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Canadian Council of Muslim Women
Conseil canadien des femmes musulmanes

MUSLIM WOMEN IN CANADA: FACT SHEETS

NUMBER 2

TRIPLE JEOPARDY: MUSLIM WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION

This fact sheet is second in a series designed to provide facts that will inform the broader Canadian society and Muslim women themselves about critical issues regarding this growing segment of the Canadian population.

The facts below are based on the various surveys conducted or commissioned by government agencies as well as private sector surveys. They are extracted from the CCMW report entitled, *Muslim Women's Experience of Discrimination*, by Daood Hamdani. For the complete report, click on <http://www.ccmw.com/>.

Discrimination motivated by religion is directed against an entire community. Therefore, surveys do not provide the gender breakdown. Observations about the entire community are taken as a proxy for women, but it should be noted that Muslim women are more at risk because they are more easily identifiable and they also face gender discrimination.

Muslim women's self assessment of discrimination

- Muslim women are the most discriminated of the faith communities for which the data are available. About one in three (30 per cent) of Muslim women reported having experienced one or more episodes of discrimination or unfair treatment. The Jewish community followed next with 23 per cent reporting similar experiences.
- 34 per cent of Muslim women belonging to a visible minority said that they had been discriminated, as compared with 20 per cent of all (Muslim and non-Muslim) visible minorities.
- Fewer Muslim females of European origins (non-visible minorities) are likely to encounter discrimination, but they were twice as vulnerable as their non-Muslim counterparts: 11 per cent versus 5 per cent.

Public perception of discrimination against Muslims

- An overwhelming majority of Canadians in every region agree that Muslims are the main target of discrimination. 80 per cent of the Canadians questioned in 2004 said that Muslims encounter one or more incidents of discrimination or unfair treatment.
- 43 per cent of the Canadians felt that discrimination happened to Muslims frequently, while 37 per cent said that discriminatory episodes were occasional occurrences.
- Even as the society is becoming more inclusive and accepting of change, anti-Muslim sentiment is rising. While 11 per cent of the Canadians saw discrimination against minorities as more of a problem in 2004 than before, four times as many (45 per cent) said that anti-Muslim feeling was rising among the people they knew. Only 21 per cent noticed a decline.

Canadians' comfort levels in dealing with Muslims

Canadians are comfortable in dealing with all faith and ethnic communities. However, their comfort levels vary depending on the community they are dealing with:

- 84 per cent of the Canadians would be comfortable with a Muslim teaching at their children's school; the corresponding figures for other communities were in the mid-90s;
- 86 per cent had no problem with a Muslim boss, versus 96 per cent for the Jewish and 97 per cent for the black;
- 61 per cent would be at ease if their daughter or son married a Muslim, while 83 per cent said the same about the Jewish and the black;
- However, about one in three (30 per cent) Canadians will not likely vote for a political party led by a Muslim; a Jewish leader drew that response from 12 per cent of the respondents, and the blacks fared better, with only 8 per cent.

Hate crimes against Muslims

- According to a pilot survey based on incomplete information, Muslims reported only 102 hate crimes to the police over the two-year period, 2001 and 2002. This accounts for only 26 per cent of all hate crimes motivated by religion. This figure is far below that reported by Muslim organizations, and inconsistent with evidence provided above.
- The same survey also noted that hate crime associated with 9/11 began to taper off within months after the immediate aftermath. Muslim organizations vehemently dispute it; nor does it stand up to the Canadians' perception that discrimination against minorities is less of a problem than before but anti-Muslim sentiment is rising.

Workplace the likeliest place for discrimination

- 64 per cent of the visible minorities who reported encountering discrimination said that they were treated unfairly at the workplace. 40 per cent identified a commercial place, and 17 per cent noted that they had been discriminated while dealing with the justice system. These figures are representative of Muslims because 84 per cent belong to visible minorities. (Note: the percentages add up to more than one hundred because some respondents encountered discrimination in more than one place).
- A recent study by the Public Policy forum notes that unemployment is high among recent immigrants because, among other things, hiring them ranks low in the workplace strategies of employers and some hiring practices "systematically discriminate recent immigrants". 48 per cent of the Muslim female population came to Canada in the 1990s and one-third during 1996-2001.

For the detailed report click on:

[http://www.ccmw.com/In The Press/Muslim Women's Experience of Discrimination.pdf](http://www.ccmw.com/In%20The%20Press/Muslim%20Women's%20Experience%20of%20Discrimination.pdf)