



## The Deafening Silence

by a CMM affiliate

**D**amascus, Syria, 2007 — As 16-year old Zahra Ezzo lay sleeping on a cold January morning, her brother Fayyez was making his way toward her apartment, driven by the most heinous intent. Using a stolen key, he slipped through her doorway around dawn, a knife at his side. Fayyez then either crouched or knelt beside his sister, drew the blade, and stabbed her — five vicious thrusts to her head and back. Immediately exiting the house, he walked directly to the nearest police station, turned himself in, and brazenly announced his actions with a full confession.

Fayyez, acting by proxy for his extended family, had murdered his sister because of a “sexual incident” one year earlier. Zahra had shamed the family honor and sullied the family name, and this most tarnishing stain required an extreme atonement — Zahra’s blood.

Compounding the tragedy, the circumstances of the

“sexual incident” for which Zahra was murdered added the cruelest, pathetic irony to her young life — she had been a rape victim. Through no fault of her own, Zahra Ezzo had become a living symbol of shame to her family, and paid with her life.

Unfortunately, there is nothing unique in Zahra’s story. It’s an oft-hidden truth in Islamic societies: Honor killings and honor-related violence are not isolated in time or place. It must be stated that honor killings are not condoned or sanctioned by the Qur’an or Hadith (traditional sayings of Muhammad). Yet, from its inception, Islam fostered oppression of women; and this legacy lends itself to gross violations.

The West has responded to the subordination of Muslim women with deafening silence. Thousands of universities in both Europe and the United States are saturated with women’s studies programs, with sub-

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# Until All Have Heard

*How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? –Romans 10:14*

**Jim Bennett, Director**  
**Center for**  
**Ministry to Muslims**



**A**mina Said, 18, and her sister Sarah, 17, smile happily in one widely circulating photo, and Amina is wearing what looks like a sweatshirt bearing the name “AMERICAN.” But their fate may have been the herald of a new, disquieting feature of the American landscape: honor killing. Amina and Sarah were shot dead in Irving, Texas, this past New Year’s Day. Their father, Yaser Said, is charged with capital murder.

The girls’ great aunt told reporters, “This was an honor killing.” She explained that Yaser Said had long abused the girls, and after discovering that they had boyfriends, threatened to kill them — whereupon their mother fled with them. “She ran away with them,” said the great aunt, “because she knew he would carry out the threat.” But Said found them, and shot them.

Honor killing, the practice of murdering a female family member who is believed to have sullied the family honor, enjoys widespread acceptance in some areas of the Islamic world.

My response to the issue of honor killings, which occur primarily in the Muslim world, is two-fold: First, I am saddened that tragic events of this kind still occur regularly, and second, I am alarmed and disappointed that very few seem willing to address it.

*Intercede* does not usually speak to issues of this kind, but I feel urged to inform our readers, and to ask for your earnest prayer. Once you read our lead article, I think you will be touched by the grievousness of this practice.

My introduction to the concept of honor killings began while living in the country of Jordan. Most incidents were given little space in the media. When a prominent journalist took up the cause — she was at first lauded for doing so. When faced with pressure from Islamists, her voice was muzzled and the issue was given a much lower profile.



As the writer of our lead article points out, in 2003 the Jordanian Parliament voted down on Islamic grounds a provision designed to stiffen penalties for honor killings. It is not unusual for the perpetrator of an honor killing to receive a sentence of a few months, after which he walks free.

In January, I was in the Irving, Texas area and read the account of Amina and Sarah. It reminded me of the horror I always felt when hearing of another honor killing in Jordan. But here I was in a metropolitan area of Texas! The killings of Amina and Sarah raise uncomfortable questions for the Islamic community in the United States. Muslim spokesmen in the U.S. have an urgent responsibility to confront and adequately address this issue.

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A TIME FOR REJOICING. I’d like to share with *Intercede* readers the good news that CMM has moved to its new building. We are grateful for a beautiful 12,000 square foot edifice that houses: administrative and ministry offices, mail and stockrooms, classroom, publications room, conference room, intercession room, and a library. A huge thanks to everyone who helped make this a reality.



