

One Law for All

No Sharia Campaign

Declaration

We, the undersigned individuals and organisations, call on the UK government to bring an end to the use and institutionalisation of Sharia and all religious laws and to guarantee equal citizenship rights for all.

Sharia law is discriminatory

Sharia Councils and Muslim Arbitration Tribunals are discriminatory, particularly against women and children, and in violation of universal human rights.

Sharia law is unfair and unjust in civil matters

Proponents argue that the implementation of Sharia is justified when limited to civil matters, such as child custody, divorce and inheritance. In fact, it is civil matters that are one of the main cornerstones of the subjugation of and discrimination against women and children. Under Sharia law a woman's testimony is worth half that of a man's; a woman's marriage contract is between her male guardian and her husband. A man can have four wives and divorce his wife by simple repudiation, whereas a woman must give reasons, some of which are extremely difficult to prove. Child custody reverts to the father at a preset age, even if the father is abusive; women who remarry lose custody of their children; and sons are entitled to inherit twice the share of daughters.

The voluntary nature of Sharia courts is a sham

Proponents argue that those who choose to make use of Sharia courts and tribunals do so voluntarily and that according to the Arbitration Act parties are free to agree upon how their disputes are resolved. In reality, many of those dealt with by Sharia courts are from the most marginalised segments of society with little or no knowledge of their rights under British law. Many, particularly women, are pressured into going to these courts and abiding by their decisions. More importantly, those who fail to make use of Sharia law or seek to opt out will be made to feel guilty and can be treated as apostates and outcasts.

Even if completely voluntary, which is untrue, the discriminatory nature of the courts would be sufficient reason to bring an end to their use and implementation.

Sharia law is a quick and cheap way to injustice

Proponents argue that Sharia courts are an alternative method of dispute resolution and curb legal aid costs. When it comes to people's rights, however, cuts in costs and speed can only bring about serious miscarriages of justice. Many of the laws that Sharia courts and religious tribunals aim to avoid have been fought for over centuries in order to improve the rights of those most in need of protection in society.

Sharia law doesn't promote minority rights and social cohesion

Proponents argue that the right to be governed by Sharia law is necessary to defend minority rights. Having the right to religion or atheism, however, is not the same as having the 'right' to be governed by religious laws. This is merely a prescription for discrimination, inequality and culturally relative rights. Rather than defending rights, it discriminates and sets up different and separate systems, standards and norms for 'different' people. It reinforces the fragmentation of society, and leaves large numbers of people, particularly women and children, at the mercy of elders and imams. It increases marginalisation and the further segregation of immigrant communities. It ensures that immigrants and new arrivals remain forever minorities and never equal citizens.

One law for all

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.

Petition One Law for All

We call on the UK government to recognise that Sharia and all religious laws are arbitrary and discriminatory against women and children in particular. Citizenship and human rights are non-negotiable.

We demand an end to all Sharia courts and religious tribunals on the basis that they work against and not for equality and human rights.

We demand that the law be amended so that all religious tribunals are banned from operating within and outside of the legal system.

Name: _____ Organisation (if any): _____ City, Country: _____

Please send in the signed petition to One Law for All, BM Box 2387, London WC1N 3XX. You can also contact Maryam Namazie at 07719166731 or onelawforall@gmail.com or visit onelawforall.org.uk for more information or to sign the petition online.