



## Position Statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

**Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) hereby,**

***Denounces*** and wholly condemns discrimination, violence, and social exclusion on the basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), ubiquitously directed toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning and Intersex (LGBTQI) individuals, with emphasis on those forms of discrimination, violence, and social exclusion endorsed or authorized by means of radicalized or extremist misinterpretations of faith and/or culture, as well as *theopolitical* state and non-state agendas. Furthermore, MPV recognizes and asserts that violence in this regard includes physical, mental, systemic and structural violence.

***Affirms*** that the utilization of faith and/or culture as drivers for the propagation of and justifications for discrimination, bigotry, misogyny, and violence is absolutely inconsistent with existing international human rights conventions. MPV asserts that faith and culture can and should be utilized, with respect and recognition given to socially inclusive and egalitarian traditions of faith and culture, as vehicles for sustainable development in accordance with international human rights law.

***Strives*** for the promotion and protection of pluralistic, egalitarian, and inclusive secular societies, by way of objective, unbiased, secularized and gender-sensitized primary and secondary academic curricula, elimination of dogmatic religious narratives in academic spaces, freedom of and from expression and belief, as well as freedom to publicly engage and disseminate critical analyses of theological scripture without fear of physical or mental harm.

***Offers*** a foundation for the critical analysis of Qur'anic Scripture, rooted in sound and reliable academia, to counter fundamentalist and extremist narratives and ideologies that propagate and enable atmospheres of discrimination, violence, and social exclusion on the basis of SOGI, as well as those that seek to undermine or threaten the promotion and protection of pluralistic, egalitarian, and inclusive secular societies.

**Furthermore, we the undersigned affirm that:**

- ⇒ Individuals, including Muslims, who express any variety of SOGI have explicit and inalienable rights in Islam to practice, express, and manifest their personhood however they choose without fear of physical and mental harm of institutionalized violence and persecution. It is the unfortunate case that currently many Muslim-majority states impose draconian, barbaric, and inhumane laws and policies directed toward their LGBTQI citizens, including Muslim citizens.
- ⇒ Islam *does not* condone the discrimination, execution, stoning, flogging, or humiliation of LGBTQI individuals. In Islam, all individuals, including LGBTQI Muslims, bear fundamental rights to privacy and physical/bodily and mental autonomy, and no human being, for religious, political, or other reasons, bears the right to exert his or her own authority and opinion upon others in those respects.
- ⇒ Islam celebrates all aspects of pluralism and diversity, including sexual diversity. “All act according to their own disposition [shakila], yet your Lord knows best who is on the most guided path” (Qur’an: 17:84), and “And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors” (Qur’an: 30:22). Additionally, Islam specifically recognizes individuals who express variant sexual orientations and gender identities, “the followers (of Muhammad) amongst the men who have no desires for women” (Qur’an: 24:31) and “Of the women, those not reproducing who do not wish for intercourse, it is no harm for them to lay aside their clothing as long as they do not overtly display their beauty [in the company of men]” (Qur’an: 24:60).
- ⇒ Islam conveys tolerant and humane approaches pertaining to differences in opinion and with forbearance, “to you your way and to me mine” (Qur’an: 109:6) and “there shall be no compulsion in religion” (Qur’an: 2:229).
- ⇒ The Qur’an does not contain language that explicitly criminalizes homosexuality or same-sex acts. In that regard, the *hadd* punishment purported by conservative fundamentalists for “crimes” of homosexuality and same-sex relations is assuredly un-Islamic and not rooted in any credible rendition of Qur’anic scripture, nor is there any documentation of the Prophet ever having punished anyone for being a homosexual.
- ⇒ The *shari`ah* legislation stipulating punishments for homosexual acts is not founded in Qur’anic scripture, but rather is drawn from *hadith* reports which are of debatable authenticity and value.
- ⇒ The Qur’an’s emphasis on the preservation of life directly invalidates and counters the death-penalty as a form of punishment: “And for you, in the law of equality, there is saving of life, O you with understanding: so that you may restrain yourselves!” (Qur’an: 2:179) and “not take life which God has made sacred” (Qur’an: 17:33).

***Lastly, MPV implores governments and policy makers to:***

- ⇒ **Repeal** *immediately* discriminatory laws, policies, practices, and *fatwas*, that institutionalize the discrimination and persecution of individuals on the basis of SOGI, as well as the criminalization of same-sex acts, in accordance with international human rights law.
- ⇒ **Hold accountable** legal institutions and state authorities to ensure they uphold and enforce the rule of law without selective bias and to pursue SOGI-sensitization initiatives for state-actors.
- ⇒ **Support and purposefully engage** in civil society campaigns that publicly advocate for and disseminate egalitarian, inclusive, non-violent, and critical interpretations and analyses of theological literature and scripture.
- ⇒ **Devise and implement** social protection measures to ensure that LGBTQI individuals are granted fair, safe, and equal access to full economic participation and benefit, decent employment, adequate healthcare, and secular education without fear or threat of physical or mental harm, as well as to ensure the aforementioned public services are not denied to any individual on the basis of SOGI.
- ⇒ **Disaggregate** statistical data on the basis of SOGI, especially as it pertains to economic participation, incidences of violence, and the enjoyment of the aforementioned public services.

***In conclusion,***

We at MPV understand the sensitivity and complexity of these matters. Sensitive and complex as they are, we believe these matters must be approached critically and analytically as imperatives to spiritual, human, and societal development. Freedom of personhood and conscience are essential for peaceful and sustainable human societies, and integral to the Qur'anic view of humanity. We welcome and encourage all who are interested in engaging us in this discussion, and insist upon the facilitation of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Let us reclaim our faiths and our cultures and utilize them to strive for the realization of humanitarian values that benefit all.



**Muslims for Progressive Values** is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization registered under ID # 26-1125983 in the USA



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