# Muslim World News



## Iran

### *PARLIAMENT MAY MANDATE DEATH PENALTY*

The Iranian parliament may mandate the death penalty for citizens who leave Islam, a human rights group recently announced. For the first time in Iranian history, a proposed penal code demands the death penalty for “apostates,” according to a statement by the Institute on Religion and Public Policy (IRPP). “Apostasy was always illegal, but the court could hand down a jail term, hard labor or the death penalty,” said IRPP President Joseph Grieboski. “Now apostasy [would only] get the death penalty.” Iran has used the “apostasy” law to target Muslim converts to Christianity, as well as liberal thinkers and members of Iran’s Baha’i religious minority. Though sections of the draft appear to indicate that both men and women can be executed for apostasy, others limit execution to males who leave Islam. — *Compass*

## Palestine/Gaza

### *CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORE MANAGER MURDERED*

Palestinian Christian widow Pauline Ayyad gave birth in Gaza City to a girl, four months after the tiny infant’s father was kidnapped and shot to death by Islamist radicals. As of yet, no one has been arrested for the crime. Rami Ayyad, 29, was serving as manager of the Palestinian Bible Society bookshop in Gaza when he was murdered in October 2007. Ayyad’s family has yet to receive any concrete information on the investigation that Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh ordered vowing to bring the murderers to justice. The family has repeatedly been given contradictory information. At the same time, a Bible Society member told *Compass* that Christians “feel real pressures now between Muslims and Christians in Gaza. Many of the Muslims believe that Rami was evangelizing people, so it was OK to kill him.” — *Compass*

## Nigeria

### *POLICEMAN KILLED OVER BLASPHEMY CHARGES*

A policeman was killed and two Christian teenagers were injured in Kano state when Muslim high school students went on a rampage over claims that a Christian student had written a “blasphemous” article about Muhammad. Killed at the local police station after the attack on students was Inspector Jibrin Garba, also a Christian. One of the injured minors who suffered knife and machete wounds, Ahmadu Inuwa, said the accused Christian student, Ashiru Danlami, could not possibly have written the alleged English-language article as he could hardly speak English, much less write in the language. After severely injuring the two Christian students, the Muslim students then went directly to the town’s police station, where they proceeded to kill the Christian police officer and burn down the station. — *Compass*

# The Deafen

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ject areas on almost every gender focus conceivable. However, conspicuously missing is a program on the subjugation of women in Islam. In addition, the reaction from Western feminist groups is remarkably mild. Still, the Western media, albeit slowly, is beginning to note the incongruities between words and practice about gender in Islamic societies. Recent studies from across the ideological and political spectrums are exposing the magnitude of the plight.

- The United Nations Population Fund reports 5,000 honor killings per year worldwide, with the vast majority in Muslim countries.
- In France, the High Council of Integration, a government-funded organization, estimates 70,000 French-Muslim women live under some sort of repression or denial of rights, often in forced marriages.
- The World Health Organization estimates 140,000,000 Muslim girls across the globe have undergone female circumcision.
- UNICEF reports over 50% of females in Afghanistan and Bangladesh are married before the age of 18.
- In the U.K., the Association of Police Officers released official data showing 17,000 British-Muslim women per year are subjected to honor violence. The report came with a numbing caveat — the unreported incidents of honor violence may be up to 35 times higher than official figures.

As bleak as the numbers are, they are only symptomatic of a far greater malady. Most data is drawn from Muslims living in the West. Statistics from Muslim countries remain elusive and the overwhelming majority of honor crimes against women go unreported.

While the West responds to the shocking numbers by organizing focus groups, creating dialogue panels, hosting conferences on cultural mores, or consigning blame to tribalism and societal pressure — the roots of Islam are entirely ignored.

Granted, Islam developed out of a tribal desert cul-

ture, and the culture brought with it a body of repressive taboos and traditions regarding women. But with the advent of subsequent Islamic literature, the ill-treatment of women was codified or at the very least, sanctioned, in the Qur'an, Hadith, and Sira (biographies of Muhammad). These texts, merged in the example set forth in Muhammad's life, became the foundation by which women would be relegated to secondary status.

