



Rome, December 27<sup>th</sup> 2022

**Muslims in Europe will pray this Friday in solidarity with their Muslim sisters and their right to education and knowledge in Afghanistan and in every region of the world.**

Since March, the first day of school year, the Taliban armed guards have prevented girls the right to enter in their classes and follow their education. Last week the Taliban announced they will ban women from attending university and teaching in Afghanistan. Nida Nadim, the Higher Education Minister, opposes female education, saying it is against Islamic and Afghan values.

On Wednesday, the **Organization for Islamic Cooperation** said, “The OIC cannot but denounce the decision, calling on Kabul authorities to reverse it for the sake of maintaining consistency between their promises and actual decisions.” No country or Islamic organization has backed the Taliban’s policy on women’s education and work thus far.

EULEMA is focusing on European policies on Islam and for the Muslim communities in Europe.

Nevertheless, we want to express our solidarity for education, human rights and religious freedom and dignity with all believers and citizens, including our sisters and their families in Afghanistan.

We agree with the statement of the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and Chairman of the **Muslim Council of Elders** Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb that the Taliban decision “**contradicts Islamic *Shari’ah*** and conflicts with its explicit call for men and women to pursue knowledge from the cradle to the grave. That **call to pursue knowledge** has produced mighty minds among women along the scientific and political history of Islam. (...) I explicitly reject this decision since it does not represent the *Shari’ah* of Islam. Rather, it radically contradicts the call of the Noble Qur’an, the book in which the words **knowledge** and **reason**, with all their derivatives, recur more than a hundred times.”

EULEMA European Muslim Scholars Council, together with senior leaders such as Mustafa Ceric from Bosnia and shaykh Muhammad Ismail from the UK, we are very careful to link, without any confusion, the authentic reading and interpretation of religious doctrine with the universal dimension of HR Human Rights, including education for all. There should not be any artificial abuse of *Shari’ah* in conflict with the Fundamental Rights.

We are happy to quote a statement as well from the Secretary General of the **World Muslim League** Dr. Al-Issa: “Education is encouraged in Islamic law and that includes everyone, men and women, and no party has the right, under any pretext, to exclude women from pursuing their education, or restrict their education” only to certain levels.

EULEMA will propose in 2023 the establishment of some working groups on Religious Education and comparative Theology as a counter narrative to radical and ideological misinterpretations in Europe. A focus on Human Rights and the prevention of discrimination or hatred against Muslims will be included.

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