

January 11, 2017

Dear Sir,

In connection with Texas Muslim Capitol Day 2017, the two organizations referenced below and Texas Representative Kyle Biedermann are jointly conducting a poll of Islamic leaders in Texas the results of which we plan to share with Texas elected officials. We would appreciate your completing the attached Poll Response and mailing same in the enclosed pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope to Rep. Kyle Biedermann, P.O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768-2910 by Friday, January 20, 2017 at the latest.

According to the Pew Research Center, large percentages of Muslims in 39 countries want Sharia law, a legal code based on the Quran and other authoritative Islamic writings, to be the official law of the land in their country.¹ Other polls have determined that “four in ten British Muslims want some aspect of Sharia law enforced in the UK”² and that a majority (51%) of Muslims in America agreed that “Muslims in America should have the choice of being governed according to Shariah.”³

On the other hand, the Southern Poverty Law Center has stated, without citing a poll, that “American Muslims overwhelmingly support the U.S. Constitution and do not seek to replace it with Sharia or Islamic law”.⁴

The leading international court in the world, the European Court of Human Rights, has unequivocally ruled that Sharia law is absolutely incompatible with the fundamental principles of freedom and democracy as set forth in the Convention for Human Rights and Fundamental Rights.⁵

This poll requests you to indicate whether you, as a Muslim American and leader of your Mosque or other Islamic entity, agree with and support the three items below.

I. Declaration of Muslim Reform Movement

Do you agree with and support this declaration which is enclosed herein?

II. Muslim Pledge for Religious Freedom and Safety from Harm for Former Muslims

Do you agree with and support this declaration which is enclosed herein?

III. S. 2230 of the 114th U.S. Congress re Designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a Foreign Terrorist Organization

The full text of this twenty-two page bill introduced on November 3, 2015 in the U.S. Senate may be found at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2230/text>.

Premised upon a list of 34 Findings, the bill provides as follows:

“Sec. 2(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS. It is the sense of Congress that:

¹ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/22/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>

² <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/738852/British-Muslims-Sharia-Law-enforced-UK-Islam-poll>

³ <http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2015/06/23/nationwide-poll-of-us-muslims-shows-thousands-support-shariah-jihad/>

⁴ <http://www.tolerance.org/publication/sharia>

⁵ *Refah Partisi v. Turkey* [GC], no. 41340/98, 41342/98, 41343/98 and 41344/98, February 13, 2003. “The Court concurs... that sharia is incompatible with the fundamental principles of democracy, as set forth in the Convention [for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms]....”

“(1) the Muslim Brotherhood meets the criteria for designation as a foreign terrorist organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189)

....

“Sec. 3(b) REPORT.... [T]he Secretary of State, in consultation with the intelligence community, shall submit a detailed report to the appropriate congressional committees that ---

“(1) indicates whether the Muslim Brotherhood meets the criteria for designation as a foreign terrorist organization”

Do you agree with and support this bill’s requirement that U.S. Secretary of State make a determination as to whether the Muslim Brotherhood qualifies as a foreign terrorist organization?

Thank you very much for participating in this important poll. Again, it is very important that your response be mailed by Friday, January 20, 2017 at the latest.

Yours very truly,



M. Zuhdi Jasser, M.D.
President, American Islamic Forum for Democracy
Co-Founder, Muslim Reform Movement



Nonie Darwish
Director, Former Muslims United, Inc.



Kyle Biedermann
Texas House Representative, District 73

Enclosures:

- Declaration of Muslim Reform Movement
- Muslim Pledge for Religious Freedom and Safety from Harm for Former Muslims
- Poll Response form
- Postage-paid Envelope

POLL RESPONSE

Texas Muslim Capitol Day 2017

Please indicate your support and approval of any of the following items by placing an "X" in the appropriate box. Then please sign and print your name, title and your institution. Place the completed form in the enclosed pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope and mail same to Rep. Kyle Biedermann, P.O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768-2910 --- ON OR BEFORE Friday, January 20, 2017.

