

[CCMW Position Papers](#)[« Back to CCMW Newsletters/Reports \(Archived Material\)](#)[CCMW Publications](#)[Other Publications of Interest](#)[Websites of Interest](#)[CCMW Archives](#)

المجلس الكندي للنساء المسلمات

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF MUSLIM WOMEN
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES FEMMES MUSULMANES

IN THE NAME OF GOD

The Canadian Council of Muslim Women is a national non-profit organization established to assist Muslim women in participating effectively in Canadian Society and to promote mutual understanding between Canadian Muslim women and women of other faiths.



"O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest unwittingly harm people, afterwards become full of repentance for what you have done."

Quran :49:6_

Congratulations!
Lila Fahlman
Order of Canada



Founder of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women



(Leila, Iman, Razia, Noreen, Salima)

**Workshop Presentation at the U.N. World Conference Against Racism
Durban, S. Africa, August 2001**

**Congratulations!
Mobina Jaffer
Canadian Senator**



WORLD TRAGEDY

Sept. 11/01 World Trade Centre, New York

We are as horrified and saddened as the rest of the world about the attack on the U.S. World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. Thousands of innocent people lost their lives and thousands of women and children are left without husbands, brothers, sisters and fathers.

CCMW immediately placed a message of condolence on our web page and we are very grateful to the number of individuals and organizations who e-mailed their empathy and good wishes to us as representatives of Muslims. CCMW also joined in endorsing a message along with a large number of other Muslim organizations. We have also been contacted by the media.

We share the anxiety and trepidation with all Muslims due to the identification of Muslims & Islam with terrorism, fundamentalism & other negative name calling. This has already led to incidents of actions

against Muslims. It has been an uphill struggle to fight against the constant negative imaging of Islam & Muslims & tragically the acts of a few will do us more damage.

We need to differentiate the acts of political terror aimed at the U.S. government policies and acknowledge that these are not attacks by Muslims for Islam. What have Muslims gained or how has Islam benefited for such tragedies? May Allah have mercy on us all.

This should also be a period reflection for Muslims. We need to consider the state of Muslims & Muslim countries and that the path taken these last 20 years has benefited neither Islam or Muslim! themselves. The harking back to the "golden age" of Islam, the lack of intelligent forward looking thinking must change or remain stuck where we are.

CONFERENCE 2001

It is with great regret that the Board, with the support of the chapters, decided not to hold a conference in 2001. We have been so busy with the development of the Resource Kit "In My Own Skin: Muslim Women Creating our Own Identity" that we have not had the emotional resources to also plan conference. It was a difficult decision as we recognize how empowering it is for all of us to gather together once a year.

CONFERENCE 2002

Insha Allah, CCMW will be 20 years o/c next year. This is a wonderful time to celebrate our achievements & look ahead to our future. We plan to have a conference of celebration & of future planning in early spring of 2002.

We will invite our many friends to help us with a retrospection & a plan for the future of CCMW.

CHAPTER REPORTS

Vancouver Chapter Report 2001

Among the terror and chaos of September 11th attacks in the United States, I could not help but think of the primary and secondary victims of this act. As I grieved for the victims in New York I also could not help think about the implications of this act on Muslims. It is at times like these when our hopes dim away for a safe and secure world. However, it is essential that we look positively at our contributions in working towards a peaceful community.

Vancouver Chapter has gone through some difficult times since our last conference in October. There were some concerns around membership in our local chapter. There were also issues of interest in attending CCMW meetings. Currently we are exploring a member's suggestion of setting up an Internet news group/club for our local members.

On May 4th, 2001 Vancouver Chapter was invited to attend the National Conference and consultation on Race and Gender Teaching Advocacy (RAGTAG) at the University of British Columbia. Shelina Neallani attended the conference on behalf of the Vancouver Chapter. Some of the topics that were presented at the Conference included:

- Violence Against Women: Talking Culture (*Shashi Assand/Yasmin Jiwani*)
- Race, Gender and Employment Equity (*Sybil Garrick*)
- Construction of Race and Gender in the Social Service Sector (*Uzma Shakir*)

This fall, Regina Chapter is putting on a workshop in Vancouver for youth called "In My Own Skin". We have a youth community that will definitely benefit from such a workshop. I see this workshop as an excellent opportunity for Regina Chapter and Vancouver Chapter to enhance their networking and collaboration.

