at the scene.”  
**-Asma**

“One lady asking me “you cover the face, right? your husband told you? your husband forced you?”

I say no, no one forced. Why? Myself, I cover. We know which awrah we want to cover.”  
**-Hanifa**

“And then he started saying “you effing Muslims, you should go back to your country, go back to where you came from”, and a whole bunch of stuff with just very, very colourful language intertwined.

A lot of swearing... and this went on for about a solid 1 or 2 minutes.”  
**-Shireen**

“It was late night, on a bus, the bus was packed, and it seemed as if nobody was paying attention...he formed his hand into like a gun basically and pointed in my direction. And...I didn't really...nobody noticed what he had done and...he did it, and that was it.”  
**-Nayyirah**



# Being Muslim in Canada

By Hanan Hazime



## (Part I: Growing up Muslim)

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee. God keep our land glorious and free!

God keep our land glorious and free!

God keep our land glorious and free!

But which God? And whose land? Whose freedom? And whose glory?  
When I was six, my best friend, in concern for my heathen soul, said  
Mommy told me that people who don't believe Jesus is God will burn in hell forever. Forever.  
Condemned to eternal damnation in between games of jump rope...  
Unless I worship the Canadian God, the Christian God.  
As if Allah is a different God. As if God isn't just One.

Picture this, on a warm spring day in Ontario,  
a young Muslim mother walking  
her ten-year-old daughter.  
her eight-year-old son.  
home from school.

And then, a white, middle-aged man attempting to run them over with his car.

I want to kill you all, you fucking terrorists.

True patriot love in all thy sons command. With glowing hearts we see thee rise,

But  
Nobody rose to help us.  
Nobody asked if we were okay.  
Nobody stood up to the real terrorist.

## (Part II: Living as a Hijabi)

Did your Father force you to wear that thing?  
Does your husband make you wear it?  
Are you a Sharia Law Muzlum now?  
Who brainwashed you into this?  
Aren't you hot in that? Aren't you?  
Aren't you hot with all those clothes?  
Poor thing, you must be so hot  
You'd look a lot hotter without it  
Who dresses like this in Canada?  
Go back to your country  
You have no right to be here  
You're oppressed  
oppressed, oppressed  
oppressed oppressed  
You fucking terrorist  
You fucking Moozlum  
You stupid Muzlim  
Fuck terrorists  
I will kill you.

# Impact of Islamophobic Violence

“At that point my leg was shaking–badly.  
One of my legs was shaking badly...  
My right leg was shaking violently and  
I was like more embarrassed that he  
could see that my leg was shaking.”

-Amira

Trauma is any event that overwhelms our usual ability to cope. We usually think of soldiers returning from war when we think of trauma, but in fact, racial violence and gender-based violence can cause trauma.

In the moment of an Islamophobic attack, we may have a trauma response of **fight, flight** or **freeze**. These responses are our bodies' ways of surviving a terrifying moment. If we have a fight response, we may yell or fight back. If we have a flight response, we might automatically run away. If we have a freeze response, we may be silent or still, until the situation passes. In some cases, the response will be automatic.

Do not blame yourself for how you reacted in the moment.  
You were doing what you needed to survive and be safe.

You may also notice that your heart rate went up or that you were shaking. This is because if something is traumatic, adrenaline rushes through our system. Again, this is our body's way of protecting us, by supplying us with a burst of energy to fight or escape.

After a traumatic event, we may experience **post-traumatic stress**.

This can look like:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Hypervigilance (Feeling on guard, scanning the environment for threats, trying to predict danger)
- Avoidance (Avoiding the area/ space where the incident occurred, not going out as much)
- Depression
- Anxiety

“...Something happens which makes you think about it, it kind of brings those memories back and it's always kind of there.”

-Shireen

“Like I thought this is home because I left when I was young back home, and this is the only home you know, and you feel this – like it just takes away... how do I put it?... the feeling that you have for the city and the country and your neighbour, it just takes [it] away from in you.”

