

ISLAMIC RELIEF UK

Bringing an end to Gender-Based Violence:

Guidelines for creating a Khutbah



Introduction and summary

Islamic Relief UK would like thank you for taking the time to read this informative document on how Islamic faith leaders can help bring an end to gender-based violence.

25 November is the UN *International day for ending violence against women and girls*. It marks the start of a global campaign known as “16 days of activism against gender-based violence”. Running from the 25th until *International human rights day* on 10th December, individuals and organisations promoting the rights of women will join together during this time.

From our work in 40 countries over 34 years, Islamic Relief UK knows that the world prospers when women do. We are calling on the support of Islamic faith leaders to help us spread the message. You can do so through by pledging your support to the campaign and speaking about it in your Friday Khutbah.

This document outlines the key arguments, statistics and messages that may be useful in creating a Khutbah on this subject. You will also find a template Khutbah in the accompanying document.

What is gender-based violence, and violence against women and girls?

Gender-based violence consists of acts of physical, sexual and psychological abuse against a person (male or female) on the basis of their gender. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is the abuse that women and girls across the globe – including here in the UK – may face specifically.

VAWG is not only a major public health issue with life-long physical, emotional and psychological consequences but also a gross violation of the human rights of countless women and girls across the globe. VAWG comes in many often overlapping forms with multiple effects, including domestic abuse, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), forced and early/child marriage and so-called “honour” killings.

The prevalence of VAWG across our homes, cities, nations and around the globe is alarming. In fact, **1 in 3 women worldwide experience physical, emotional or sexual violence in their lifetime**. That’s **over one billion women** alive today.

Recent figures for England and Wales recorded that 1.9 million people aged 16 to 59 years old had

been victim of domestic abuse and around 63% of these were women (1.2 million).ⁱ

What types of violence against women and girls are there?

Physical violence

This includes any form of physical violence used against women intending to harm her physical wellbeing. This includes: slapping, hitting, beating, burning, the excessive use of physical force and the use of physical objects against the body with the intent to harm.

Physical violence may also deliberately involve other forms of violence, such as sexual abuse, and in all forms affects the emotional wellbeing of the victim. In its most severe form, it can even result in loss of life. Women are disproportionately affected by domestic homicides. Between 2013 and 2016, the vast majority of victims of domestic homicide in England and Wales were female.ⁱⁱ

Sexual violence

Sexual violence constitutes unwanted, non-consensual or coerced sexual activity. This includes all forms of rape, sexual harassment (unwanted touching and sexualised language) and forced prostitution. It also crucially includes coercion into sexual activity, including those which are demeaning and degrading to women.

Sexual violence also includes actions taken to control a woman's sexual behaviour, for example through female genital mutilation (FGM). Current figures estimate that at least 200 million women and girls across the globe have been subjected to FGM.ⁱⁱⁱ

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse is the manipulation of another's emotions and deliberate attempt to lower a woman's self-confidence, self-esteem, self-worth and sense of independence. This also crucially includes controlling or coercive behaviour. Psychological abuse comes in many (often multiple) forms including: accusations of lying, the use of insults and slurs, attempting to cut a woman off from friends and family, and belittling a woman's interests.

Financial abuse

Financial abuse is the control over a woman's financial welfare. This can range from controlling the finances of a spouse, to forms of domestic slavery and labour exploitation where a victim is forced to work against their own will with/without adequate pay and in inappropriate conditions. Financial abuse can also include the attempt to keep a woman in poverty/financially dependent to control and damage their physical and emotional wellbeing and independence. This includes forbidding a woman from working or keeping their own earnings.

Recent research conducted in the UK with survivors of domestic violence revealed that 71% of these women did not have access to daily essentials and of those still living with their abuser, 52% said they could not afford to leave.¹

What do the Qur'an and Hadiths say on VAWG

Islam is emphatic about honouring and respecting women. As a faith, it shuns violence against women and all forms of abuse.

Below are some key references that may be relevant to your Khutbah. These are references to the importance of standing for justice, the equality of men and women in the Holy Qur'an and examples of how the blessed Prophet of Allah [SAW] demonstrated this in his life.