On behalf of Vancouver Chapter I would like to thank Alia Hogben and the rest of the Board members who have been our lifeline and supported us through difficult times.

Regina Chapter Fall 2001 Report

The Regina Chapter has not held any official chapter meetings this past year but the individual members have been quite active on various committees and events throughout the Regina Community. The following is a summary of some of these activities:

- Chapter President, Erum Afsar, was selected as a member on the National Work Group Committee and helped to prepare a manual and video entitled "In My Own Skin: Canadian Muslim Women

Creating Their own identities". These products examine the challenges of being a young Muslim woman in the Canadian context.

- Chapter President, Erum Afsar, attended the World Conference Against Racism - Non-Governmental Meeting in Durban August 27 - September 1.
- Erum Afsar was nominated as a Young Woman of Distinction (YWCA Award' based on her community volunteer work and involvement with CCMW Erum Afsar also attended meetings of the Regina Council of Women and National Council of Women National Forum it Vancouver - Securing Our Future (Women and Financial Security in Later Life).
- Nargis Bhimji has been active in the Regina Open Door Society helping newcomers to Canada with their English skills and adapting to Canadian society
- Samina Ahmed and Zarqa Nawaz have attended meetings of the Multi-Faith Forum in Regina.
- Zarqa Nawaz was interviewed on local CBC radio to discuss the impact of September 11th on Canadian Muslims
- Zarqa Nawaz and Erum Afsar spoke at a University of Regina "Women in Islam" class. Erum Afsar showed the previous video completed by CCMW and discussed issues relevant to Canadian Muslim women and Zaraq Nawaz discussed Muslim women and her own experiences wearing the head scarf.
- Erum Afsar was profiled in Homemakers Magazine 2001 on the challenges facing Muslim women in Canada.

The Regina Chapter will also host a workshop for Young Muslim women to be held in October 2001 and continue to participate in events and committees throughout Regina. Submitted by Erum Afsar September 27th, 2001

Toronto Chapter 2001 Report

Participated in the CBC Town Hall Meeting to discuss the aftermath of September 11th.

Took part in the interfaith prayer at Metro Hall on Sunday 23 where Roy McMurtry, Keith Norton, and the Attorney General of Ontario spoke along with several community members and children who read from a variety of holy scriptures.

We were also part of a Friday, Sept. 21, United For Peace evening in Pickering which had members of Federal and Provincial government speaking as well as various other organizations.

One of our members spoke in a panel at high schools for the International Day For The Elimination of Racism in March.

As you know, our Rehana Begg has worked valiantly for the kit that CCMW is preparing.

We have designed and printed Eid cards that will be selling to help raise funds.

We presented our Lila Fahlman scholarship for the second year.

We were represented at Eid Dinners at Queen's Park and The House of Commons.

One of our members led workshops at OISE for Islamic teachers in the summer.

Participated in Black History Month activities at City Hall.

Continued involvement with B'Nai Brith and National Muslim/Christian Liaison Committee.

Presented prayer in an interfaith service in April (Peel).

Our chapter has been rather quiet this year - Inshallah next year we will have more to report on the activities of members and activities for members. Barbara

London Chapter 2001 Report

Co-Chairs: Zanifa Ali (850-7893)
 Sally Abdool (451-6623)

Organizations Belong To:

LAQ (Londoners for Afghanistan's Women)

Contacts With:

ICSWO (Islamic Centre South West Ontario)
London & Area Cross Cultural Learner Centre
LIHC (London Intercommunity Health Centre)
Anti-Bias/Anti-Hate Committee (London)
Ethnocultural Council of London
Canada Customs & Revenue Agency
Canadian Cancer Society

London CCMW members are on the executive of LAW, serve as Board members and have a member on the Anti-Bias/Anti-Hate Committee which helped set up a 24 hour help-line for bias or hate issues.

Members have attended the Annual Take Back The Night Walk, a Muslim Press conference related to issues coming from Sept. 11'h in New York, a Peace Rally in front of London Muslim Mosque organized to show support for Muslims and will attend the December 6'h memorial as well as other community women's issues.

Plans for the future include a CCMW banner, circulating written knowledge of how to wash a body for burial, a membership drive, and participation in various activities involving an accurate picture of Muslims in differentiating terrorism and Islam.