-Aisha

Other impacts of Islamophobic Violence that Muslim Women in the study shared are:

- Alienation (feeling like you do not belong in the community or the country)
- Exhaustion (feeling tired, burnt out, or trapped)
- Feeling like you have to hide your Muslim identity to avoid being targeted in the future

# Strange Fear

By Kulsuma Alimirah Afkae



I fear walking in large crowds and groups of people –  
afraid one might decide to grab a hold of my hijab and pull it off  
and in that moment - I stand in shock - feeble  
I thought - pulling my hijab? Thats a line you shouldn't cross

I fear walking on the subway platform - near the rails  
afraid that someone will shove me just as the subway goes past  
But I guess nowadays, this is what prevails  
This is what happens when you live in a place where there are people who hate you because they  
typecast

I fear walking by people with hot drinks or any sort of beverage  
afraid they might spill it on me - or that it could be an acid attack  
I may seem paranoid, but these are real stories with news coverage  
These aren't irrational fears - these are negative issues which we need to switchback

I know that I live in a world where I may be in danger  
But I know that the Prophet صلى الله عليه و على آله وسلم said Islam began as something strange and will  
go back to being strange, so glad tidings to the strangers.

# Getting Support

“...it’s not in your head. The emotions that you’re experiencing as reaction to that violence is real. And it’s not an over-reaction; it’s a human reaction, because you have been dehumanized. And you are allowed to feel these things. You don’t need anybody’s permission to feel these things. But what you’re going through is real, and... I believe you.”

**-Stephanie**

After an incident of Islamophobic violence happens, it is important to know that **you are not alone**. You can get support by:

- Telling someone you trust. Is there a family member, friend, or community member you can share with? If there is no one you trust to tell, you can **call one of the anonymous helplines listed on Page 22**.
- Getting professional supports. **Check out the resources on Page 22**.
- Knowing Your Options for Reporting. You don’t have to report, but you can **learn about your Reporting Options on page 23**.

**You** get to choose what happens next.  
It is up to you whether you want to report it,  
talk about it, find counselling...

No one should pressure you one way or the other.





# Tips on How to Feel Better After an Incident of Islamophobic Violence

These are strategies research participants used to feel better after an incident of Islamophobic violence:



Talking to  
friends and  
family



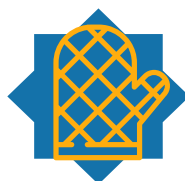
Praying



Reading Quran



Exercise



Cooking, baking



Writing  
(poetry, short  
stories, journal)



Listening to Music  
or singing



Having clear  
boundaries  
with people



Making and  
enjoying Art,  
Crafting



Treat yourself  
to a nice meal  
or snack



Watch a movie  
or TV show



Activism

You get to choose what to do next.  
You are the expert on your recovery.

# My Crown

by Amina Handouleh



I cannot bear all I've been  
caused so much pain for my religious beliefs.

Judged, abused and criticized for wearing my hijab and my beautiful long dresses that flow so  
elegantly behind me

My crown is the one thing that identifies me for something much more than what people  
assume

Why can't I walk down the street without feeling as if I'm going to be verbally shamed

I AM peaceful

Why can't I do things that normal people do without my every move being watched

As I stand up for what I believe in nothing will force me to neglect my crown

That sits so modestly on the top of my head.

What have I done?

What have I done to deserve this type of negative attention that echoes throughout my head every  
time I stand in front of a crowd?

My religion has taught me to speak when I have something good to say

that's why

Every time I speak, people react with gasps and utter shock with the amount of intelligence that  
rolls off my tongue.

Why am I seen as if I'm not enough?

Seen as if I'm oppressed just because I choose to wear my hijab that I admire so highly?

My head is not bald nor am I ashamed of my body .

The hijab is my voice,  
it is the one and only thing that truly belongs to me. The one thing that I could call mine.

My choice to cover my beauty from head to toe shouldn't concern anyone.

Every human being is entitled to their own beliefs.

At the end of the day .. I AM beautiful

# What Bystanders Can Do

## if They Witness Islamophobic Violence

“I’m getting on a streetcar, where a woman she got on and... at first she didn’t say anything to me but after a while she just started to just say things to me like why are you dressing like that or nobody wants to sit beside you and things like that, and every... literally everyone who was sitting around me before I could even defend myself, they began to defend me. So after a while she obviously couldn’t say anything so like her power was taken away from her. Because of like those around me, strangers.”  
-Nayyirah

For people witnessing Islamophobic violence, there are many options for how to intervene. Bystanders should make sure to be safe in the method they are choosing. The goal is to de-escalate the situation and take the lead from the Muslim woman.

“I wanna ask them through this, please, please when you see something like my situation that day, please stand up and stop her or him from talking. Stop, please, do something.”  
-Lailah

## The 4 D’s of Bystander Intervention

### Direct



#### Examples:

- Directly tell the perpetrator to stop.
- Ask the woman being targeted if she is okay or needs help.
- Offer to walk with/sit with the woman.
- Stop a perpetrator from committing violence against a Muslim woman.

### Distract



#### Examples:

- Interrupt the situation by distracting the perpetrator. Get him or her to look away or think about something different. Change his or her focus.
- Interrupt the situation by talking to the Muslim woman. Talk to her in a way that takes power away from what the perpetrator is trying to do. For example, ask her what books or movies she likes.

### Delegate



#### Examples:

- Ask for support from other people in the area.
- Ask the bus driver, teacher, security guard, etc. to intervene.

### Delay



**If the first 3 Ds are not possible for you in the situation, you can have a delayed response.**

#### Examples:

- Follow up after the incident and ask if she is okay,
- Follow up after the incident and offer supportive resources.

“Even if you’re not actively going on the other side of the street and being like “Hey you, stop saying that stuff,” just walking beside her [the Muslim woman], being like “Listen, like my name is so-and-so, I’m here just in case.” ...I think that’s something that other people can do.”  
-Shireen

# Do's and Don'ts for Supporting Survivors of Islamophobic Violence

If a Muslim woman tells you she has been through Islamophobic violence:

## Do

Believe her

Tell her it's not her fault

Ask her what she needs

Offer support

Connect her with resources

Support her choices

## Don't

Question her and ask her to prove it

Blame her in any way

Tell her to stay home or change something about herself

Tell her to get over it

Abandon her to solve it herself



# “When Was the Last Time You Heard the Truth About Islaam?”

by Profound B. Shakoorah

Bismilllaah

I know it's hard  
To believe  
But  
I've never known oppression  
Until I walked out of my house  
Until I walked out  
Into this “accepting”  
Society  
They preach “multiculturalism”  
And tolerance  
When really  
They're just puppets  
On TV  
And they say  
Honesty  
Is the best policy  
But when's the last time  
They told the truth  
About Islaam?  
Well honestly  
I cover simply because  
Allaah commanded me  
To protect me from  
The evil desires  
Of humanity  
And what's better than  
Honour  
From the One  
Who Created thee?  
I mean  
Even diamonds  
Are kept hidden discreetly  
Locked up in safety deposit boxes  
Or deep inside the earth

I'm more than my hair  
My body  
And my face  
I recognize my worth  
So now there's a “women's rights” movement  
Governments want to ban the niqaab  
How could you be trying to  
Advance my rights  
By taking away the ones that I have?  
And it's crazy how  
It's now legal for a woman  
To go completely naked  
But it's a problem  
For me to cover my face  
We live in a society where  
Modesty is shunned  
And women's bodies are less than sacred  
So I say this  
With no reservation  
My veil is my liberation!  
And when's the last time  
You heard the truth  
About Islaam?  
It's ridiculous how our religion  
Is judged by its people  
Rather than by the Noble Qur'aan  
The Prophet Muhammad  
Peace be upon him  
Is our example  
Not just any man  
And as soon as any Muslim  
Commits a crime  
It's his religion  
That we hear about  
How stupid would it be  
If we heard  
“A Christian man  
Suspected of a crime  
Is on the hideout.”?  
But when's the last time  
You heard the truth  
About Islaam?  
Like Malcolm X said,  
May the Mercy of Allaah be upon him,





"The media is the most powerful  
Entity on earth  
Because it has the ability  
To control  
The minds of the masses."  
Even back in high school  
One of my teachers  
Used the word "jihadist"  
In one of my classes  
I just laughed  
And I was like,  
"What's that Miss?"  
She said,  
"It's someone who goes to war  
For their own purpose."  
So I said,  
"Like George Bush?"  
Mind you  
The word doesn't even exist  
"Jihaad" means "struggle"  
For the Sake of Allaah  
And the Prophet  
Peace be upon him said  
That the best struggle  
Is "jihaad-an-nafs"  
Or the struggle against our souls  
But when will the truth be told?  
Truth be told  
The Qur'aan states that  
Killing one person unjustly  
Is like killing the whole of mankind  
And suicide bombing  
Cannot be religiously justified  
It's crazy how the media never reports  
That it's a major sin in Islaam  
To commit suicide  
But all lies aside  
When will they tell us the truth  
About Islaam?  
Not every Muslim is a terrorist  
And not every terrorist is a Muslim  
And what's so scary  
About a bearded man?  
And it's crazy how terrorist and Muslim  
Have become one in the same

