
Alliance of Inclusive Muslims' 2021 Conference

SPEAKERS' BIOS

Ani Zonneveld (USA)

Ani Zonneveld is a writer, singer/songwriter, founder and President of **Muslims for Progressive Values** (MPV), an organization that advocates for social justice and equality for all, a strong supporter of freedom of expression and of conscience, women's rights and as an ally, LGBTQ rights. Ani promotes these values at the United Nations by challenging human rights abuses in the name of Islam, and by offering an inclusive understanding based on universal human rights and justice. Since its inception, Ani has presided over MPV's expansion to include chapters in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Atlanta, Washington D.C., New York, Boston, Columbus and Chicago, and is also the founder of **Alliance Of Inclusive Muslims**, the first international human rights Muslim umbrella organization made up of members spanning six continents.

Ani is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR); on the U.N. Inter-agency's Multi-Faith Advisory Council, and was commissioned by the U.N. Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect to create an anti-hate speech curriculum for Muslim communities. She has organized numerous interfaith arts and music festivals, is the co-editor of MPV's first book, an anthology titled "Progressive Muslim Identities – Personal Stories from the U.S. and Canada"; executive producer of a video series "LGBTQI Rights in Islam"; has contributed to many forewords and anthologies, and is a contributor for HuffingtonPost, OpenDemocracy and al-Jazeera. She has a TEDx talk titled – [Islam: As American As Apple Pie](#), and is the subject of a documentary title "al-imam" featuring Ani's activism works, screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 2019. As an award winning songwriter, she utilizes the power of music and the arts in countering radicalism as she speaks-sings her message of social justice and peace from a progressive Muslim woman's perspective, and is the first woman to release an English Islamic pop album in the U.S. in 2004. She continues to create spiritual worship songs for the purpose of creating a new culture for Western born Muslims.

Born in Malaysia, Ani, a Muslim since birth, spent a good portion of her formative years raised in Germany, Egypt and India as an Ambassador's daughter. Her exposure to different politics, religions and cultures has shaped her inclusive worldview.

[Muslims for Progressive Values](#)
[Ani Zonneveld](#)

Ms. Dwi Rubiyanti Kholifah (Indonesia)

Ms. Dwi Rubiyanti Kholifah, is Indonesia Country Director for the **Asian Muslim Action Network** (AMAN), with a focus on the role of women in peace building and interfaith cooperation. Born and raised in Indonesia, she assists young Muslim scholars conducting research on Muslims responding to modernity and globalization. She is active in writing articles regarding women's issues, minority's rights, and the role of women in peace building in journals and online and offline media. She has authored several books including *Contesting Discourse on Sexuality and Sexual Subjectivity Among Single Muslim Women in Pesantren* and co-authored *The Future of Feminisms: Confronting Fundamentalism, Conflict and Neo-liberalism*. Ms. Kholifa earned a master's degree in Health and Social Science at Mahidol University in Thailand, for which she researched the dynamics of sexual health in the pesantren (pondok) in Indonesia. She also has a bachelor's degree in Literature from Universitas Jember, Indonesia.

In 2014, she was selected as an Asia Foundation Development Fellow and in 2016 she was recipient of the N-Peace Award. She has spoken out about such topics as the wearing of hijab, rights for victims of sexual assault, interfaith relations, terrorism, rights of the Ahmadiyya minority, transgender rights, among other issues.

[Asian Muslim Action Network](#)

Imam Khalfan (Burundi, DRC, Congo)

Imam Khalfan, President, Founder, and Legal Representative of **Alliance Des Imams Du Corridor Nour Pour Le Developpement Humainitaire** (AICNDH), is a leader in the Muslim community in Burundi. Imam Khalfan was born in Nyagatovu in 1984. After college, he went to study Islamic Studies at the Islamic Institute of Mombasa. At that time, he became aware of harmful interpretations of sacred texts. In 2012, upon returning from Mombasa, Imam Khalfan did a six-month training on Islamic Thought at the Islamic Cultural Center in Kigali.