Niagara Chapter 2001 Report

September 2001

Recently, we attended a candlelight vigil in Niagara Falls to honour the victims of the September 11'h disaster in New York and Washington

We are also organizing a potluck dinner on October 6'h to which we have invited people of different faiths to attend. Included among our guests will be local politicians. Part of the purpose of this event is to encourage the community at large to become better acquainted with our Muslim community

April 28th

Two members, Shanta Tayab and Joveira Asif arranged and hosted a workshop for Muslim teenage girls in which they discussed major social issues of concern. In an open forum the girls were encouraged to ask questions and, hopefully, find answers to the many issues that exist for young Muslims in today's society. It was a very successful event and was followed by a potluck dinner. We hope to continue with such events in the upcoming months.

Montreal Chapter Report 2001

Although our 'meetings' have been few and far between, we 'the members' have been active in the community. Starting with the news of our Youth member Samira Hussain who had won the CCMW Scholarship fund and used it towards her trip to Lebanon where she lived and worked in Refugee Camps for 5 months as part of her internship sponsored by CEPAL (Canadian Palestinian Education Exchange) and CDA (Canadian International Development Agency).

One of our members who gives her time to the 'Project Genesis of Montreal' got an award of thanks for her five years of service to the community.

We joined hands with the Helping Hands Foundation which is run by an energetic Hungarian lady who goes every night to pack all the left over food from a Buffet Restaurant and delivers it to the needy families. She is willing to help Muslim families also, although remarked that she finds they are fussy about what they eat, so we informed her of our eating habits and regulations. The BEST thing that came out of being in touch with her was her comment, "I find that Muslim people have been the kindest to me".

A couple of our members hosted the lady, from FOCOLARE - this word means 'hearth' in Italian and the founder Ms. Chiara Lubich is now 81 years old and had started this movement when she was 21 years of age. This is an organization that looks for Unity within the religions of the world and last year had hosted a huge conference and a 'Friendship Dinner' in Washington where people of all religions came together to see this Unity.

Members also helped a Pakistani family who were having trouble dealing with the Youth Protection and social workers. This involved talking to the Youth Protection Agency, Social workers involved and guiding the family to handle their physically and mentally challenged children.

A true humanitarian, Br. Alen Okanovic, had decided to cycle across Canada to raise money and awareness for the innocent children of war in Chechnya, Iraq, and Palestine. The Host Sponsor for the 2nd

Cross Canada Cycle is HCI (Human Concern International). Some of our members helped to welcome Br. Okanovic and his crew to Montreal. A welcoming luncheon for 60 people was held in his honour. Alhamdulillah the program was a success thanks to the contributions from our CCMS sisters as well as mosques in the area.

Members for CAIR-CANADA were visiting our area and one of our members had an informative evening at her house to help other members be aware of this existing organization.

Members also attended a 'Peace Cafe' organized by the SIGI & ISIF (Sisterhood is Global Institute & Institut pour la solidarity International des Femmes) to show solidarity for peace in the Middle East.

One of our members is now officially the assistant secretary of association des benevoles donneurs de sang. This is the Quebec branch of Red Cross called HEMA Quebec. She is advised of their meetings and regularly gets emails to indicate the location of all blood drives. She herself is a volunteer and can advocate volunteers also.

One of our members hosted a visiting sister from the SIS Forum (Malaysia) Berhad. This is an organization in Malaysia which resembles our CCMW. We have her contact numbers and have promised to keep in touch and exchange ideas.

Last and the latest venture being, member Noreen's visit to the Conference on AntiRacism in Durban South Africa. She will be telling us all about it in the meeting on the 4th of October, 2001 Insha Allah.

CCMW Ottawa 2000/2001

September 2001

Farhat gave an interview to a Carleton student in early September.

September 11th

Farhat and Humera were interviewed & taped by Carleton students on the reaction of Muslim women to the recent events of September 11th.

Farhat partially attended the AGM of IVMWAA on Sept. 25 and attended the launch of their training Manual for service providers "Changing the Landscape". This is available for purchase, but we got a free copy.

July 19, 2001

Farhat helped organize showing of video entitled Nur-eJahan. This is a stills-Video made by Ottawa artist Naz Ikram Ullah. Naz has been a practicing artist since the 70's and has shown her work in many countries. The video is a celebration of the Muslim women of the sub-continent. It highlights the accomplishments of Muslim women in history and now. It sheds light on the shared cultures of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This event was attended by about 85 men and women.

