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**Statement by Canadian Islamic Scholars and Mainstream Muslim Organizations Reaffirms Freedom of Religious Expression**

Friday, October 09, 2009 10:42 am

(français en dessous)

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

Statement by Canadian Islamic Scholars and Mainstream Muslim Organizations Reaffirms Freedom of Religious Expression

(OTTAWA – October 9, 2009) In response to recent calls to ban the niqab (face veil) in Canada, a wide coalition of mainstream Canadian Muslim organizations in conjunction with Canadian Islamic scholars issued a statement today reaffirming the freedom of religion and conscience in Canada.

The statement read as follows:

"The recent calls to ban the niqab (face veil) in Canada are misplaced and contravene the fundamental principles of our free and democratic society. All Canadians, whether Muslim or not, are guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms the freedom of religion and conscience. The state has no business in the wardrobes of the nation.

"Therefore, if a segment of Canadian Muslim women believe that wearing the niqab is part of their religious practice, then they must be allowed to freely do so. The principle must be extended to all religious practices, provided the practice does not infringe upon the fundamental rights of others.

"The marginalization of Muslim women must be countered with public education and anti-discrimination efforts, not with the state's dictation on how one may dress, which only serves to further marginalization instead."

**STATEMENT SIGNATORIES:**

Ahlul-Bayt Centre Ottawa \*  
Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN)

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- Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN)
- Canadian Council Of Muslim Theologians (CCMT)
- Canadian Council of Imams
- Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC)
- Canadian Muslim Civil Liberties Association (CMCLA)
- Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI)
- Canadian Muslim Forum (CMF)
- Council for the Advancement of Muslim Professionals Toronto (CAMP Toronto) \*
- Dar Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre
- DawaNet Canada
- Federation of Muslim Women \*
- International Muslims Organization (IMO)
- Islamic Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Canada, Richmond Hill \*
- Islamic Circle of North America Canada (ICNA Canada) \*
- Islamic Foundation of Toronto \*
- Islamic Society of British Columbia
- Islamic Society of North America Canada (ISNA Canada)
- Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA)
- Islamic Society of Toronto
- Jamat E-Islahul Muslimeen \*
- Jami Omar Mosque
- Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Muslim Council of Calgary (MCC)
- Muslim Association of Canada (MAC)
- Muslim Council of Montreal / Conseil Musulman de Montreal
- Muslim Presence / Presence Musulmane \*
- Muslim World League, Canadian Office \*
- Salaheddin Islamic Centre
- Scarborough Muslim Association
- TARIC Islamic Centre, Toronto
- Young Muslims Canada

**CONTACTS:**

- Nermine Barbouch, CMF Spokesperson, 514.806.3257 [FRANCAIS]
- Selma Djukic, CAIR-CAN Spokesperson, 416.726.4992
- Shahina Siddiqui, ISSA Executive Director, 204.944.1560
- Shk. Yusuf Badat, CCMT Spokesperson, 416.321.0909 ext 235 or 416.402.8542

- POUR DIFFUSION IMMÉDIATE -

Un énoncé de la part des érudits islamiques canadiens et des organismes musulmans grand public réaffirme la liberté d'expression religieuse

(OTTAWA, le 9 octobre 2009) – En réponse aux récents appels à l'interdiction du niqab (voile de visage) au Canada, une vaste coalition d'organismes musulmans canadiens grand public de concert avec les érudits islamiques canadiens a émis un énoncé aujourd'hui qui réaffirme la liberté de religion et de conscience au Canada.

L'énoncé se lit comme suit :

« Les récents appels à l'interdiction du niqab (voile de visage) au Canada sont

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L'énoncé se lit comme suit :

« Les récents appels à l'interdiction du niqab (voile de visage) au Canada sont déplacés et ils contreviennent aux principes fondamentaux de notre société libre et démocratique. Tous les Canadiens, qu'ils soient musulmans ou non, se voient garantir par la Charte des droits et des libertés la liberté de religion et de conscience. L'État n'a nullement sa place dans les garde-robes de la nation.

Par conséquent, si un segment des femmes musulmanes canadiennes croient que porter le niqab (voile de visage) fait partie de leur pratique religieuse, alors elles doivent être autorisées à le faire en toute liberté. Le principe doit être élargi à toutes les pratiques religieuses, à condition que la pratique n'empiète pas sur les droits fondamentaux des autres.

La marginalisation des femmes musulmanes doit être contrée par l'éducation populaire et par les efforts de lutte contre la discrimination, non par les dictats de l'État sur la façon dont on peut se vêtir, ce qui ne fait qu'accentuer la marginalisation à la place. »

SIGNATAIRES DE L'ÉNONCÉ :

Ahlul-Bayt Centre Ottawa \*  
Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN)  
Canadian Council Of Muslim Theologians (CCMT)  
Canadian Council of Imams  
Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC)  
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