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Launch of One Law for All. Campaign against Sharia law in Britain, December 1, 2008

The One Law for All campaign against Sharia law in Britain is to be launched at the House of Lords on International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2008 from 4:00 to 5:00pm.

According to campaign organiser, Maryam Namazie, 'Even in civil matters, Sharia law is discriminatory, unfair and unjust, particularly against women and children. Moreover, its voluntary nature is a sham; many women will be pressured into going to these courts and abiding by their decisions. These courts are a quick and cheap route to injustice and do nothing to promote minority rights and social cohesion. Public interest, particularly with regard to women and children, requires an end to Sharia and all other faith-based courts and tribunals.'

The campaign has already received widespread support including from AC Grayling; Ayaan Hirsi Ali; Bahram Soroush; Baroness Caroline Cox; Caspar Melville; Deeyah; Fariborz Pooya; Gina Khan; Houzan Mahmoud; Homa Arjomand; Ibn Warraq; Joan Smith; Johann Hari; Keith Porteous Wood; Mina Ahadi; Naser Khader; Nick Cohen; Richard Dawkins; Shakeb Isaar; Sonja Eggerickx; Stephen Law; Tarek Fatah; Tauriq Moosa; Taslima Nasrin and others. It has also received the support of organisations such as the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain; Equal Rights Now – Organisation against Women's Discrimination in Iran; European Humanist Federation; International Committee against Stoning; International Humanist and Ethical Union; Lawyers Secular Society; the National Secular Society; and the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan.

The campaign calls on the UK government to recognise that Sharia law is arbitrary and discriminatory and for an end to Sharia courts and all religious tribunals on the basis that they work against and not for equality and human rights.

The campaign also calls for the Arbitration Act 1996 to be amended so that all religious tribunals are banned from operating within and outside of the legal system.

In the words of the Campaign Declaration: 'Rights, justice, inclusion, equality and respect are for people, not beliefs. In a civil society, people must have full citizenship rights and equality under the law. Clearly, Sharia law contravenes fundamental human rights. In order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of all those living in Britain, there must be one secular law for all and no Sharia.'

Roy Brown, immediate past president of the International Humanist and Ethical Union said, "IHEU is lending its full support to this campaign. It is intolerable that the very values on which UK society is based - human rights, equality and the rule of law - are being undermined by the quiet and insidious application of systems of law that have no basis in equality or justice."

Terry Sanderson, president of the National Secular Society, which is supporting the One Law for All campaign, said: "It is a grave error for the authorities in this country to give credence to Sharia in any form – whether legally or in terms of informal arbitration. When women are being subjected to violence in their marriages, it is not acceptable for religious authorities – which are, by definition, misogynistic – to arbitrate. A two-tier legal system, with women's rights being always secondary to religious demands, is unnecessary, undesirable and ultimately unjust."

To RSVP to attend the launch or for more information, please contact Maryam Namazie, email: onelawforall@gmail.com, telephone: 07719166731; onelawforall.org.uk.
The campaign's website will be available on the day of the launch.