July 13, 2001

Lecture by Tariq Ramadan, Professor Religion and Philosophy at the University of Frelburg and the College of Geneva, Switzerland. Organized by Edition Tawhid a French Muslim Group in Canada. "The Muslim Identity within a Canadian Context".

June 19, 2001

Farhat and Humera attended the UNIFEM annual general meeting - at the Press Club Bldg.

June 7, 2001

Appeared before the Standing Committee on Health, I was a witness invited to a comment on the religious implications of the draft legislation on Assisted Human Reproduction which had been tabled in the House of Commons by the Minister of Health, Allan Rock. I presented a Muslim woman's point of view stating the safe technological advances that are in keeping with the fundamental principles of justice, fairness and equity, are a Blessing from God. It is up to us humans to put these to use in ways, which enhance and enrich the quality of our lives and not cause undue and harsh burdens or prove to be dangerous tools in the hands of unscrupulous individuals.

Peel Chapter Report 2001

Nuzhat has helped the Pakistani Women's Support Network with member education. Sayeeda Apa has been talking more about Islam to her Quilter's group. She continues to volunteer at the Credit Valley Hospital. Naz Husain continues to help the CNIB and a couple of other organizations. Mrs. Anwari Alikhan continues to write for the Ambition newspaper. She also monitors the media and write letters to the editor when she feel a point must be made.

Bibi Mohamed helps a group of Muslim teens in Brampton. I have spoken twice lately Muslim gatherings

which would otherwise have been mostly traditional and insular. I addressed the young people in English. I have just been asked to be a speaker at a Uniti Church service on Remembrance Day. The church group is in Inglewood, north Brampton. This is a result of my request Raheel Raza to pass my name along when the group needs someone in the west end of the GTA. I also keep up my commitment to the Zonta service club. Wherever we are, we see ourselves as ambassadors of peace.

We feel that we need to have a more consistent effort to be more effective.

Regards,

Atiya

P.E.I. Chapter Report 2001

The Muslim community is very small about 10-12 families from various corners of the world (Pakistan, Tunisia, Syria, Sudan, Kosovo, Bangladesh and Somalia).

We meet at least once a month at Muslim pot luck dinners and discuss issues concerning youth. Most of them have been born and raised here and their way of thinking is very different than their parents. The Muslim environment is not there except within the confines of the homes. The biggest problem faced by families (living in a small province has its limitations) is the question of finding suitable mates for their sons and daughters. Maybe CCMW should take up a project communicating the information to families across Canada. In a very small gathering, few students the problems of youth outside the classroom and home were discussed. Mostly it is peer pressure as Muslims are not allowed to do so many things as opposed to the community at large. The youth find this frustrating, especially girls. That is why the youth call this a generation gap.

The incident of September 11 in New York has affected everybody and most often the question is asked, why Muslims are so vindictive? It is very hard to explain unless one knows the history. I got phone calls from local reporters to comment on this.

Kosovar Muslim families are now well integrated in the Canadian society. Most of them have jobs and they own cars, their children are doing good in schools and communication has become more easy as some of them have started speaking English.

We supported "second cross country cycle fund raising project" sponsored by HCL for the children of Chechnya, Iraq and Palestine by donating some money to the worthy cause. Alen Okanovic originally from Bosnia and Zenel Gashi of Kosovo visited PEI during their cross country cycle.

We educate young minds by visiting schools and explaining to them that we are no different than they are.

Fund-raising for an Islamic Centre is on going at a slow pace (\$55,000).

Farida Chishti

MEDIA ADVOCACY

CCMW receives many calls from the media and the general public. We often share these with our sister organizations such as the Afghan Women's Referral Services & Federation of Muslim Women. Examples are:

Invitation to participate at "Town Hall Meeting" a CBC TV broadcast with Peter Mansbridge; Nina has been interviewed a number of times on TV and radio; CTV invited us to be part of a group to meet with their senior staff to discuss coverage of the issues since Sept. 11/01.

There was an article in the Homemaker's magazine, October 2001, on CCMW; Alia has been invited to speak at Queen's University, we have asked the Toronto chapter to speak at the Anglican Church's Women AGM in October 2001.

The Ottawa Chapter has met with Carleton University students regarding a video and Alia was interviewed by another student for Carleton's web "Capital News on Line".

The federal government asked CCMW to be represented on a Committee of the House of Commons regarding animal to human transplantation - Xenotransplantation - and Farhat Rahman, President of the Ottawa Chapter ably represented CCMW.

