

Press Release**European Union Court Ruling that Hijab Can be Banned at Work, Legitimizes Islamophobia and Legalizes Discrimination against Muslim Women in Europe**

On Thursday 15th July, the European Union's top court ruled that companies can ban Muslim employees from wearing the Hijab under certain conditions, stating, "A prohibition on wearing any visible form of expression of political, philosophical or religious beliefs in the workplace may be justified by the employer's need to present a neutral image towards customers or to prevent social disputes." This is despite openly admitting in a press release following the judgement that the prohibition of the Islamic dress would mean that some workers would be treated less favourably than others on the basis of their religious belief, which would amount to direct discrimination. The decision was made in a ruling on cases brought by two women in Germany who were suspended from their jobs for wearing Hijab but will have repercussions on the lives of Muslim women living in other states in Europe. The judgement is not a surprise considering that in 2014, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) upheld France's 2010 ban on the wearing of Niqab in public, stating that the ban did not violate religious freedom and aimed to ensure "respect for the minimum set of values of an 'open democratic society'". Furthermore, in 2015, the ECHR ruled in favour of France's ban of Hijab and other religious symbols in the public sector, stating that the ban did not affect religious freedom in a country where secularism and strict religious neutrality is enshrined in the constitution. This is despite the ECHR ruling in favour of a Christian woman in Britain in 2015 who was prevented from wearing a cross to work.

This recent ruling by the European Union Court of Justice enshrines the marginalization of Muslim women and their treatment as second-class citizens into law, preventing their full participation in society if they adhere to their Islamic obligations. It highlights the complete fallacy of Western secular states justifying interventions in Muslim lands based on securing the rights of Muslim women. Furthermore, this judgement pours further fuel on the fire of Islamophobia which is raging in various European states and panders to the false narratives of Islamophobes and bigots, providing them further ammunition to propagate their hate-filled agendas. Rather than laying blame squarely on the Islamophobic laws and policies of secular anti-Muslim governments for fueling prejudice and hatred towards Muslims and Islam, and inciting racism, division and tensions between different communities, it ludicrously accuses the Islamic dress of carrying the potential of causing 'social disputes'.

All this demonstrates the utter confusion and contradictions of secularism, where one of the "values of an 'open democratic society'" validates religious discrimination based on the absurd premise of religious "neutrality". It also further highlights the farce and hypocrisy of secularism's application of religious freedom which is secured only for those who leave their religious beliefs at their door. Furthermore, any system that is not able to accommodate for the religious convictions of individuals or forces them to choose between their faith and employment, is not fit for purpose in governing nations. This ruling sends out a clear message: that Muslims will never be fully welcome in Europe if they adhere to their Islamic beliefs. It should serve as a stark reminder to Muslims living within secular states the world over that they should never place their hopes and trust in this system to protect their right to practice their faith free from harassment, discrimination and fear. It is only the System of Allah (swt), the Khilafah based upon the method of the Prophethood, that can offer Muslims and non-Muslims a place where their right to practice their religious beliefs far from harassment and interference from the state is enshrined in law and can never be abandoned based on the prejudices, bias, and bigotry of those who rule or judge, for all the provisions of the Khilafah are based on the Commands of Allah (swt) Who prohibits any form of discrimination between citizens based on religion, ethnicity, race or gender. Therefore, we urge Muslims in the West to not only stay resolute upon their Islamic beliefs but to also work to establish the second Khilafah Rashidah upon the method of the Prophethood in the Muslim lands with urgency. Allah (swt) says: **فَإِنَّكَ فَادِعٌ ﴿١٥٧﴾** **"So to that (religion of Allah) invite (O Muhammad) and remain on a right course as you are commanded and do not follow their inclinations but say, "I have believed in what Allah revealed of the Qur'an, and I have been commanded to do justice among you.""** [Ash-Shura: 15].

Dr. Nazreen Nawaz

Director of the Women's Section in The Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir

Tel/Fax.: 009611307594 Mobile: 0096171724043

E-mail: ws-cmo@hizb-ut-tahrir.info

Hizb ut Tahrir Official Website

www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org

Hizb ut Tahrir Central Media Office Website

www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info