The Hadith offer a startling indication of the position of women in Islam. Bukhari (considered to be the most reliable collection of Hadith) offers repeated instances of Muhammad's denigration of women, giving details such as why the majority of hell's inhabitants will be women, and passages describing the low intelligence of females. The other Hadith collections are replete with further references to women's inferiority, even more derogatory than Bukhari.

The Sira also paint a dismal picture, abounding with details about Muhammad's polygamy, particularly his marriage to Aisha. The vast majority of Islamic scholars concede that Muhammad's marriage to Aisha was consummated before she had reached her teens. (It was no accident of history, when in 1979, following the Iranian revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini relied on Islamic precedent and lowered the legal age of marriage for females to nine. At age 28, Khomeini himself had married a 10-year old.)

But even if one dismisses the Hadith as unreliable, or puts no credence in the Sira, one is left staring at the Islamic colossus, the Qur'an. The Qur'an contains many verses with stark pronouncements about women:

Sura 2:223 – Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how ye will; but do some good act for your souls



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beforehand; and fear Allah. And know that ye are to meet Him (in the Hereafter), and give (these) good tidings to those who believe.

Sura 2:282 – O ye who believe! When ye deal with each other, in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time, reduce them to writing ... If the party liable is mentally deficient, or weak, or unable Himself to dictate, Let his guardian dictate faithfully, and get two witnesses, out of your own men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as ye choose, for

doing injustice.

Sura 4:11 – Allah (thus) directs you as regards your Children's (Inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is a half.

Sura 4:34 – Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous



witnesses, so that if one of them errs, the other can remind her.

Sura 4:3 – If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from

women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all).

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The Qur'an also boldly sets up Muhammad as the standard of behavior to emulate, referring to him as *uswa-hasana* (an excellent model of conduct).

Sura 33:21 – Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah.

Sura 68:4 – And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character.

When laid bare, the Qur'an swallows up the arguments of Islamic apologists like a river over a rock. The oppression of women is engendered by the inferior status ascribed to women in Islamic theology,

and that theology is anchored in the Qur'an.

It would be simple to continue referencing Qur'anic verses, listing sections of Hadith, detailing portions of Sira, or citing examples of Sharia law. However, that is quite often the path of Islamic scholars who take advantage of Islam's textual duality to tickle a skeptic's ear. The simple truth: Islamic texts offer two angles on most everything. Contradictions range from the Meccan/Medinan revelations, to the religious/political facet, to Muhammad as fighter/preacher, and even to the when/where complications of abrogation. When confronted by legitimate questions over the restrictions imposed by Islam, Muslim apologists often cloak denials in a barrage of verses that — to the uninitiated — transform Muhammad into a champion of gender equality.

One can argue that the myriad pieces of the Islamic culture of repression can belong to any religion, but no amount of semantic-sidestepping can change the fact that Muslim women across the globe — Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Iran, and even within cloistered enclaves in Europe — daily face abuse if they dare to step from the scripted role of submission mandated by Islam.

The tragic cases that periodically make the Western news (honor killings, forced marriages, and female circumcision) are not anomalies. There is a primal grain of humanity that runs contrary to these crimes, and should burn the conscience of every Christian. This article has a sole purpose: to draw attention to the difficulties faced by women in Islamic societies and in doing so, to implore Christians to pray earnestly for Muslim women, both for protection and salvation.

Please pray fervently for the safety of Muslim women. Please pray they would have opportunity to hear the truth of Jesus Christ. Most of all, please pray they would find ultimate freedom in accepting Him as their Lord and Savior.





# JUMAA PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

*PRAYING FOR MUSLIMS  
AROUND THE WORLD!*



**Friday, May 2, 2008. Please pray**

*...for the daughter of a British imam.* After recently converting to Christianity, she has been forced into hiding from her family after receiving death threats.

*...for a 70-year old MBB (Muslim Background Believer) murdered in Bangladesh.* Local villagers were reportedly highly upset with her conversion. The assailants have not yet been arrested.