We joined the campaign Against Child Poverty, along with a vast number of organizations. This organization is made up of many churches and social service agencies and ran an advertisement in the Globe & Mail earlier in 2001.

CCMW in partnership with the Afghan Women's has been working on publicizing the plight of Afghan women.

CCMW has also been on a network on FGM with Health Canada. We have referred them to Dr. Khadigia

Ali of the Rexdale Resource Centre.

CCMW also participated in the campaign of advertisements to fight against racism which was initiated by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. Our logo and name appeared on all the ads across the country.

Advisory Committee to Dr. H. Fry

The Secretary of State, Dr. Hedy Fry, invited CCMW to be on a committee to discuss what actions could be taken by the federal government to assist Canadian Muslims in this time of anxiety and backlash. This Advisory Committee to Dr. Hedy Fry has 7 Muslim/Arab organizations and to date we have discussed the anxieties & concerns of the communities, as well as the Anti-Terrorism Act Bill c-36. Please contact Alia Hogben if you would like more information.

RESOURCE KIT "IN MY OWN SKIN"

Masha Allah, the young women in the Work Group have been working long hours on the development of a video and manual which we hope will be used for workshop sessions to educate & stimulate discussion about the issues facing young Canadian Muslim women.

Consultative workshops have been held in Montreal, others will be held in Toronto, Vancouver & Regina.

The draft video & manual were presented at a workshop at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, S. Africa, in late August 2001.

The completed Kit titled "In My Own Skin: Canadian Muslim Women Create Our Own Identity" will be ready for distribution in November 2001. We hope that educators & other Muslim groups will use the powerful material to assist young women.

The Board has been so impressed with the Work Group and cannot thank them enough for their commitment & enthusiasm. They should feel proud of what they have accomplished in helping other young women. Thank you Erum Afsar, Leila Bedeir, Rehana Begg, Salima Ebrahi Humera Ibrahim, Noreen Majeed & In Zebian.

WCAR

Our appreciation & thanks to the National Council of Women of Canada for allowing us to use their UN accreditation for WCAR.

The young women who have developed the Resource Kit attended the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, S. Africa in August 2001. We have attached to this newsletter their reports which will also be on the CCMW website.

ABOUT CCMW

We were honoured when a masters student at Concordia University wrote her essay CCMW. The paper of Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, a student in the class of Profess Lynda Clarke, has been placed on our website. The paper, *Women in Religion: CCMW* traces the history & development of the organization & contains a great deal of history.

We are keenly looking forward to proposed article on CCMW to be written by Professor Sajida Alvi & some of her colleagues, for the internationally renowned journal Muslim World.

We were asked to provide our publications to the National Library of Canada so as "preserve our published heritage". A brief description is entered in the National Library database so that the public can access the books. The Library's address is: 395 Wellington St., Ottawa, ON K1A 0N4. Phone: (819) 997-9565 e-mail: legal.deosit@nlc-bnc.ca

OF INTEREST

Wisdom Books, 127-21st St. East, Saskatoon, S7K 0B2 Phone: (306) 93-9224 email: contact@wlsdoiyibooksontine.com

They sell books on Islam.

National Clearing House on Family Violence This is a federal body which publishes material on violence

and publishes a newsletter. It is an excellent resource.

Please contact them at:

Family Violence Prevention Unit

Health Canada

1907D 1, 7th floor, Jeanne Mance Bldg.

Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa K1A1B4 Phone: 1-800-267-1291

website: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/nc-cm

Religions for Peace: Women's Program They have published a Global Directory of Religious Women's Organizations & CCMW is listed in it.

Copies can be obtained from:

World Conference on Religion & Peace Women's Program

777 United Nations Plaza, 9th Floor New York, N.Y. USA Phone: (212) 687-2163

GLOBAL VILLAGE

If, the Earth's population was shrunk into a village of just 100 people with all the human ratios existing in the world still remaining what would this tiny, diverse village look like? That's exactly what Phillip M. Harter, a medical doctor at the Stanford University School of Medicine, attempted to figure out. This is what he found.

