



musawah

For Equality in the Muslim Family

Musawah Vision

Issue 13: June 2013

An update on Musawah issues and activities

I. Muslim Family Law News

- India:** Parliament passes a bill criminalising and preventing sexual harassment in the workplace, including against domestic help. - [The Indian Express](#)
- Morocco:** Ministry of Justice reports reveal that in 2010 courts granted permission for minors to marry in 90 per cent of the cases. - [New York Times](#)
- Saudi Arabia:** Women call for smooth inheritance distribution and an end to guardianship over women. - [Saudi Gazette](#) and opinion piece by [Samar Fatany](#)
- Sudan:** Lawyers and rights activists call for changing laws that allow marriage of girls as young as 10. - [IPS News](#)
- U.A.E.:** 'The areas of personal status law, family law, citizenship law, inheritance and cultural gender perceptions still require serious thought and work.' - [GulfNews](#)

II. Building Our Knowledge

Theology in 140 characters

Musawah Communications live-tweeted a workshop on 'Reading Gender from the Quran' led by professor Amina Wadud and hosted by Sisters in Islam, Musawah Advocate in Malaysia, in May 2013. Tweet seminars on Amina Wadud's teachings have since been popular events on Twitter attracting hundreds of followers and retweets, particularly using the Musawah-created hashtag [#femquran](#).

Visit our [Twitter feed](#) for more on this and other events and news.

For a review of our tweet seminar by Malaysian youth activist Shafiqah Othman Hamzah, click [here](#).

The screenshot shows the Twitter profile of Amina Wadud (@aminawadud). The profile picture is a colorful illustration of women in hijabs. The bio reads: "Islam, justice and gender: 3 words to live by. Muslim by choice, American by force. Peace in the struggle to find peace. Calicut, India · facebook.com/group.php?gid=...". The profile statistics are: 15,516 TWEETS, 34 FOLLOWING, and 6,372 FOLLOWERS. The user is currently following. Below the profile, there are three tweets from MUSAWAH (@musawah) dated 29 May, all retweeted by amina wadud. The tweets discuss Tawhid and Islamic feminism.

amina wadud @aminawadud
15,516 TWEETS 34 FOLLOWING 6,372 FOLLOWERS Following

Tweets

amina wadud @aminawadud 9m
RT from the tweets that were live streamed from my workshop in Malaysia.. cause I am impressed with 140 characters for complex theology LOL!
Expand

MUSAWAH @musawah 29 May
Amina: Tawhid therefore includes elements of oneness, unity, uniqueness. Tawhid is not a method. It is the foundation of social justice.
Retweeted by amina wadud
Expand

MUSAWAH @musawah 29 May
Amina: your life is an ultimate source of reality. Your biology is an ultimate source of reality. Nature is an ultimate source of reality.
Retweeted by amina wadud
Expand

MUSAWAH @musawah 29 May
Amina: Islamic feminism uses gender as a category of thought, as a tool to interrogate ideas, concepts, goals, etc to decipher truth.
Retweeted by amina wadud
Expand

III. Building Our Movement

Musawah Advocate updates

Egypt

Musawah Advocate in Egypt, [The Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance](#) (CEWLA), held a three-day international conference on 'Trends in Family Law Reform in Muslim Countries' from 22-24 May 2013 in Cairo, Egypt. The conference's objectives were to (1) exchange experiences and strategies on Muslim family law reform with networks in different Muslim countries; (2) highlight best practices from Muslim countries that have implemented reformed laws, such as in the areas of joint matrimonial assets (Malaysia and Singapore), restricting polygamy (Malaysia and Morocco), minimum age of marriage (Jordan), and judicial divorce (Singapore and Tunisia); and (3) promote the Musawah Framework of Action to activists and the public locally, regionally and internationally.

The conference commenced with a welcome and introductory presentation by Musawah Advocate and member of the International Advisory Group Marwa Sharafeldin, in which she presented the Musawah Framework of Action. Conference sessions were divided under two main themes: 'Islamic Jurisprudence' and 'Legal Frameworks' followed by a closed session to discuss CEWLA's draft family law. The sessions included: 'Juristic Principles, the Social Construction of Islamic Law and Family Law Reform' presented by Musawah Advocate Professor Khalid Masud; 'The Construction of Gender in the Islamic Legal and *Tafsir* Traditions' and 'New Understandings of *Qiwamah* and *Wilayah*' presented by Professor Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Musawah International Advisory Group member and Convener of the Knowledge Building Working Group; and 'Justice through Procedural Reform and Case Management' presented by Halijah Mohamed, Musawah Advocate in Singapore.