Through AICNDH, he engages in promoting human rights, especially Muslim women's rights, citizen participation, and humanitarian development. As a **#ImamsForShe** Champion, he was a keynote speaker in conferences on Freedom of Religion and Sexuality at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Imam Khalfan holds a graduate degree in Mathematical Physics from the Normal Superior School of Burundi (ENS). As a student, Imam Khalfan founded and led the Association of Muslim Students of Normal School (AEMENS). He also served as Executive Secretary for Muslim Students of the East African Community. Currently he is the Deputy Secretary of **Alliance of Inclusive Muslims**.

[Alliance Des Imams Du Corridor Nour Pour Le Developpement Humainitaire](#)

Ulfat Hussein Masibo (Kenya)

Ms. Ulfat Hussein Masibo founded **Africa Muslim Women Action Network** (AMWAN) in 2019 and is currently based in Mombasa. AMWAN is a Muslim women led organization seeking to bring forth an egalitarian society by advocating for gender equality and women empowerment. She is also the current Regional Co-Ordinator for **Coast People Forum** (CPF), an organization seeking to educate the young girls in the coastal region and the President and Board Member of **Alliance of Inclusive Muslims** (AIM).

She has attained a Bachelor Degree in Law from Moi University Kenya and she is currently taking a second degree in Political Science & Communication from the University of Nairobi.

[African Muslim Women Action Network](#)

Dr. Mzuri Issa (Tanzania)

After a Bachelor's degree in Mass Communication from Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mzuri Issa completed her Auditing Course, Masters and PhD in Political Science and International Relations at the University of Dar Es Salaam (UDSM). Her career is all about promoting the rights of marginalized groups.

She is the Director of **Tanzania Media Women's Association, Zanzibar** (TAMWA ZNZ) the organization she virtually invented in 2007. She served as a TAMWA Board Member from 2004 – 2007 when she decided to work conventionally with the organization since it was only in operation in the Tanzania Mainland. Doing so, Mzuri was forced to leave her precious post at the Ministry of State, President's Office in Zanzibar as Acting Director of the Directorate of Communication. Through her leadership, foregrounded by media advocacy, TAMWAZNZ managed to put into the public discussion, the thorny issue of Gender Based Violence (GBV), which due to the local culture, was taboo to talk about yet committed at alarming scale with impunity. This accompanied a range of policy and legal changes. She also managed to enroll more than 7,000 women, especially from the rural areas, in the Income Generating Activities (IGAs) amid women's mobility restrictions and supported a score of women contesting for public leadership positions, an area which was reserved entirely for men. Dr Mzuri also champions collaboration with other civil society organizations focusing on the areas of good governance, human rights and gender equality.

She hold seats on the Boards of Directors for a number of organizations including Zanzibar Good Governance Network (ZANGG), East African Constitutional Development Centre locally known as Kituo cha Katiba cha Afrika Mashariki (KCK) based in Uganda, Union for Women Members of the House of Representatives locally known as Umoja wa Wakilishi Wanawake Zanzibar (UWAWAZA) and Zanzibar Institute for Research, Policy and Publication (ZIRPP).

[Tanzania Media Women's Association](#)

Aizat Shamsuddin (Malaysia)

Mr. Aizat Shamsuddin is the current Country Director of **Komuniti Muslim Universal** (KMU), an organization founded by former radicalized Malaysian youth to counter extremism with narratives based on human rights and dignity. He also serves as the Chair of the **Alliance of Inclusive Muslims** (AIM), a human rights umbrella organization registered in Geneva. Mr. Shamsuddin is degree holder in LL.B and Sharia (Hons) from Islamic Science University of Malaysia and a 2019 recipient of the ASEAN-Australia award. Previously, he worked as a political consultant and analyst for the Malaysian government and at the Center to Combat Corruption and Cronyism. He also served as a Professional Fellow at the American Council of Young Professional Leaders, where he helped to contribute to research production relating to US/ASEAN relations, human rights protections, and good governance.