*...for MBBs in Iran.* The parliament is considering making apostasy punishable by death.

**Friday, May 9, 2008. Please pray**

*...for the Church in Azerbaijan.* Pressure from the Muslim government is continuing.

*...for converts to Christianity in Morocco.* The numbers are not substantiated, but the gospel of Jesus Christ is definitely reaching Muslims in Morocco.

*...for the tense situation in Muslim areas of the Philippines.* The past 40 years of violence has seen thousands of deaths.

**Friday, May 16, 2008. Please pray**

*...for MBBs across the Muslim world desperately searching for discipleship and fellowship.*

*...for the family of Rami Ayyad in Gaza.* As manager of the Bible Society bookstore, Ayyad became a target of radicals. He was kidnapped and murdered. As of yet, no one has been arrested.

*...for the troubled country of Sudan.* Sources are reporting that President Bashir has made several volatile statements calling for training for more mujahideen. These are the same troops involved in widespread atrocities during the civil war.

**Friday, May 23, 2008. Please pray**

*...for approximately 700,000 international students in the U.S.* A substantial portion come from Muslim countries.

*...for an end to the turmoil in Kenya.* Muslims make up only 10 percent of the country, but are growing faster than any other group.

*...for continued prayer for 41 Indonesian Christian leaders* sentenced to five years imprisonment on blasphemy charges.

**Friday, May 30, 2008. Please pray**

*...for continued successful witness to Muslims* through print, television, radio, and Internet ministries.

*...for Saudi nationals who are secret Christians.* The government refuses to acknowledge the existence of a single one.

*...for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to reach the Muslims of India.* India is home to 140 million Muslims, the second highest number of any country on earth.

***I URGE, THEN, FIRST OF ALL THAT REQUESTS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSION AND  
THANKSGIVING BE MADE FOR EVERYONE. –1 TIMOTHY 2:1, NIV***



# JUMAA PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

*PRAYING FOR MUSLIMS  
AROUND THE WORLD!*



**Friday, June 6, 2008. Please pray**

*...for the minority Christians in Indonesia.* They make up approximately 10 percent of the populace and Muslims comprise nearly 89 percent. The total population of Indonesia is 230 million.

*...for Muslims in Canada where Islam is the fastest growing religion.* Between 1991 and 2001, the number of Muslims doubled to approximately 580,000.

*...for Christian workers in Nigeria.* In the 1960s, approximately 10,000 expatriate missionaries worked in Nigeria. Today, estimates place the number of expatriate missionaries at 500. However, many Nigerian nationals have assumed the mantle, acting as missionaries within their own country. Please pray for their protection as they toil in Muslim areas.

**Friday, June 13, 2008. Please pray**

*...for missionaries in Jordan.* The government continues to exert pressure on Christian workers, expelling a series of individuals and families from several denominations.

*...for the Muslims of Yemen,* the poorest country in the Arabian peninsula. Pray that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would find open hearts in this beleaguered country.

*...for Southern Thailand.* Violence continues through Muslim unrest. Pray for a permanent peace.

**Friday, June 20, 2008. Please pray**

*...for the Christian community in Iraq.* Churches and clerics still remain under threat. As of this printing date, the Kirkuk Chaldean Archbishop was being held on a \$2.5 million ransom.

*...for a MBB in New Zealand caught in a bureaucratic tangle.* If Bahareh Moradi is denied refugee status and sent back to Iran, she will likely face severe danger as an apostate.

*...for Muslims in the Central Asian countries.* Pray that the Gospel would reach the hearts of so many hungry people.

**Friday, June 27, 2008. Please pray**

*...for continued strength for Shadia Nagui Ibrahim,* an Egyptian sentenced to three years in prison for listing her religion as "Christian" on her marriage certificate. After an incredibly complicated case, she was released. Pray that the Lord would keep her from further harm.

*...for Nigeria.* Violence against Christians continues unabated. Reports of deaths and demolished churches abound.

*...for the few overt Christians in the Maldives.* The government has passed an amendment declaring that all citizens must be Muslims.