I AGREE WITH AND SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING INDICATED ITEMS:

- Declaration of Muslim Reform Movement.
- Muslim Pledge for Religious Freedom and Safety from Harm for Former Muslims.
- S. 2230 of the 114th U.S. Congress that requires the U.S. Secretary of State to determine whether the Muslim Brotherhood meets the criteria for designation as a foreign terrorist organization.

Signature

Printed Name

Title

Mosque or Other Institution

Whereas:

All four schools of Sunni Islamic law (*Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali*), as well as the other main schools of Shia Islamic law (*al-Isma'iliyyun and Ithna'ashariyya*), unanimously agree that a former Muslim male, also known as an apostate, must be executed. While some hold that an apostate woman should also be executed, the *Encyclopedia of Islamic Law: A Compendium of the Major Schools*, adapted by Laleh Bakhtiar, states that she should be imprisoned or beaten five times a day until she repents or dies. These specific world-renowned Islamic legal authorities join in this consensus:

Head of the Fatawa Council of Al-Azhar, **ABDULLAH AL-MISHADD**, Al-Azhar University, the pre-eminent Shariah legal authority, *fatwa* issued 23rd September 1978: *"This man has committed apostasy; he must be given a chance to repent and if he does not then he must be killed according to Shari'ah. As far as his children are concerned, as long as they are children they are considered Muslim, but after they reach the age of puberty, then if they remain with Islam they are Muslim, but if they leave Islam and they do not repent they must be killed..."**

MUFTI OF LEBANON, Beirut, *Fatwa* issued 13 November 1989: *"Now, should the apostate (male or female) persist in his apostasy, he should be given the opportunity to repent, prior to his being put to death, out of respect for his Islam. A misunderstanding on his part may have taken place, and there would thus be an opportunity to rectify it. Often apostasy takes place on account of an offer (of inducement). So Islam must be presented to the apostate, things should be clarified, and his sin made manifest. He should be imprisoned for three days, so that he may have the opportunity to reflect upon his situation. This three-day period has been deemed adequate. But if the man or the woman has not repented of his or her raddah, but has continued to persist in it, then he or she should be put to death..."**

IBN RUSHD (AVERROES), *The Distinguished Jurist's Primer*, "Chapter on the Hukm of the Murtadd (Apostate)," Volume II, page 552, Section 56.10: *"An apostate, if taken captive before he declares war, is to be executed by agreement in the case of a man, because of the words of the Prophet (God's peace and blessings be upon him), 'Slay those who change their din. They disagreed about the execution of a woman and whether she to be required to repent before execution. The majority said that a woman (apostate) is to be executed..."*

AHMAD IBN NAQIB AL-MISRI, *Reliance of the Traveller*, translation approved by Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy and IIIT, 1994. (p. 595): *"o8.1 When a person who has reached puberty and is sane voluntarily apostatizes from Islam, he deserves to be killed...o8.4 There is no indemnity for killing an apostate (O: or any expiation, since it is killing someone who deserves to die)."*

ISMAIL R. AL-FARUKI, Founder of International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), *Islam*, 1979, p. 68: *"That is why Islamic Law has treated people who have converted out of Islam as political traitors...[Islam] must deal with the traitors when convicted after due process of law either with banishment, life imprisonment, or capital punishment...but once their conversion is proclaimed, they must be dealt with as traitors to the state."*

LOUAY SAFI, former Executive Director of IIIT and former Executive Director of the Islamic Society of North America's (ISNA) Leadership Development Council, *Peace and the Limits of War*, IIIT publication, 2003 (p 25): *"A quiet desertion of personal Islamic duties is not a sufficient reason for inflicting death on a person. Only when the person's desertion of Islam is used as a political tool for instigating a state of disorder, or revolting against the law of Islam, can the individual apostate then be put to death as a just punishment for his act of treason and betrayal of the Muslim community."*

SYED ABUL A'ALA MAUDUDI, Pakistani Islamic authority, *The Punishment of the Apostate According to Islamic Law*, translation by Syed Silas Husain, 1994: *"In any case the heart of the matter is that children born of Muslim lineage will be considered Muslims and according to Islamic law the door of apostasy will never be opened to them. If anyone of them renounces Islam, he will be as deserving of execution as the person who has renounced kufr to become a Muslim and again has chosen the way of kufr. All the jurists of Islam agree with this decision. On this topic absolutely no difference exists among the experts of shari'ah."*