57 Would be Asian

21 Would be European

14 Would be from the Western Hemisphere 8 Would be African 52 Would be female

48 Would be male

70 Would be non-white 30 Would be white

70 Would be non-Christian 89 Would be heterosexual 11 Would be homosexual

6 People would possess 59 percent of the entire world's wealth, and all 6 would be from the United States.

80 Would live in substandard housing 70 Would be unable to read 50 Would suffer from malnutrition 1 Would be near death 1 Would be pregnant 1 Would have a college education

1 Would own a computer

The following is an anonymous interpretation:

Think of it this way. If you live in a good home, have plenty to eat and can read, you are a member of a very select group.

And if you have a good house, food, can read and have a computer, you are among the very elite.

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness ... you are more fortunate than the million who will not survive this week.

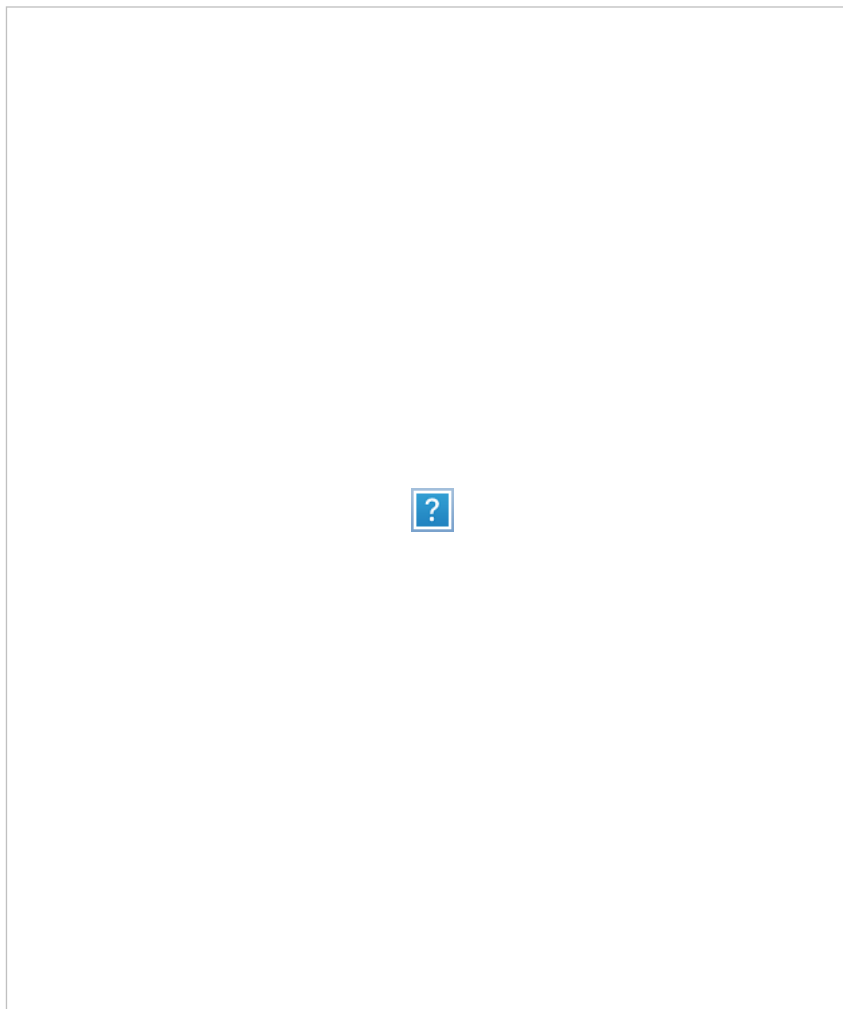
If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you attend a meeting of your faith community without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death ... you are fortunate, more than three billion people in the world can't.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep ... you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you

are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.



CHAPTERS CONTACT

Calgary	Pervina Khan
Edmonton	Soraya Hafez
Halifax	Munawar Ahmed
London	Zanifa Ali
Montreal	Sajida Hussain
Montreal	Fehmida Khan
Niagara	Hasna Tayab
Ottawa	Farhat Rehman Kurd
Pr. Ed. Island	Farida Chishti
Peel	Atiya Ahsan
Regina	Samina Ahmed
Toronto	Barbara Siddiqui
Vancouver	Shahnaz Rahman

BOARD

Solmaz Sahin
Razia Jaffer
Nina Karachi Khaled
Iman Zebian
Nuzhat Jafri
Alia Hogben
Humera Ibrahim

**Canadian Council of Muslim Women
Le Conseil Canadien des Femmes Musulmanes
2400 Dundas Street, W., Suite 513
Mississauga, Ontario L5K 2R8**