Musawah news and events

International Advisory Group Meeting in Cairo

Thirteen new and continuing members of the International Advisory Group (IAG) and five members of the Musawah Secretariat and transition team met in Cairo from 18-21 April 2013. They discussed progress Musawah working groups have made so far, planned activities and goals in each working area and how to support them and see them through in light of Musawah's [Strategic Direction](#). One of the main topics of discussion was the transition of the Musawah Secretariat to Cairo, which will be taking place around the end of 2013.

The meeting programme included breakout sessions into regional groupings to focus on ways IAG members and Musawah Advocates can build the movement at the national and regional levels. Movement building proposals and how specific national and regional activities can feed into the 2014 Global Meeting programme were then shared with the plenary. IAG members further discussed the need for national and regional Advocates to raise funds for the activities proposed.

Baraza! Special Issue on Musawah

Sisters in Islam (SIS), Malaysia's leading women's rights non-profit organization, the initiator of Musawah in February 2009 and host of its Secretariat since, produced a special issue of *Baraza!* SIS's Bulletin, on Musawah! This issue is content-rich, yet provides a succinct overview of Musawah, its constituencies and collective achievements.

For the full issue, click [here](#).

Baraza!
A BULLETIN OF SISTERS IN ISLAM

Why Musawah

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Suggested Resources

Report: *Justice Through Equality: Building Religious Knowledge for Reform of Muslim Family Laws*

In May 2013, The Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief released a [report](#) on its Oslo Coalition's Muslim Family Law project. The project was co-founded and directed by professor Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Musawah International Advisory Group member and convenor of the Musawah Knowledge Building Working Group. The report is based on the recently-launched book [Gender and Equality in Muslim Family Law](#), which is a collection of essays exploring gender and equality in Islam and offering ground-breaking analysis of the male monopoly over matters of family law and court practices. 'The report is intended for policy-makers, stakeholders and advocates of reform who are developing knowledge-based arguments for legal reform.'

For the full report, click [here](#).

Scholarly Opinion: 'Islam and human rights: Beyond the zero-sum game' by Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im in [ABC Religion and Ethics](#), 3 JUN 2013.

It is easy to find verses of the Qur'an that apparently support various modern human rights principles. But one can equally quote verses that seem to support the opposing view. The real issue is to establish a consistent 'framework of interpretation' that addresses a wide range of reform issues in a systematic manner on the basis of the historical contingency of revelations of the Qur'an and reversal of the process of abrogation (*naskh*) applied by early scholars of *shari'ah*. The need for systematic revision of the methodology of *shari'ah* (*usul al-fiqh*) remains the fundamental challenge.

For the full article, click [here](#).

Book: *Heaven on Earth: A Journey Through Shari'a Law from the Deserts of Ancient Arabia to the Streets of the Modern Muslim World*

Author Sadakat Kadri, a legal historian and human rights lawyer, gives a history of Islamic law and explains how, just in the last 40 years, *Shari'ah* has been appropriated and transformed by hardliners desperate to impose their oppressive vision on society. In the second half of the book, Kadri takes an extraordinary journey through more than half a dozen countries, where he explores in depth how *Shari'ah* is taught, read, reinterpreted, revered and challenged.

For a book review, click [here](#). For an excerpt from the book, click [here](#).

CEDAW updates: New general recommendations on article 16

On 26 February 2013 the CEDAW Committee adopted [general recommendation on article 16](#) of the Convention, highlighting the 'Economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution'. In reiterating the greater disadvantages at which women find themselves in most settings, particularly at the dissolution of marriage whether by separation, divorce or death, the Committee recommends that States parties take the necessary measures to decrease the economic burden on women in such cases.

For the complete document, click [here](#).

V. Contact Us

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To submit advocate updates or ask questions, write to Musawah at: info@musawah.org