

THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE*

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Violence is unacceptable

Violence against men, women, and children is unacceptable in Islamic Law and is considered a sin. A person who chooses to be violent to others will be held responsible and accountable in this life as well as in the Hereafter.

Non-violence is valued

Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) said: "The best among you is the one who is best for his family." A man who resorts to violence is not only committing a crime in the legal sense but triggers the wrath of God and exposes himself to divine punishment.

We all have individual responsibility

The Q'uran stresses in several verses that every individual is responsible for his or her own actions. For example:

Every person is a pledge for what he or she has earned
(74:38).

Women have a right to be safe

Each woman has the right to live in dignity and respect, free of humiliation and she must be protected from any harm that might befall her or her family. If she is being abused, she has the right to seek help through the services available in her community.

Men and women are equals

In Islam, a woman enjoys the same status as that of man. In the words of the Q'uran:

So their Lord accepted of them, "Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, be you male or female. You are members, one of another"
(3:195).

There is no difference between man and woman as regard to status, rights and blessings, both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Women have specific rights

Islam grants women the right to choose their husbands, to seek divorce, to retain their family names, to pursue education, to seek employment, to own property, and to remain in control of their own wealth.

* This is a summary of the full statement available in Arabic at www.lfcc.on.ca/harmony_Arabic.html

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Assaulted Women's Helpline
1-866-863-0511 / (416) 863-0511

www.shelternet.ca: To find a temporary safe place to live if you must leave your home because of mistreatment. Information is there in French, Arabic and Farsi.

Hotpeach Pages has links to information about violence against women in over 70 languages:
www.hotpeachpages.net/

Muslim Wheel of Domestic Violence
(by Dr. Sharifa Alkahteb)
www.lfcc.on.ca/muslim_wheel_of_domestic_violence.html

Information for newcomers to Ontario about housing, English instruction, finding a job and other issues:
www.settlement.org

Find a document called **Basic Immigration Issues Related to Woman Abuse** at: **www.owjn.org**

What You Should Know About Family Law in Ontario
www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca

This pamphlet contains the name of God and some verses from the Q'uran. Please be respectful.

Development of this pamphlet was funded by the Ontario Victim Services Secretariat, Ministry of the Attorney General.

Also available in French, Arabic, Farsi, Bosnian, Somali and Urdu.

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Family Safety Family Harmony



Information on Violence Against Women

and the Law
in Ontario

This pamphlet has information about violence against women in the family. In this matter, Canadian laws are in harmony with the Islamic teachings:

- both seek justice and fairness
- both value safety
- both protect the vulnerable and hold the perpetrator accountable

Accordingly, we all want that:

- the family home is a place of peace, mutual respect and kindness
- boys and girls are equally valued
- our children grow up to be kind and nurturing parents based upon our example

These values unite us.


**MUSLIM FAMILY
SAFETY PROJECT**



Important Facts

- violence against women can occur in any country, including Canada.
- being hit or mistreated is never a woman's fault or justified by her behaviour.
- a man who hits his wife has chosen to break the law and must be prepared to accept the consequences.
- a man can get counselling to stop being violent or mistreating his wife.
- there are many people in Ontario whose job it is to help women who are mistreated by their husbands.
- those people can listen, give emotional support, and explain her rights.

Have Questions?

You can talk to someone by telephoning the Assaulted Women's Helpline. You can speak in any of 154 languages, any time, day or night, even on the weekends.

Greater Toronto Area: (416) **863-0511**

Ontario: **1-866-863-0511** (toll free)

TTY: **863-7868** or **1-866-863-7868** [English]

There is no cost and what you say is private.

Criminal Laws

Hitting a person is against the law. It is a crime called "assault."

Threatening to harm someone is also a crime.

Forcing a wife to have sex without her agreement is a crime called "sexual assault."

A person charged with a crime cannot use religion or culture as an excuse or legal defence.

Mandatory Charging

In Ontario, when police believe that a man assaulted his wife, they must lay a criminal charge. Charging is "mandatory."

The police lay the charge, not the woman.

The police will not drop the charge, even if the woman asks them to.

A man who threatens a woman to drop the charge can be charged with a new crime.

Counselling / "Early Intervention"

A man charged with assaulting his wife may be offered counselling at a local PAR (Partner Assault Response) Program. There is usually no cost.

Immigration Concerns

No one needs to stay in an abusive marriage, even if she is a refugee or landed immigrant or she worries about deportation.

If you have concerns about your immigration status, read a document called *Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence by Community Legal Education Ontario* www.cleo.on.ca or www.cleonet.ca

A woman leaving her husband because of violence can qualify for Ontario Works (financial assistance called "welfare").

Divorce

To get married again, you need a legal divorce.

Verbal divorce is not legal in Canada. Only a Court can grant a legal divorce.

It is an ethical conflict for a wife and husband to use the same lawyer to get a divorce.

Custody of Children After Divorce

Canadian Courts decide custody based on children's "best interests" (emotionally not financially), usually giving custody to the parent who takes care of them everyday and best understands their needs.

Some safety issues

Telephone calls to local numbers or toll-free numbers (like 1-800 or 1-866) will not show up on a regular telephone bill but might be listed on the bill for a cell phone.

A record of recent calls may be kept in your telephone, depending upon what type of telephone you have.

If privacy is important, use a pay telephone or the telephone of a friend.

If you are in immediate danger, dial 911 for police assistance. Say the name of your language and they can connect you with an interpreter. Or say "help."

When using the Internet, a record of sites and pages you visited recently is kept in your computer.

If you want privacy, use a computer at a public library, at a friend's home, or find the instructions to erase your visits at www.shelternet.ca under "how to hide your Internet activities." This information is available in French, Arabic and Farsi.

If you need to leave, find a list of documents and items to take with you at www.shelternet.ca under "make a safety plan."