[Komuniti Muslim Universal](#)

Dr. Amel Grami (Tunisia)

Dr. Amel Grami is a Professor of Gender in Islam at **University of Manouba**, Tunisia in the Manouba Faculty of Arts and Humanities, where she has worked since 1993. She is one of the world's leading experts on religion and women's studies with specific focuses on Islamic Culture and comparative religion and dialogue between religions within the Maghreb. Dr. Grami has contributed to a number of conferences and currently holds membership with the **Women's Alliance for Security Leadership** (WASL) and the **International Civil Society Action Network** (ICAN) for Women's Rights, Peace, and Security. From May to August 2014, she held a fellowship position at Käte Hamburger Center for Advanced Study in the Humanities "Law as Culture". Dr. Grami has published a number of texts including Apostasy in Modern Islamic Thought, Is There Religious Freedom In Islam, Islam in Asia, and Differences in Islamic Culture: Gender in Islam.

Mohamad Galadami (Nigeria)

Mohamad Galadami is the founder of **Galadima Islamic Center** and a passionate advocate for women's and girl's rights. He was born in Biu Town, Borno State in Northeastern Nigeria where he was educated in a traditional Almajiri system of education, which he recognized as outdated and not conducive to the well rounded style of education he was hoping to achieve in school. After completing secondary school, Mr. Galadami studied at the College of Education Waka Biu, the Teacher's Registration Council of Nigeria, and the Federal University of Maiduguri, the latter being where he obtained a BA in English. After his father's passing, he built a liberal Islamic school on the land he inherited, naming it the Galadima Islamic Center BIU, after his father. The school serves a wide range of individuals within the community, with the goal of opening up education to those who would otherwise be excluded because of their gender or their socioeconomic status.

[Galadima Islamic Center](#)

Eva Janadin (France)

Eva Janadin is the co-founder of several associations in France including the **Association for the Renaissance of Mutazilite Islam** and the **Voices of an Enlightened Islam**, a movement for a spiritual and progressive Islam. She is also general delegate of the French association "L'Islam au XXIème siècle" and Editor-In-Chief of its quarterly review. Since 2019, she has also served as an imam in the Simorgh mixed mosque in Paris. Passionate about theology and Islamic history, she has been working since 2015 to promote a more humanistic Islam for the 21st century. She wants to find ways to rethink the methodology of reading Islamic texts towards ever more equality and justice between human beings.

[Association for the Renaissance of the Mutazilite Islam](#)

Hon Mwanamkuu Sudi (Kenya)

Mwanamkuu Sudi M. is a Principal Magistrate currently attached to **Kandara Law Courts** where she serves as the Head of Station. She has served in various capacities including being a member of the Kadhis Steering Committee, which formulated the Kadhis Rules of Procedure and the Kadhis Bench book. She has a passion for servant leadership especially in the areas of human and property rights as well as the Constitution. Prior to joining the bench she was an advocate of over eight years standing. She had served under the Parliamentary Service Commission, participated in the Constitutional review process (2010) and lectured part time at the University of Nairobi. Hon. Mwanamkuu holds a Master's degree in Women's Rights from the University of Zimbabwe, Bachelor of Laws from the University of Nairobi and a Higher Diploma from the Kenya School of Law.

Odette Yilmaz (Germany)

Odette Yilmaz (she/her) resides in Hamburg, Germany and has been a member of **LIB Germany** since 2011. She has dedicated her career to advocating for women's rights, gender equality and an inclusive society, which condones any kind of group-focused enmity that threatens these universal rights. Since her election as Chairperson of LIB in 2018 she has been defending inclusive and progressive values in the context of Islam across several committees and federal ministries. Outside of politics, Ms. Yilmaz works as the Head of Administration at **Mamalies**, a Hamburg-based institution working to create an empowering and safe space and educational opportunities for refugee women and their children.

