

Her Voice, Her Rights: Muslim Women's Conference on Gender-Based Violence and Access to Justice

Date: June 26, 2025

Venue: Budaka, Uganda

Issued by: Islamic Women's Initiative for Justice, Law & Peace (TWILAP)

PREAMBLE.

We, the participants of the *Her Voice. Her Rights* Muslim Women's Conference on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Access to Justice, including Muslim women and girls, Sheikhs and female Muslim scholars, legal practitioners, government representatives, civil society actors, and healthcare professionals, gathered in Budaka on June 26, 2025. The purpose of the conference was to address the persistent challenges facing Muslim women in Uganda in accessing justice, particularly in the context of GBV and reproductive health rights.

We affirm that Islam upholds justice (*adl*), compassion (*rahma*), and dignity (*karrah*) for all human beings. The Qur'an says:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice..." (Qur'an 4:58).

We are guided by the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who said:

"The best among you are those who are best to their women." (Tirmidhi)

RECOGNIZING/ Key Issues Identified:

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- The absence of clear Islamic guidance (Fatwas) on contemporary SRHR issues, including abortion, within Ugandan Muslim communities.
- The systemic and intersectional barriers that hinder Muslim women's access to justice;
- The persistence of GBV in Muslim communities, especially in rural areas, reinforced by harmful cultural practices and patriarchal misinterpretations of Islam that perpetuate GBV;
- The silence, stigma, and fear that prevent Muslim women and girls from reporting violence or accessing justice.
- The lack of faith-sensitive legal aid services and limited operationalization of Qadhi courts to deliver faith-sensitive, survivor-centered services and to handle Muslim women's rights and SRHR-related cases.
- The potential of Islamic teachings to advance justice, dignity, and gender equity.

Kabuya

WE HEREBY.

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1. **Affirm** that Islam upholds the dignity, rights, and justice for all, and reject all forms of violence against women and girls.
2. **Commit to Justice & Equity.** The conference reaffirmed Islamic teachings that uphold women's right to protection from harm (Qur'an 2:231), equal dignity (Qur'an 49:13), and access to justice without discrimination (Qur'an 5:8).
3. **Condemn** the misinterpretation of Islamic texts to justify gender-based violence and discrimination.
4. **Call upon** the Government of Uganda, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC), and all relevant institutions to expedite the operationalization of Qadhi Courts to handle family, GBV, and SRHR-related cases for Muslim communities.
5. **Recommend Strategic Legal Action.** IWILAP will follow up on the existing constitutional petition on the delayed operationalization of Qadhi courts, with emphasis on their potential to serve Muslim women in SRHR and family law matters.
6. **Recommend that** men should support and allow women to work, in line with Islamic principles that promote dignity, self-reliance, and shared responsibility.
7. **Urge** UMSC to issue two Fatwas on:
 - The permissibility and Islamic position on abortion in life-threatening circumstances.

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- The broader Islamic understanding of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) for Muslim women.
- 8. **Commit** to promoting legal literacy, survivor-centered legal aid, and faith-informed advocacy to encourage reporting of GBV and build grassroots knowledge of legal and Islamic rights in Muslim communities.
- 9. **Encourage** collaboration between religious leaders, women's rights advocates, and service providers to develop holistic, culturally responsive referral systems for survivors of GBV.
- 10. **Recommend** the establishment of a Task Force on Muslim Women's Access to Justice to monitor implementation, promote policy reform, documentation, and provide sustained advocacy and referral services in rural Muslim communities.

Call to Action.

We call upon:

- **Muslim leaders and scholars** to speak out against GBV and advance Qur'an-based interpretations that protect women.
- **Government actors and policy makers** to integrate faith-sensitive justice mechanisms into national GBV response frameworks.
- **Legal professionals and CSOs** to collaborate with religious institutions to provide survivor-centered legal aid.
- **Muslim women and girls** to rise with courage, faith, and solidarity to claim their God-given rights.
- IWILAP, in partnership with national stakeholders, will publish and disseminate a position paper outlining key legal, policy, and religious recommendations.
- A working group will be established to continue dialogue with UMSC and state actors on matters of SRHR and justice.
- Annual conferences will be held to sustain the movement, build capacity, and track progress on gender justice for Muslim women.
- Community leadership to report GBV and SRHR cases that affect Muslim women and girls.

Conclusion.

This communiqué is a testament to our collective resolve. As Allah reminds us:

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, or your kin..." (Qur'an 4:135)

Let this communiqué serve as a unified call for justice, equity, and the full realization of Muslim women's rights in which their voices and lives are upheld, protected, and honored in Uganda and beyond.

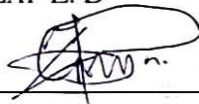
Endorsed by:

Participants of the Her Voice, Her Rights Conference.
Islamic Women's Initiative for Justice, Law & Peace (IWILAP).

With support from the Urgent Action Fund (UAF).

Signed by:

IWILAP E. D



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District Amirat



Hajjat Nagudi Fatima

By Budaka District Qadhi



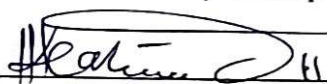
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