

Rising Islamophobia and Violence Against Muslim Women - Demand Urgent Action

March 27, 2025: In recent weeks, our community has witnessed a series of distressing events that have heightened fear and vigilance among Muslim women and girls. These incidents, ranging from violent attacks in public spaces to escalating scrutiny of Muslim individuals, underscore the urgent need to address rising Islamophobia and the increasing vulnerability of those most at risk.

In Ajax, Ontario, a hijab-wearing woman was brutally attacked in a public library, where the assailant attempted to set her on fire. This horrifying act of violence is part of a disturbing pattern of targeted attacks against Muslim women in Canada.

In Calgary, Alberta, a widely circulated video shows a woman of color being violently assaulted at an LRT station while bystanders stood by. The lack of intervention is a painful reminder that racialized women continue to face disproportionate violence in public spaces, often without support from those around them.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the alarming detention of Rumeysa Ozturk, a Turkish doctoral student at Tufts University, has sparked concern. Reports indicate that her student visa was revoked due to her pro-Palestinian advocacy, leading to her abrupt arrest by immigration authorities. This incident has intensified fears among Muslim students and non-citizens about the growing surveillance and punitive actions they may face for their political beliefs.

These incidents, alongside ongoing political rhetoric and global injustices have instilled a deep sense of unease in our communities. Muslim women and girls, especially Black women and those who wear the hijab, are disproportionately targeted in moments of heightened Islamophobia.

We unequivocally condemn all acts of hate and call on political leaders at every level to do the same. Words matter, and silence in the face of rising Islamophobia only emboldens perpetrators. We urge governments to take concrete steps to ensure the safety of all communities and hold those responsible for hate-fueled attacks accountable.

We also call on all members of society to play a role in combating hate and violence.

- **Intervene when you witness harm** - Bystander intervention saves lives. In response to these recent events, we will be hosting a bystander intervention training session to equip community members with the tools to safely and effectively support victims in public spaces. Details will be shared soon.
- **Report hate crimes and incidents of Islamophobia** - Documenting and reporting these acts helps track patterns, ensure accountability, and provide support for those affected.
- **Support those impacted** - No one should have to navigate these traumatic experiences alone. Our organization offers free, confidential, and culturally safe counseling for those affected by Islamophobic violence, discrimination, and harassment. We also provide guidance on navigating reporting mechanisms and accessing additional resources.

Everyone deserves to feel safe in their own community. We cannot allow fear and hate to dictate how we exist in public spaces. Now is the time for solidarity, meaningful action, and unwavering support for those most at risk.

For support, resources, or to learn more about how to report a hate crime, please contact Sisters Dialogue.