Therefore: To support the civil rights of former Muslims, also known as apostates from Islam, I sign "The Muslim Pledge for Religious Freedom and Safety from Harm for Former Muslims":

I renounce, repudiate and oppose any physical intimidation, or worldly and corporal punishment, of apostates who leave Islam, change their religion from Islam to another religion, or express unbelief in Islam, in whatever way that punishment may be determined or carried out by myself or any other Muslim including the family of the apostate, community, Mosque leaders, Shariah court or judge, and Muslim government or regime.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Organization/Title: _____

Date: _____

Signing the pledge does not constitute in any way endorsement or support of Former Muslims United, Inc.

Please mail your signed pledge to FMU, 15021 Ventura Blvd. #319, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403.

For more information contact info@formermuslimsunitd.org. *Complete fatwa texts posted at formermuslimsunitd.org

MUSLIM REFORM MOVEMENT

PREAMBLE

We are Muslims who live in the 21st century. We stand for a respectful, merciful and inclusive interpretation of Islam. We are in a battle for the soul of Islam, and an Islamic renewal must defeat the ideology of Islamism, or politicized Islam, which seeks to create Islamic states, as well as an Islamic caliphate. We seek to reclaim the progressive spirit with which Islam was born in the 7th century to fast forward it into the 21st century. We support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by United Nations member states in 1948.

We reject interpretations of Islam that call for any violence, social injustice and politicized Islam. Facing the threat of terrorism, intolerance, and social injustice in the name of Islam, we have reflected on how we can transform our communities based on three principles: peace, human rights and secular governance. We are announcing today the formation of an international initiative: the Muslim Reform Movement.

We have courageous reformers from around the world who have written our Declaration for Muslim Reform, a living document that we will continue to enhance as our journey continues. We invite our fellow Muslims and neighbors to join us.

DECLARATION

A. Peace: National Security, Counterterrorism and Foreign Policy

1. We stand for universal peace, love and compassion. We reject violent jihad. We believe we must target the ideology of violent Islamist extremism, in order to liberate individuals from the scourge of oppression and terrorism both in Muslim-majority societies and the West.
2. We stand for the protection of all people of all faiths and non-faith who seek freedom from dictatorships, theocracies and Islamist extremists.
3. We reject bigotry, oppression and violence against all people based on any prejudice, including ethnicity, gender, language, belief, religion, sexual orientation and gender expression.

B. Human Rights: Women's Rights and Minority Rights

1. We stand for human rights and justice. We support equal rights and dignity for all people, including minorities. We support the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

2. We reject tribalism, castes, monarchies and patriarchies and consider all people equal with no birth rights other than human rights. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Muslims don't have an exclusive right to "heaven."
3. We support equal rights for women, including equal rights to inheritance, witness, work, mobility, personal law, education, and employment. Men and women have equal rights in mosques, boards, leadership and all spheres of society. We reject sexism and misogyny.

C. Secular Governance: Freedom of Speech and Religion

1. We are for secular governance, democracy and liberty. We are against political movements in the name of religion. We separate mosque and state. We are loyal to the nations in which we live. We reject the idea of the Islamic state. There is no need for an Islamic caliphate. We oppose institutionalized sharia. Sharia is manmade.
2. We believe in life, joy, free speech and the beauty all around us. Every individual has the right to publicly express criticism of Islam. Ideas do not have rights. Human beings have rights. We reject blasphemy laws. They are a cover for the restriction of freedom of speech and religion. We affirm every individual's right to participate equally in *ijtihad*, or critical thinking, and we seek a revival of *ijtihad*.
3. We believe in freedom of religion and the right of all people to express and practice their faith, or non-faith, without threat of intimidation, persecution, discrimination or violence. Apostasy is not a crime. Our *ummah*--our community--is not just Muslims, but all of humanity.

We stand for peace, human rights and secular governance. Please stand with us!

Affirmed this Fourth Day of December, Two-Thousand and Fifteen

By the founding authors who are signatories below

#MuslimReform

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Please sign our declaration www.change.org

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...affirmed at 8 AM this Fourth Day of December, Two-Thousand and Fifteen