

A message from community leaders and ulama about maternal mortality

“Be at your mothers’ feet and there is paradise” - Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)



We address this letter to our brothers and sisters in humanity, Assalaamu alaykum wa rahmatullah – peace be upon you all

There is a crisis occurring in the world today. A crisis which affects almost every community and every country in the world. A crisis which devastates families and leaves young children vulnerable to poverty, illiteracy and death.

1000 mothers are dying every day during pregnancy or childbirth because they cannot access basic care - that's one every 90 seconds. Over 7 million more women every year are left with disabilities and injuries from complications relating to pregnancy and childbirth. 99% of these deaths occur in the developing world, in countries such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia and Pakistan.

But 8 out of 10 women could survive if they had better access to basic healthcare – such as a hospital, basic medication, or trained health workers. This is not expensive or difficult to provide: a package of maternal health services costing about £1 per person could make significant improvements in women's health.

Islam teaches us to honour our mothers for the hardships they endure, and the central role they play in society. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said *‘Be at your mother's feet and there is Paradise’* (Ibn Majah). The Qur'an repeatedly speaks of the rights of mothers to be cared for during pregnancy and childbirth, commanding *“and if they are pregnant, then spend on them until they deliver...”* (65:6). Islam gives women the right to education, healthcare, marital choice and financial support – we must ensure that these rights are being respected around the world.

Education and family planning are life-saving. 150,000 women could be saved every year by spacing out births and through effective family planning. Encouraging young girls to stay in education and delay their first pregnancy would also prevent many needless deaths, as girls under the age of 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than girls in their 20s. Educated girls are also more likely to make healthier choices during pregnancy and childbirth, which significantly reduce their risk of dying.

Muslim communities have the power to make a difference. Our communities and charities have strong links with countries where maternal mortality is highest, such as Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan. This means we're in a unique position to influence attitudes, share life-saving knowledge, and provide vital healthcare to women around the world. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said *‘Whosoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest of faith’* (Muslim).

We call on Muslims in the UK to lead the campaign to promote maternal healthcare across the globe. You can do this by raising awareness within the UK; by sharing your knowledge with friends and family in developing countries; and by supporting charities and governments to increase their work on maternal healthcare. Join the www.atourmothersfeet.org.uk campaign now to celebrate motherhood; let us do our duty in honouring and supporting mothers around the world and make saving mothers' lives a priority.

Signed:

1. Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, 1st Ethical Charitable Trust
2. Imam Suliman Gani, Imam of Tooting Islamic Centre
3. Mufti Barkatullah, Ibrahim College
4. Shaykh Tawfique Chowdhury, Al Kauthar Institute and Mercy Mission
5. Mufti Muhammad Ibn Adam Al-Kawthari, Dar Ul Iftaa
6. Khalid Sabir
7. Maulana Abdul Basit, Unity Welfare Foundation
8. Abul Barakat Mishkat, East London Academy
9. Najma Ansari
10. Nacira Sebouai
11. Farhana Kapasi, Al-Mahdi Institute
12. Imam Hussein Ahmed, Jamia Darussunnah Mosque
13. Maulana Abdur-Rahman Madani, Principal of Jamiatul Ummah Sixth Form College
14. Jusna Ali
15. Dr. Usama Hasan, Al-Tawhid Mosque and City Circle
16. Saiyyidah Zaidi, Working Muslim
17. Khola Hasan, Albatross Consultancy
18. Imam Qasim Rashid Ali, Al Khair Foundation
19. Mahmood Hasan, Chairman, Islamic Aid
20. Dr. Husna Ahmad OBE, CEO, Faith Regen Foundation
21. A.G. Karim, Chairman, Lady Fatemah Charitable Trust
22. Abdurahman Sharif, Coordinator, Muslim Charities Forum
23. Ustahda Bint Ahmad, Al Zahra UK
24. Shaykh Muhammad Hilli
25. Selina Begum Ali, Oak Education and Beacon Institute
26. Humera Khan, An-Nisa Society
27. Ruby Azad, Muslimaat
28. Dr Musharraf Hussain Al-Azhari OBE, CEO and Chief Imam, Karimia Institute
29. Shaykh Abdul-Aziz Fredericks
30. Abu Eesa Niamatullah, Al Maghrib Institute
31. Shaykha Halima Krausen, An-Nisa Society
32. Shah Muhammad Anas, Principal, Imam Zakariya Academy
33. Sabooh Uddin, Managing Director, Muslim Charity
34. Dilowar Khan, Director of East London Mosque Trust/London Muslim Centre
35. Shaykh Ruzwan Muhammad, Co-Founder, Solas Foundation
36. Shaykh Arif Abdul Hussain, Director, Al-Mahdi Institute
37. Syed Lakhte Hassanain, Muslim Hands International
38. Imam Yunus Dudhwala, Head of Chaplaincy & Bereavement, Newham University Hospital Trust
39. Farooq Murad, Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain
40. Jehangir Malik OBE, Director, Islamic Relief UK
41. Shaykh Ibrahim Osi-Efa, Founder, Greensville Trust
42. Imam Monawar Hussein, Eton College Imam
43. Shaykh M. Manwar Ali (Abu Muntasir), CEO of JIMAS
44. Khalid Sofi, Chairman of the Board, MADE in Europe
45. Mohammed Sarwar, Chairman, Ucare Foundation (former Member of Parliament)
46. Munawer Rattansey, Vice President, The World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities

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