1. Stand up in the face of injustice :

“O ye who believe! Stand out firmly in justice, as witnesses to Allah.” (Qur'an,4: 135)

2. Men and women have the same purpose in life:

“I have not created human beings and Jinn for anything else but to worship Me alone.” (Qur'an, 51:56)

3. Men and women come from the same root and same human race:

“O mankind! Be conscious of your Sustainer, who has created you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women. And remain conscious of God, in whose name you demand [your rights] from one another, and of these ties of kinship. Verily, God is ever watchful over you!”(Qur'an. 4:1)

4. Our hard work will be rewarded - whether you are male or female - based on the same criteria of excellence:

“As for anyone – be they a man or woman – who does righteous deeds and is a believer, verily – him shall We most certainly cause to live a good life and most certainly shall We grant unto such as these their reward in accordance with the best that they ever did.” (Qur'an, 16:97)

"I shall not lose sight of the labour of any of you who labours [in My way], be it man or woman: each of you is an issue of the other." (Qur'an, 3: 195)

5. He makes it abundantly clear that men and women have absolute spiritual equality:

“Verily, for all men and women who have surrendered themselves unto God, and all believing men and believing women, and all truly devout men and truly devout women, and all men and women who are true to their word, and all men and women who are patient in adversity, and all men and women who humble themselves [before God], and all men and women who give in charity, and all self-denying men and self-denying women, and all men and women who are mindful of their chastity, [and all men and women] who remember God unceasingly: for [all of] them has God readied forgiveness of sins and a mighty reward.” (Qur’an, 33:35)

6. Men and women are mutual protectors of each other:

“And [as for] the believers, both men and women they are close protectors unto one another: they [all] enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong...” (Qur’an, 9:71)

7. Men and women began their journey as equals from the day one:

“And We said: ‘O Adam, dwell you and your wife in this garden, and eat freely thereof, both of you, whatever you may wish; but do not approach this one tree, lest you become wrongdoers.’” (Qur’an, 2:35)

8. The best of men are those who are best in behaviour with their wives:

The blessed Prophet of Allah [SAW] said:

“The most perfect of believers in belief is the best of them in character. The best of you are those who are the best to their women.”

Violence against women contravenes the perfect believer described by the blessed Prophet of Allah [SAW]. In fact, Allah makes it abundantly clear that you must live with you wife in kindness and not hostility, not inflicting on them any physical or psychological harm:

“Live with them in kindness; even if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike something in which Allah has placed much good.” (Qur’an, 4:19)

9. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was clear on the responsibilities of men and women:

The blessed Prophet Muhammad (SAW), set direct examples of these ideals of a marital relationship in his personal life. :

“Give her food when you take food, clothe her when you clothe yourself, do not revile her face, and do not beat her.”

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) further stressed the importance of kindness toward women in his farewell pilgrimage. He equated the violation of their marital rights to a breach of the couple's covenant with Allah.

He was never physically (or otherwise) abusive towards his wives in his life. He demonstrated utmost respect, kindness and fair treatment to the women in his life as he understood the Qur'anic injunctions of equality and fairness.

About Islamic Relief UK's Honour Her campaign

Islamic Relief UK is committed to preventing violence against women and girls. **Launched in 2018**, our [Honour Her campaign](#) was created to encourage debate on this important matter and to help inspire action in communities across the world. We are especially promoting the campaign in November and December 2018 as part of the global movement for 16 days of activism on violence against women and girls.

Both here in the UK and in our work worldwide, we're working to promote community dialogue, empower women and put a stop to the cycle of gender-based violence. Across Britain, we work with key British-Muslim figures to spread our message, including the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, Harun Khan, and the Chief Imam of the East London Mosque, Imam Abdul Qayum.

We are incredibly grateful for the support of mosques across the country and we hope you can support us in this important mission. You can do this by giving your backing to the campaign and using the Khtubah to spread this message.

Find out more about the campaign and pledge the support of your mosque at <http://iruk.co/honourher>

ⁱ Office for National Statistics (2017) [Domestic Abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#)

ⁱⁱ Office for National Statistics (2017) [Domestic Abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ United Nations (2018) [Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation](#)