

## **TTW: violence mentioned, domestic/intimate partner violence**

**Every time we lose someone to intimate partner violence, we lose a force from this earth.** As organizations dedicated to ending gender-based violence, we are mourning the murders of Sania Khan, a 29-year-old Pakistani photographer and divorce advocate, and Alwiya S. Mohamed, a 20-year-old mother to a one-year-old child. Sania was murdered in her Chicago home by her ex-husband, and [Alwiya](#) was murdered by her husband in her home in Milwaukee. Sania and Alwiya were one of us—a Chicagoan, a Tennessean, a Wisconsinite, and an Atlantan. Most importantly, they were [survivors](#).

According to the Chicago Sun Times, Sania and her ex-husband had finalized their divorce in May when her ex-husband traveled from Georgia to Chicago to “salvage the marriage.” Sania was murdered by her ex-husband, who subsequently killed himself. Alwiya was murdered by her husband, who also killed himself. We are holding space for the family, friends, and loved ones of Alwiya and Sania; we are holding space for the communities they came from and the people they impacted; and we’re holding space for the survivors re-traumatized by this recent news. **To the survivors who have experienced violence or are still experiencing violence: you are not alone, it is not your fault, we hear you, we see you, and we believe you.**



Unfortunately, Alwiya and Sania's stories aren't isolated events. **Nationally, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical abuse from an intimate partner.** Furthermore, this statistic excludes other types of abuse, such as emotional, financial, or spiritual abuse, as well as unreported cases of violence and gender nonconforming individuals. Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors used by someone to establish power and control over another person in a relationship. So we must address the underlying causes of violence in order to end it. Abuse does not happen in a vacuum; rather, it is enabled by cultures, and to change these cultures, we must address the root causes of gender-based violence.

Domestic violence is rooted in power and control—in toxic masculinity, rape culture, and systemic oppression. To truly address gender-based violence in our communities, we have to address the root causes that have perpetuated harmful community norms and practices. We have to make it easier for a victim to leave their abuser. We have to understand and address that a survivor is at increased risk when and if they leave. In addition to the emotional, communal, and cultural barriers to leaving an abusive relationship, survivors have to consider how rent will be paid, whether or not they can trust law enforcement, if they can access childcare, and more. **Without addressing these root causes, our communities will continue to lose out.**



**The work of building safer communities and healthier relationships is all of ours.** We are all responsible for creating communities of care and respect. Often, we feel helpless because we do not know our role in this crisis, but everyone has a role to play if we want to eradicate violence in our communities. **In fact, if we are going to build a safer world, we need the innovation and dedication of the community, not the police and carceral state that repeatedly harm our communities.** Support organizations like [Raksha](#), [Noor Family Services](#), [Apna Ghar](#), and [HEART](#); donate to Alwiya's baby [Go Fund Me](#); attend our panel to learn more about gender based violence (details forthcoming) and **believe in survivors**. Believing survivors means helping secure funding, ensuring social and emotional safety, and practicing compassion.

In this time of mourning, we reaffirm our commitment to **believing survivors** and our dedication to community accountability, the protection of the most vulnerable, and addressing the root causes of violence. To Alwiya and Sania's family and loved ones, we send our love, prayers, and support.

For more resources,

[Victim Centered Response to Power Based Violence](#)

[Believe Survivors Embodying a Victim Centered Approach](#)