Adis Duderija - (Australia)

Dr. Adis Duderija teaches and researches in the Islam in Society field of study at **Griffith University**. He is one of the most internationally recognized scholars in the field of contemporary Islamic Studies especially in relation to his work on gender and Islam, the theory of progressive Islam and the Islamic interpretive tradition more generally. He serves on the editorial board of half a dozen academic journals and his scholarship has been translated into Arabic, Indonesian, Urdu and Hindi. His research focuses on contemporary Islam with special reference to progressive Islam, gender issues in Islam, Islamic fundamentalism/extremism/radicalism, and interfaith dialogue theory. According to Griffith's Symplicit Elements Dr. Duderija has 95 publications (7 books, 53 books chapters and 35 journals articles) to his name. He has currently 760 citations (as per Google Scholar). His H-Index is 17 and his i-10 index is 22. Dr. Duderija is regularly invited to review manuscripts, contribute to edited volumes and assess grant applications from scholars and research agencies around the world.

[Adis Duderija](#)

H.E Sheikh Shaaban Mubaje (Uganda)

H.E. Sheikh Shaaban Mubaje is the **Grand Mufti of Uganda** and a founding member of **Religions for Peace's Interreligious Council of Uganda**. Born in Mbale District, he began his Islamic Studies education at an early age, first in primary school before completing his secondary studies at Bugembe Islamic Institute in Jinga. After completing Senior Six, Sheikh Shaaban Mubaje moved to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Sharia. Four years after completing his studies, he became the Imam of Madinah Mosque and founded the Mahdi Noor Islamic Institute. He went on to obtain a Post-Graduate Diploma in Philosophy from Mbale Islamic University before obtaining a Master's Degree in Religious Studies from Makerere University. He later returned to Mbale Islamic University as a Professor of Religious Studies and to serve as the Mbale District Khadi. In 2000, along with Dr. William Vendely, Sheikh Shaaban Mubaje formed the Interreligious Council of Uganda - Religions for Peace, which sought to address and communicate with the rebel groups across the country with messages of love, peace, and unity, regardless of the individuals' religious affiliation. That same year, he was unanimously elected as the Grand Mufti of Uganda, a role he still holds to this day. He has continued to devote his time to the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, serving as the Co-Chair of the Council and worked to create a similar council for religious leaders across Africa entitled **Religions for Peace-African Council of Religious Leaders**

Azza Basarudin (United States of America)

Azza Basarudin is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at **California State University, Long Beach** (CSULB) and is on the Board of Trustees of **Muslims for Progressive Values**. Trained in gender and sexuality studies (Ph.D., UCLA), Basarudin's research interests include transnational feminisms, gender/sexuality in Muslim cultures, women's movements, intimacy politics and human rights with an emphasis on Southeast Asia. She has held visiting positions and fellowships at Harvard Divinity School, Syracuse University, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, and the American University in Cairo. Her research has been supported by the University of California Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI), the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), and the National Science Foundation (NSF), among others.

Basarudin's writings have appeared in journals, edited anthologies, and popular forums including: "Countering Epistemologies of Islamophobia: Critical Feminist Pedagogies" (The Scholar & Feminist Online, 2021 with S. Hafez, C. Sameh, and K. Shaikh); "The Contours of Speaking Out: Gender, State Security, and Muslim Women's Empowerment," (Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism, 2020, with K. Shaikh); "The Shape of a Life," (Departures in Critical Qualitative Research, 2019); "The Other Within: Muslim Rights Warrior," (Samyukta: A Journal of Gender and Culture, 2018); and "Meditations on Friendship: Politics of Feminist Solidarity in Ethnography" in Dissident Friendships: Imperialism, Feminism, and the Possibility of Transnational Solidarities (E. Chowdhury and L. Philipose, eds, 2016, with H. Bhattacharya). Her first book, Humanizing the Sacred: Sisters in Islam and the Struggle for Gender Justice in Malaysia was published by the University of Washington Press (2016).

As a longtime resident of Los Angeles, she has merged her passion for intellectual work with a commitment to activism through collaborative social and political networks. Basarudin has collectively produced and hosted radio shows on women and gender issues in communities of Muslims on KPFK. She is a former columnist for the Malaysian Insider and a founding member of a feminist task force in Southern California to tackle Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism by connecting scholarly output to public policies. Her current research focuses on the gendered and racialized dimensions of intimate counterterrorism initiatives, particularly in Muslim communities in Southern California.

