

Press Release

## Norway's Proposal to Ban 'face coverings' in Learning Institutions Forces Muslim Women to Abandon their Islamic Beliefs

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June, the media reported on Norway's new proposals to reform the laws on face covering in "learning institutions, from kindergarten to universities" which will ban, "all types of clothing that cover the face wholly or in parts", with exceptions for clothing that is used as protection against cold temperatures. The Acting Minister of Immigration and Integration Per Sandberg stated that the niqab represents values alien to Norwegian society and contributes to suppressing women. The new plans have been led by right wing politicians and have been met with protests from University Students and leaders who state that such legislation will have a negative impact on minority women and violate their equal right to education. Through these laws, Norway is merely following its European counterparts in tightening the rope around the necks of Muslims in Europe in a vain attempt to suffocate Islamic concepts, creating fear in the heart of Muslim women and forcing them to abandon their Islamic beliefs.

It is clear that the Islamic identity of Norway's Muslim women is the direct target of these repressive draconian laws. They are trying to 'force-feed' them the flawed secular liberal values, which have robbed them of their religious rights. How ironic that these extremist secularists accuse Islam of suppressing women, while in the same breath they dictate the beliefs Muslim women should adopt and deny them the right to pursue an education if they embrace religious beliefs from their own convictions. If Muslim women's rights were truly a matter of concern, how does making them a target for discrimination, hate crimes and limiting their social mobility and education afford them greater opportunities and engagement with the society? It is also clear that these proposals are in addition, a cynical attempt by opportunistic politicians to win some cheap racist votes, for only about 100 women of the 148,000 Muslim population wear the niqab. It is a reflection of the moral vacuum of secular politics which has no qualms about using Islamophobia as a tool to increase electoral ratings.

The laws banning the Islamic dress that are sweeping across Western states are indeed a great test for our Muslim sisters. We urge our dear sisters in Norway and in all those countries where their Islamic identity is under attack, to remain staunch and steadfast in their obedience to Allah (swt) and to not fear any laws that seek to take them away from their Islamic beliefs. We should remember that the Prophet (saw) and his pious companions were indeed tested in the same manner but they stood firm in their Deen and sincere to their beliefs. We should also take note of the important advice in the Quran where Allah (swt) urges us to never succumb to pressures to leave the Haqq for He (swt) promised His Mercy, Blessings, Forgiveness and Support to those who remain steadfast to their Deen in the face of adversity. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالنَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ \* الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاغِبُونَ \* أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ﴾

***"And We shall certainly test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return." They are those on whom are the Salawat (i.e., who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones."*** [Al-Baqara: 155-157]

Women's Section  
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