Yet I've been Muslim for nearly 20 years  
And never met a terrorist  
In all of my days  
And the name "Abdullah"  
Raises red flags  
When it just means "Allaah's slave"  
And "Allaahu Akbar"  
Means "Allaah is Great"  
And what's so wrong with praise?  
It's crazy  
But when's the last time  
They told the truth  
About Islaam?  
Our fundamental belief  
Is monotheism  
We don't worship any man  
The Prophet Muhammad  
Peace be upon him  
Was the "Walking Qur'aan"  
Islaam is not just for Arabs  
It transgresses space and ethnicity  
Most of us don't ride camels  
We'd rather push SUV's  
And it's funny  
'Cause you'd think that  
All the propaganda and hate  
Would push people away from Islaam  
But it's the fastest growing religion  
In all of the lands  
I mean  
Truth is clear from falsehood  
As day is from night  
Even a child  
Knows wrong from right  
But knowledge is power  
And the world is larger  
Than a television screen  
So if you really wanna know  
The truth about Islaam  
Pick up the story of the Prophet  
Peace be upon him  
And the Qur'aan  
And read.


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# Support Resource List

You are not alone.

## 1. Assaulted Women's Helpline


The Assaulted Women's Helpline is a free, confidential 24-hour telephone and TTY crisis line. They provide counselling, emotional support, information and referrals. Support is available in over 200 languages.


 Toll free: 1-866-863-0511

 Website: [www.awhl.org](http://www.awhl.org)

## 2. Nisa Helpline


Nisa Helpline is a peer-to-peer counselling helpline available to Muslim women of all ages, 12 hours a day, 7 days a week.

 Toll-free: 1-866-315 NISA (1-866-315-6472)

 Website: <https://nisahelpline.com/>

## 3. Naseeha Muslim Youth Helpline


Naseeha Muslim Youth Helpline is a confidential youth helpline for young Muslims to receive immediate, anonymous, and confidential support over the phone from 6 – 9 pm, Monday to Friday (Eastern Standard Time).

 Toll free: 1-866-627-3342

 Website: <http://naseeha.org/>

## 4. Barbra Schlifer Clinic

The Barbra Schlifer Clinic offers legal representation, professional counselling and multilingual interpretation to women who have experienced abuse.

 Phone: 416-323-9149

 Website: <http://schliferclinic.com/>

## 5. Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres.

Find one in your area:  [http://www.satcontario.com/en/locate\\_centre.php](http://www.satcontario.com/en/locate_centre.php)

## 6. Sexual Assault Support Centres.

Find one in your area:  <http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/support>

“I just think that like there should be more funding for mental health programs, and healing programs and trauma programs for women of colour and also Muslim women of colour. There should be more resources.”

**-Stephanie**



# Options for Reporting

You do not have to report the incident. It is up to you. If you want to report, here are three options for reporting what happened. Feel free to explore them.

## 1. National Council of Canadian Muslims Hate Crime Reporting Tool

This is an online form you can fill out to report an incident of Islamophobic violence

 <https://www.nccm.ca/programs/incident-report-form/>

## 2. The SafeTTC App (if the incident happened on the TTC)

This is a free mobile app for both iOS and Android. You can download the app and use it to report Islamophobic violence that happens on the TTC or to get emergency assistance.

## 3. Hate Crime Unit

The Hate Crime Unit is part of Intelligence Services in the Toronto Police, that “monitors hate motivated crime for the purpose of aiding and identifying crimes and criminals and to assist with sentencing at the end of the judicial process.” Police Officers of the Hate Crime Unit can be reached through Intelligence Services at: (416) 808-3500

# Taking Action in Your Community

If you want to take action in your community to end Islamophobia, there are many things you can do. Make sure to find allies that will support you. You don't have to do this alone!

- **Host a workshop in your community, school, or workplace.** A free workshop template is available online at [riversofhopetoolkit.ca](https://riversofhopetoolkit.ca)
- **Start a conversation with friends, neighbours, co-workers or classmates.** Share the information in this toolkit with them, and use it to start conversations
- **Support organizations doing anti-Islamophobia work.** You can volunteer or fundraise for groups that are working to raise awareness and end Islamophobic violence

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### Iconography:

Watching TV: Gan Khoo Lay

Writing: Hea Poh Lin

Talking to family/friends: H Alberto Gongora

Woman in hijab: Danny Lelieveld

Race: MRFA

Racism: Gan Khoo Lay

Man kicking trashcan: Gan Khoo Lay

Hands: Diego Carneiro

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Right Arrow Bubble: Kevin

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