Hon. Tito Kunyuk (Kenya)

Tito Kunyuk is a Principal Kadhi based at **Kisumu Law Courts** in Kisumu County, Kenya. He holds a Bachelor of Shariah from International University of Africa, Sudan (2005), a Bachelor of Laws from Mt. Kenya University (2016) and a Diploma in English, Literature and History from Kagumo Teachers' Training College, Kenya (2012). His research interests border on the intersection of law and religion with emphasis on the broader aspects of Islamic law and the rule of law in Kenya.

Mr. Kassoum Coulibaly (Mali)

Kassoum Coulibaly is an international expert on human rights, women's rights, gender equality, and sustainable social and economic development. He received a degree in Economic Development from University Bouaké in the Ivory Coast before obtaining a Diploma in Human Rights from Henry Dunant University College in Switzerland and a GenderPro Certificate from The Global Women's Institute at The George Washington University in Washington DC. Currently, Mr. Coulibaly serves as the Co-President and CEO of the **Global Institute for Women's Empowerment** (GIWE) Group, an international think tank committed to promoting gender equality and economic freedom. He is also the President and General Director of the **Global Institute Group for the Empowerment of Women**, a UN Women Empower Women Global Champion, and a Mentor for Women's Economic Empowerment. Mr. Coulibaly serves as the Vice Chair and National Chair of the **MenEngage Africa Steering Committee** and is a member of the **West Africa and Global Steering Group - Side by Side Faith Movement for Gender Justice**. He is the International Coordinator for the **Observation of Gender Based Violence in Africa** and the Vice President of the National Reference Group for the UN Spotlight Initiative on Gender Based Violence in Mali.

[Global Institute for Women's Empowerment / Global Institute for Women's Empowerment Facebook](#)
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Ms Shamsa Abubakar Fadhil (Kenya)

Shamsa Abubakar Fadhil is a skilled, experienced and passionate mediator and community mobiliser. Her groundbreaking efforts over the years have transformed hundreds of youths and women not only from her home county of Mombasa but nationwide. Her dedication, selfless service and practical strategies toward peace building have endeared her to youth, women and a variety of community-based organizations and NGOs operating in the Coast region of Kenya. She provides the much-needed link between the community she works with and the security infrastructure at local and national levels. In 2014 she created a grassroots organization dubbed **Focus on Women and Youth in Coast Province for Political Development**. The success of this platform led to her election as the first woman to chair the **Mombasa District Peace and Security Committee** (DPSC) a position she holds to date.

As chair of the DPSC, Mama Shamsa as she is popularly known among the youth she works with, created a permanent position for a youth representative in the DPC. This has been replicated in various DPSCs across the country ensuring structured involvement of youth in peace building. Triggered by widespread criminal activities in Mombasa involving over 200 juvenile gangs, she pioneered an intense campaign to reform affected youth. This quickly evolved into a multi-sectoral engagement involving Religious Leaders, district peace and security committee members, government administration officials and the police. Established in 2019, this campaign has contributed to the transformation of 500 youth who have opted out of criminal life and are now peace ambassadors. This has subsequently opened doors for them to seek amnesty and other benefits such as counseling, capacity building on entrepreneurship and acquisition of technical skills such as carpentry, masonry and plumbing.

In October, 2020 Shamsa was awarded a Heroine medal of Mombasa County by His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta the President of Kenya. This was recognition of her service in promoting peace, cohesion and integration and being at the fore-front in creating awareness at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the many roles she plays include the National Cohesion and Integration Commission focal peace and cohesion champion in the Coast Region. She is also the chairperson of **Mombasa Women of Faith Network** in which she represents the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims. Under her leadership, Mombasa Women of Faith Network is fostering interfaith relations while countering several community level challenges such as early marriages, an array of GBV cases and violent extremism. Recently she was elected as National chairperson women of peace and security steering committee network of Kenya.

| More Biographies To Come |