



The Islamic Women's Initiative for Justice, Law & Peace.

Kira Mulawa off Shimon Road P.O BOX 30055, Kampala Uganda

Tel. 0393243413, Email: info@iwilap.org

The Budaka Declaration on Muslim Women's Justice and Dignity

Adopted at the "Her Voice, Her Rights" Muslim Women's Conference on Gender-Based Violence & Access to Justice.

Budaka District, Uganda | June 26, 2025

Preamble

We, the participants of the Muslim Women's Conference on Gender-Based Violence and Access to Justice, convened in Budaka District, Uganda, on June 26, 2025, under the auspices of the Islamic Women's Initiative for Justice, Law and Peace (IWILAP) funded by the Urgent Action Fund (UAF), comprising Muslim women and girls, legal practitioners, scholars, religious leaders, policy makers, civil society actors, and healthcare professionals, do hereby adopt this Declaration as follows:

Guided by the noble values of Islam and the principles of justice ('Adl), compassion (Rahmah), dignity (Karamah), and equity (Qist), we affirm our collective responsibility to uphold and advance the rights of Muslim women and girls to live free from violence, discrimination, and injustice;

Recalling the words of the Qur'an:

"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)

"And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness." (Qur'an 5:8)

"And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts." (Qur'an 30:21)

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And the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

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

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Affirming that Islam upholds the principles of justice, dignity, equity, and compassion for all human beings;

Recognizing that gender-based violence (GBV) is a grave violation of human rights and a significant barrier to the well-being, dignity, and empowerment of Muslim women and girls;

We recognize that:

- Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a profound violation of human dignity and Islamic teachings.
- Many Muslim women in Uganda, particularly in rural areas, face systemic barriers to accessing justice.
- Harmful cultural practices and misinterpretations of Islamic texts continue to silence survivors and normalize abuse.
- The operationalization of Qadhi courts and Fatwas on reproductive health remain unresolved.

Acknowledging the intersection of patriarchal interpretations of religion, socio-cultural norms, and systemic legal gaps that have contributed to the silencing, marginalization, and vulnerability of Muslim women in Uganda;

Recalling that access to justice is a fundamental right and an essential pillar of both Islamic teachings and the Ugandan Constitution;

We therefore declare:

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1. **That gender-based violence is un-Islamic, unjust, and unacceptable.**
We call upon all Muslim leaders, communities, and institutions to publicly denounce GBV and promote teachings that affirm the dignity and agency of women and girls.
2. **On Justice and the Rule of Law, Muslim women and girls have the right to access timely, affordable, and culturally appropriate legal redress.** We therefore call on the Government of Uganda to fully operationalize Qadhi courts to address faith-sensitive issues, including marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance, especially as they relate to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as a critical component of ensuring accessible and culturally relevant justice for Muslim women. We demand that Muslim women be included as legal officers, interpreters, and advisors in these courts.
3. **On Reproductive Justice,** We call on the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) to urgently issue two Fatwas: one on the permissibility of abortion under Islamic jurisprudence in circumstances such as rape, incest, and threat to a woman's life; and another on broader SRHR access for Muslim women, rooted in Maqasid al-Shariah (the higher objectives of Islamic law).
4. **On Ending Gender-Based Violence,** We condemn all forms of GBV as un-Islamic and demand stronger faith-informed legal responses and survivor-centered services. We urge religious leaders to speak out unequivocally against domestic violence and harmful practices.
5. **That legal aid providers must integrate faith-informed, trauma-sensitive, and rights-based approaches** to better serve Muslim women, especially survivors of GBV.
6. **On Women's Leadership and Empowerment,** We call for the promotion of Muslim women into leadership within mosques, Muslim schools, councils, and legal bodies. Their voices and lived realities must shape community and legal responses to injustice.
7. **On Education and Legal Literacy** We commit to increasing Muslim women's access to legal education and human rights awareness. Legal aid, community outreach, and faith-sensitive education must be expanded and adequately funded.

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8. That religious leaders, especially Sheikhs and female scholars (Sheikhas), must take proactive leadership in educating communities on Qur'anic principles of gender justice and challenging harmful practices.

9. On Faith and Feminism, We affirm that faith and women's rights are not incompatible. Islam, when authentically interpreted, upholds the dignity and rights of women. We reject patriarchal distortions and call for an Islamic feminism rooted in justice, equity, and mercy.

10. On employment and right to work, We affirm that men should support and allow women to work, in line with Islamic principles that promote dignity, self-reliance, and shared responsibility. Enabling women to engage in lawful employment strengthens families, uplifts communities, and reflects the justice and balance at the heart of our faith.

11. On Partnerships and Solidarity, We call on governments, donors, scholars, and CSOs to invest in faith-led solutions and collaborate with Muslim women's organizations. Sustainable progress requires inclusive, multi-sectoral approaches.

12. That IWILAP, in collaboration with partners, will establish a task force to monitor the implementation of this Declaration, strengthen referral pathways, and continue advocacy and education at community and national levels.

Call to Action

We urge all stakeholders—religious institutions, government agencies, civil society, and international partners—to support the implementation of this Declaration and promote the rights and dignity of Muslim women and girls in Uganda and beyond.

Our Commitment We, the signatories to this Declaration, pledge to:

- Establish a national working group on Muslim Women and Justice.
- Advocate for the Fatwas and the Qadhi court system to become fully functional.
- Document, monitor, and respond to GBV cases affecting Muslim women.
- Continue faith-based legal aid, advocacy, and community education.

May Allah (SWT) guide us in this pursuit of justice, strengthen our unity, and make our efforts a means of healing, empowerment, and liberation for all women.

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"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives..." (Qur'an 4:135).

Adopted this 26th day of June, 2025 in Budaka, Uganda.
Islamic Women's Initiative for Justice, Law & Peace (IWILAP).

Adopted and Endorsed by:

- Participants of the Her Voice, Her Rights Conference
- Islamic Women's Initiative for Justice, Law & Peace (IWILAP)
- Muslim women leaders and legal advocates
- Sheikhs and Sheikhas in attendance
- Civil society organizations and development partners

Done at Budaka on this 26th Day June 2025

Signed by:

IWILAP Executive Director



Dr. Mwanga Mastullah Ashah (PhD).

District Amira



Hajjat Nagudi Fatima

Senior Community Development Officer



Hakim Kirya

Budaka District Qadhi



Kalibala Zubairi

Gender Specialist



Baluka Shamira