

Muslim Women in the UK Are a Political Tool, Not Honour in Western Politics

News:

Mariam Ahmed, chief executive of Amina, the Muslim Women's Resource Centre, criticised the Reform UK MSP Thomas Kerr over his calls for further restrictions on Islamic dress after singling out the burqa in his call for a ban on face coverings. As the matter prepares to be discussed in the Scottish Parliament, Kerr has lodged a motion on full-face coverings which is due to be debated on Thursday, October 8.

On Twitter, he is quoted: "Scotland needs to ban the burqa."

Kerr has previously described the burqa as a "medieval piece of clothing". And in the Scottish Parliament he said, "This Government is blind to what is happening in Muslim households across this country. Women are being forced to wear this medieval piece of clothing."

Comment:

There is nothing new about the attack on Muslim women and their dress code. Since the Orientalist agenda entered the Muslim world, brainwashing Muslims into thinking that hijab and Islamic culture was a symbol of oppression and that liberal secular politics was the saviour.

An Orientalist attack on Muslim women was a social and political process in which Western political, media, and cultural influences used colonial tropes to stereotype, police, violate and humiliate Muslim women who did not compromise with Islamic principles. This discourse typically reduces Muslim women either to helpless victims who need "saving" with Western secular values or they are labelled as "cultural and security threats", prompting national debates on the danger they pose.

The "Saving" trope is a Western political and media narrative that usually frames the hijab, niqab, or modest dress as symbols of forced oppression. This justifies state interventions such as public bans as acts of liberation rather than violations of bodily autonomy.

The "Security Threat" shift was prominent post-9/11, and other discourses like modest swimwear have been deliberately misleading the public by linking them to radicalisation, extremism, or terrorism by political figures in France and other countries.

Orientalist and Islamophobic rhetoric spills over into physical harassment and hate crimes, such as "veil-pulling", the forced removal of hijab in public spaces. Mainstream politicians frequently leverage anti-veil rhetoric or controversial statements that humiliate Muslim women and normalise derogatory terms to bolster political support by framing minority traditions as incompatible with Western society. In this way, the crimes of politicians can be hidden behind the suffering of women so they assume the false hero positioning of defending feminism.

The classic historical example of a political Orientalist attack occurred during the British occupation of Egypt under Evelyn Baring. Lord Cromer aggressively used the "oppressed Muslim woman" trope to argue that Islam was inherently backward and that British imperialism was required to "civilise" Egypt by freeing women from the veil.

However, this revealed a contradiction. While positioning himself as the saviour of Egyptian women to justify colonial occupation, Cromer simultaneously opposed women's education in Egypt and famously fought against the women's suffrage movement back home in Great Britain. This demonstrated that the "defence" of Muslim women was merely a political tool for imperialist rule.

The continuation of the false narrative exists in different styles today, with the banning of hijab in Azerbaijan most recently. The contradiction is repeated when Muslim girls are seen crying at the school gates and are denied education in the same way the "oppressive Taliban" deny education, as reported in the Western media.

The regulation of Muslim women's clothing under the guise of secularism only proved one thing: that Muslim women need the Khilafah (Caliphate) State more than any other political organisation to deliver dignity and security as they strive to be pious servants of Allah (swt). We must work tirelessly for this to seek the rewards whilst we are patients in the tests of oppression.

﴿وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا﴾

“And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer—those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged, [even as much as] the speck on a date stone.” [An-Nisa 4:124]

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Imrana Mohammad

Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir