

Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia

Community Report



Prepared by Darakshan Raja, Sahar Pirzada, & Yazan Zahzah

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(Justice For Muslims Collective, 2019).

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WHAT IS GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA?

The Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia has adopted the following working definition created by Darakshan Raja at Justice For Muslims Collective. It is one framework for approaching this work, and is based upon the work on the ground.

Gendered Islamophobia consists of the ways the state utilizes gendered forms of violence to oppress, monitor, punish, maim and control Muslim bodies. It includes the ways gender binaries and gender constructions are used to prescribe negative social constructions on Muslim women and girls while erasing the existence of femmes, trans women, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary Muslims because of the assumptions that Muslims are inherently homophobic and queerphobic.

These negative social constructions portray Muslim women and girls as terrorists, terrorist sympathizers, supporters and potential terrorists who pose a threat to the security of the state on one end of the spectrum, and on the other end of the spectrum as inherently oppressed. They also depict Muslim women and girls as cultural representatives of Islam and Muslim communities, and hence why women and girls' bodies are often the sites of control and domination.

Simultaneously, Muslim women and girls are also depicted as inherently oppressed and lacking of any individual or collective agency. Therefore, violence against Muslim women and girls is often seen as normal and acceptable.

WHAT IS GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA?

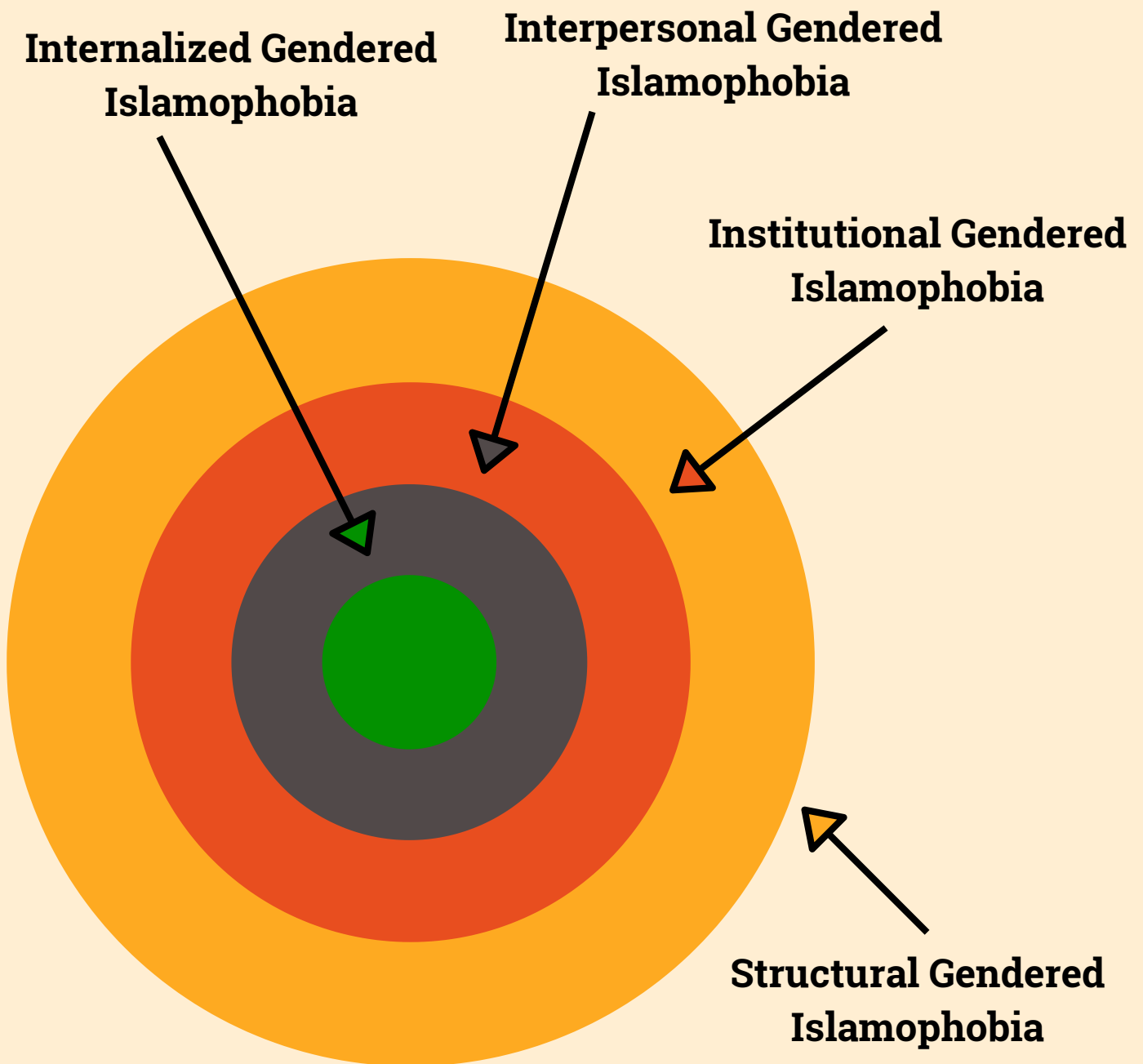
Gendered forms of violence that are inflicted on Muslim bodies include the use of sexual violence, torture, harassment, murder, and state reproductive control, coercion and violence.

Finally, gendered Islamophobia exists on a continuum and is enforced and heightened through the interplay of violence that manifests at the institutional and systemic (interplay between multiple institutions) levels, as well as via non-state actors (specifically vigilante violence in the form of hate violence), through community institutions and members, through family and interpersonal relationships, and also at an internalized level.

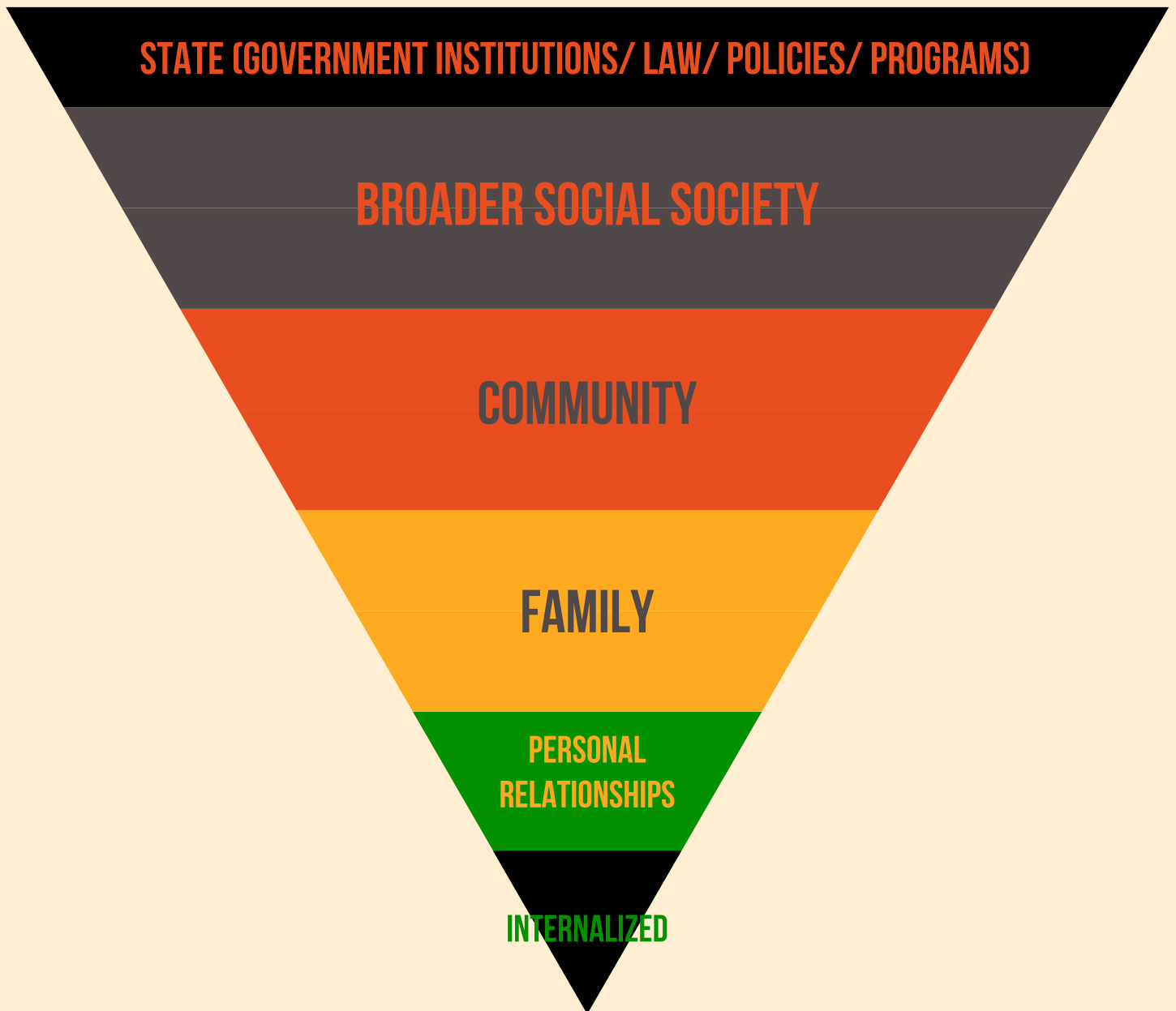
In other words, it includes the ways the state fosters an environment of impunity that produces hate violence, use of gendered violence by state agencies, and intra-community abuses to flourish, such as femicide, sexual assault, domestic and family violence, trafficking, harassment, and abuse. This violence is rooted in and lives at the intersection of heteropatriarchy, institutional Islamophobia, and interlocking systems of oppression that produce gender-based violence and negatively impact the quality of life for Muslim women and girls.

Similar to the ways Islamophobia flourishes through the interaction of structural, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized oppression, gendered Islamophobia also exists through the interplay of structural, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized gendered Islamophobia.

WHAT IS GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA?



GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA VIOLENCE PYRAMID



GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA VIOLENCE SPECTRUM

- Construction of Muslim women as inherently oppressed and in need of saving
- Construction of Muslim women as security and cultural threats who need to be monitored, controlled and surveilled
- Acceptance of Islamophobic political speech and dehumanizing narratives against Muslim women and girls.

- Culture of impunity flourishes and acceptance of violence on a mass scale
- Collusion between abusers and the State
- Muslims internalize dominant State narratives

Harmful Narratives

Escalated Violence

- Verbal + Psychological violence
- Tolerance for discrimination and exclusion
- Microaggressions by members of society
- Lack of prioritization as a group by community members worthy of advocating for and minimizing the gendered violence Muslims experience

- Physical violence, detention, incarceration, torture, hate violence, murder (state, non-state, and community actors)
- Normalization of mass dehumanization (wars, drones, murder)
- Societal and systemic exclusion

PARTNERSHIP TO END GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA ANCHOR ORGANIZATIONS

Building upon a history of shared values and intersecting work, the Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia brings together HEART, Justice for Muslims Collective and Vigilant Love to build analysis, tools and power to dismantle Gendered Islamophobia. Sitting at the intersection of the Gender-based Violence and Anti-Terror Industrial Complex fields, these organizations are committed to addressing GI from both perspectives.

JUSTICE FOR MUSLIMS COLLECTIVE

The mission of **Justice for Muslims Collective** is to dismantle institutional and structural Islamophobia through raising political consciousness and shifting narratives, community empowerment, organizing and healing, and building alliances across movements with a focus on the greater Washington region.

HEART

HEART ensures that Muslims have the information, resources, and choice to nurture sexual health and confront sexual violence.

VIGILANT LOVE

Vigilant Love creates spaces for connection and grassroots movement to ensure the safety and justice of communities impacted by Islamophobia and violence in the greater Los Angeles Area.

CONVENING GENERAL INFORMATION

The Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia convening took place on the 19th anniversary of 9/11 with 20 individuals from across the nation. We shared space and centered the conversation on the impacts of the War on Terror with a gendered lens. There has been a lack of gendered analysis when it comes to addressing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism, including anti-Black racism.

The significance of holding this convening on the anniversary of 9/11 was to create intentional power for those impacted by Gendered Islamophobia to lead the conversation and in doing so create a communal healing space on a day that many in our communities choose to stay in isolation.

The convening integrated prayer, grounding and healing with critical conversations on the importance of Gendered Islamophobia, how it is showing up in our work, what work is being done to address the impacts and think strategically about what is needed to continue this work as a coalition of experienced, values-aligned individuals.

The organizers split the 2-day convening up into three sessions each day. Each day's second session entailed a specialized panel discussion to ground theory in practical application and uplift the lived experiences of those impacted who are leading the work.

The individuals in attendance included organizers from the anti-War on Terror field, academics specializing in Gendered Islamophobia, advocates from the gender-based violence sector, lawyers, community leaders and student activists. Representing nearly a dozen organizations, these individuals were engaged in one-on-one conversations prior to the convening to ensure values alignment and build a foundation of trust.

This convening was supported by the Ms. Foundation Activist Collaboration Fund. The coalition's work is also supported by Movement Voter Project.

PARTNERSHIP TO END GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA COALITION MEMBERS

This report was built in conversation and collaboration with the following brilliant individuals:

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SABRINA GHAUS

MEHAK ANWAR

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CONVENING OVERVIEW



DATES CONVENED

Program ran for 2 days from 9am PST - 3pm PST on 9/11 and 9/12



OF ATTENDEES

Over 20 individuals from the field joined us from various disciplines for the entire 2 days



SESSIONS

A total of six 1.5-2 hour sessions were held during the convening including 2 panels, 2 sessions with breakout rooms and plenary sessions for large group discussions



ANCHOR ORGANIZATIONS

HEART
Justice for Muslims
Collective
Vigilant Love



LIVE-STREAMED PANEL

A panel discussion on Gendered Islamophobia with 4 experts in the field was livestreamed to 4k viewers



COALITION MEETINGS

Commitments to attend 3 coalition meetings were made at the convening to keep the momentum going on the work

Convening Goals

GOAL 1 Convene individuals/organizations leading the work on gendered Islamophobia to build deeper relationships and share efforts

GOAL 2 Build a shared analysis and framework: Build a shared working definition of gendered Islamophobia, mapping of organizations, and (praxis) what are active campaigns that fight against gendered Islamophobia

GOAL 3 Move towards creating a national network of organizations that work to dismantle gendered Islamophobia

GOAL 4 Release a shared valued statement from organizations and brief from the convening

GOAL 5 Set-up a structure for continuing a space for this network to meet regularly and organize



Mapping: How is Gendered Islamophobia Showing up in the Field



The Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia used the convening to gather information on ways gendered Islamophobia is showing up in the following fields:

**NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE WAR
ON TERROR**

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

THE ACADEMY



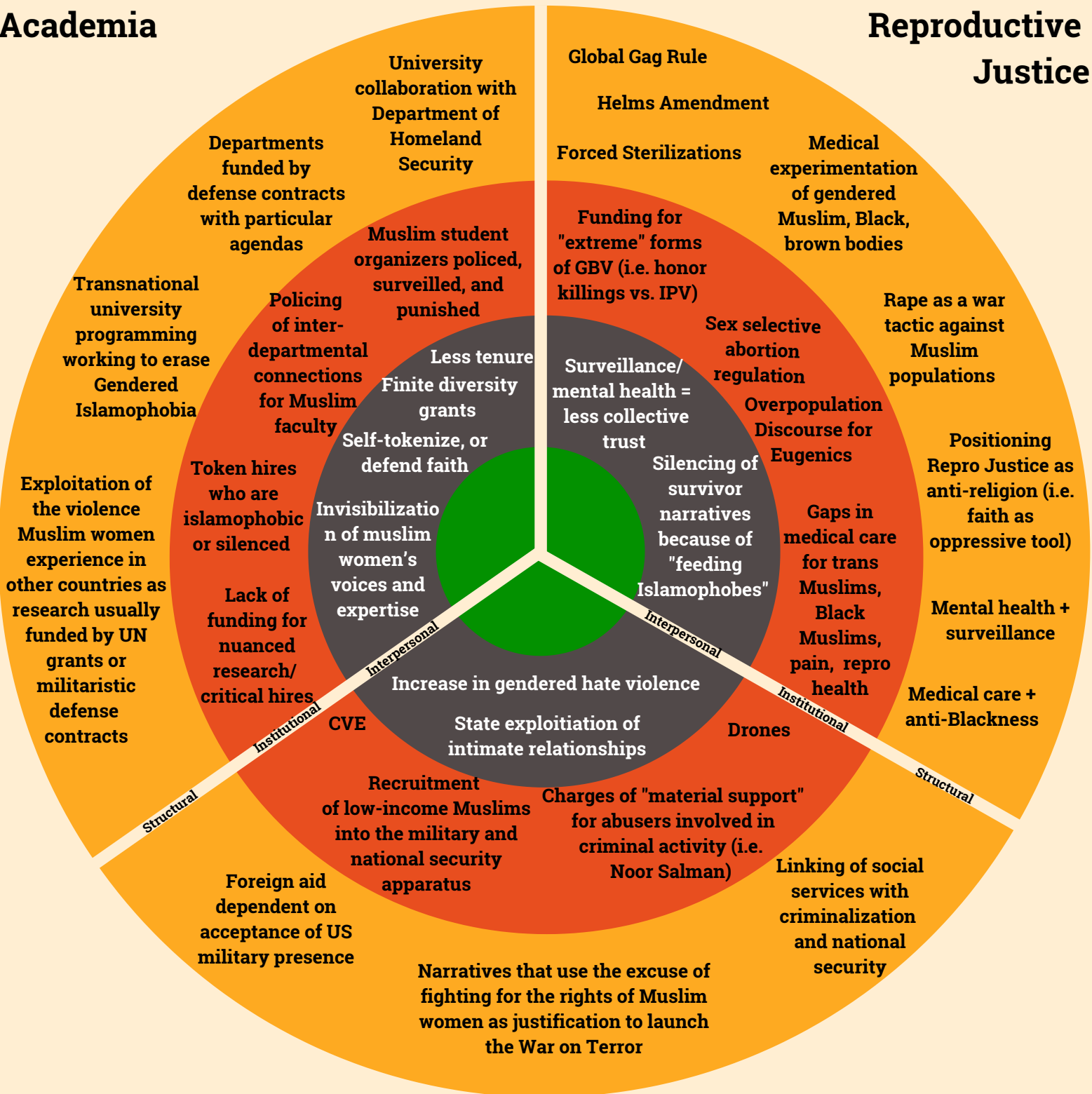
In addition to mapping the ways gendered Islamophobia shows up in these fields, we administered a short questionnaire to individuals in the field. Our major findings from the questionnaire are included below.

In order to map the ways gendered Islamophobia is showing up in the field, we sent out a short questionnaire to convening attendees and then analyzed their responses to identify key themes. The questionnaire was completed by 11 individuals who hold expertise in the field of gendered Islamophobia. To complement the questionnaire, we held a breakout session with 3 working groups focused on the following themes: 1) Gendered Islamophobia and the War on Terror; 2) Gendered Islamophobia and the ways it manifests in the academy; and 3) Gendered Islamophobia and Reproductive Justice. Twenty-five (25) individuals self-selected into the various breakout groups. We are sharing the broad themes from the questionnaire and group breakouts:

HOW GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA SHOWS UP IN OUR FIELDS

Academia

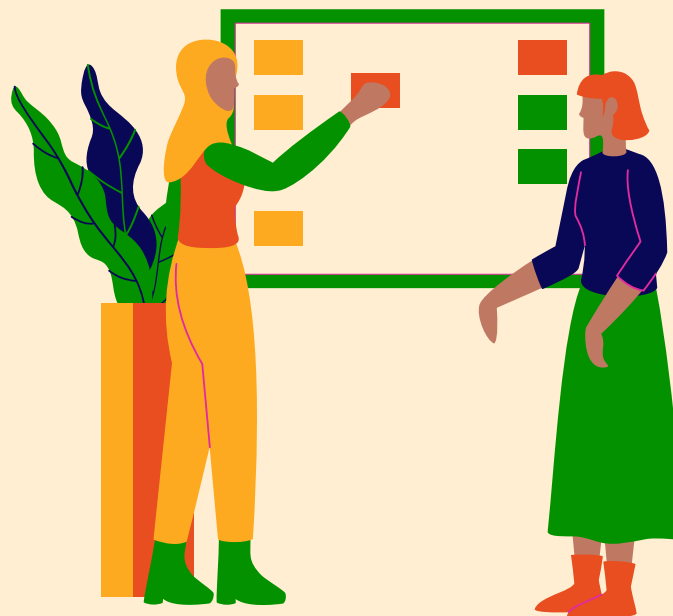
Reproductive Justice



War on Terror


QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

- Most individuals have an understanding of gendered Islamophobia but there is no baseline framework or shared working definition that is used across organizations and individuals working within this field.
- There is a body and field of work across academia, organizing, advocacy, direct services, and raising awareness that focuses on the different aspects of gendered Islamophobia. However, the field is siloed and disconnected. It's also important to note that no one mentioned having a clear space, project, or program dedicated to fighting gendered Islamophobia.
- Everyone engaged in fighting gendered Islamophobia stated they themselves have faced gendered Islamophobia in doing this work
- Overall, people feel supported by their organizations in tackling gendered Islamophobia, but only 2/11 respondents stated their organizations or groups they volunteer with had an existing definition of gendered Islamophobia.



Mapping out GI + Countering Violent Extremism

The Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia is invested in ending all forms of criminalization, surveillance and incarceration of communities impacted by Islamophobia. Particular programs, organizations and individuals contribute significantly to the promotion of gendered tropes that harm our communities in these ways. Their Gendered Islamophobia ranges from blatant to ever so subtle and cuts across sectors and community bounds. To support informed decision making and safety in our communities, the Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia is engaged in a mapping process to identify the players promoting Gendered Islamophobia, harm of various forms in community and those who are caught in the crossfires. The initial mapping generated creative ways to present the information in accessible and nuanced ways to community. The players included:



THOSE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED, APPLIED FOR, RECEIVED OR PROMOTED COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM FUNDING AND FRAMEWORKS

THOSE WHO PROMOTE THE "SAVING" OF MUSLIM BODIES FROM VIOLENCE TIED TO AN ISLAMOPHOBIC READING OF ISLAM - MANY ARE FOCUSED ON SENSATIONALIZED FORMS OF VIOLENCE INCLUDING CHILD MARRIAGE, FGM, HONOR KILLINGS AND "WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT" IN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

MUSLIM COMMUNITY MEMBERS/ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE COLLABORATED WITH THE STATE IN HARMFUL WAYS AND FURTHERED THE "GOOD MUSLIM" VS. "BAD MUSLIM" NARRATIVE



Points of Unity

The Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia is in the process of finalizing a Points of Unity. Our Points of Unity is a living document that lists and expands on shared values and issue areas for the coalition. It will serve as an anchor allowing us to always maintain clarity on who is impacted, how, and what our coalition needs to organize against in order to stop gendered islamophobia. Similarly, our Points of Unity allow us to think beyond what we must organize against and reminds us to envision what change we must instill.

Our intention in creating this is to establish a baseline that the coalition can operate from: What structural violences do we believe most directly play a role in the creation of gendered islamophobia? What issue areas does gendered islamophobia most often present itself in?

These two questions served as our guiding posts for every part of our process, from the types of violence we aimed to address with this project, to which partners we identified as most connected to the work, and finally to the work we will pursue as a coalition.

What alternative resources are we responsible for creating for communities to ensure they are safe and well?



Points of Unity

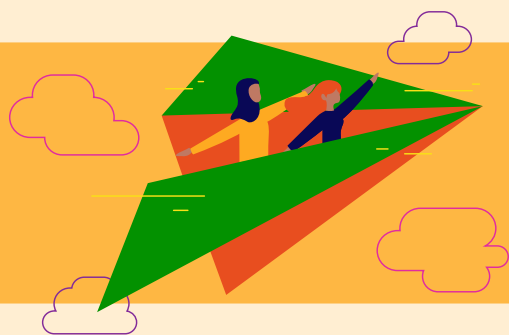
Our working points of unity include 6 political values and 4 issue areas we will be centering in the coalition.

Our political values are as follows:

★ GENDER JUSTICE ★ SURVIVOR-CENTERED ★ ABOLITIONIST ★ ANTI-WAR ★ TRANSNATIONAL ★ ANTI-CAPITALIST

The issue areas within Gendered Islamophobia we will target in our work are as follows:

- **GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA AND SENSATIONALIZED VIOLENCE (E.G. HONOR KILLINGS, CHILD BRIDES, FGM)**
- **GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE WAR ON TERROR (E.G. POVERTY, DISPLACEMENT, IMPRISONMENT, SURVEILLANCE)**
- **GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (E.G. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS FUNDED BY CVE)**
- **GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE (E.G. HELMS AMENDMENT, STERILIZATIONS)**



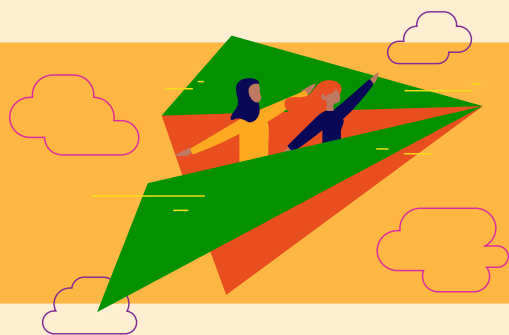
Moving Forward

COALITION MEETINGS

- As of right now, the Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia will convene a coalition meeting for our partners every month for two hours. As the anchors of the coalition, HEART, JMC, and VL will rotate facilitation of meetings.
- We will work together as a coalition with our partners on:
 - Developing a shared the political framework
 - Expanding our research
 - Identifying concrete campaigns
 - Building relationships of support
 - Thought partnering on rapid response as it relates to political and communal situations involving Gendered Islamophobia

NEXT STEPS AND ACTIONS

- Our next steps will be responsive to the political environment and community needs. We know for certain the following will be ongoing deliverables of the coalition:
 - We will be releasing educational materials that make our work more accessible to members of various Muslim communities. Gendered Islamophobia is regularly experienced but challenging to contextualize- our priority is normalizing this analysis so women and LGBTQ community members impacted by this violence are able to articulate it and seek community with our partnership as needed.
 - We intend to host retreats and convening spaces to continue thought-partnering and relationship building. There, we will develop projects to take on as a partnership.



Moving Forward

SUPPORT NEEDED

There are multiple ways to support this critical work.

- **FUNDING**

- Funding to sustain this work is needed, especially to support the anchor organizations. The Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia seeks funding by values aligned foundations and individuals.

- **VISIBILITY**

- We seek support to uplift the partnership to end gendered Islamophobia as leaders of this work. The erasure of Gendered Islamophobia in conversations about the War on Terror, Gender based violence, state violence and reproductive justice can no longer be accepted. We need visibility without co-option and with credit given to those who are spearheading this work on the ground.

- **COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT**

- This work requires widespread awareness in mainstream communication and media outlets. When and where possible, we seek support to bring us in to provide narrative and analysis around Gendered Islamophobia.