

Sedaa, Our Voices - Writers of Muslim heritage

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Self-présentation of the platerform SEDAA.

ABOUT SEDAA

Sedaa is a platform which will feature writers of Muslim heritage. We use the term “of Muslim heritage” because we seek to bring together both those who identify as Muslims, and those who have left the religion.

We have set up this website to analyse politics, critique religious extremism, reactionary cultural attitudes, and problems caused by moral relativism in our society. We believe that Islamists and their fellow travellers and apologists must be challenged and opposed.

At the same time, as people with Islamic heritage, with Muslim family and friends, who have experienced discrimination ourselves, we are also aware that anti Muslim bigotry is a reality and so we will strive to challenge this too. We will seek to negotiate the issues we face with fairness and sensitivity.

Too often a free and unchallenged platform has been given to those who wish to portray extreme views as “normative” Islamic beliefs, and that they should thus be immune from critique.

This comes, intentionally or otherwise, at the expense of abandoning liberal and democratic values and side-lining progressive and secular voices from within Muslim communities who are, and have been for many years, standing up to the fundamentalists.

Many of those voices are not being heard because they are not seen as ‘authentic’ or ‘representative’. Dissenters are silenced by being cast as “traitors”. Often, wider society either looks away, or sides with the reactionary forces within our communities because of fear of causing offense. By accident or design, often through a misguided notion of multicultural taboo, liberals and leftists can become complicit in double standards and oppression.

Often, these issues can be difficult to speak about, and in some cases can lead to threats to personal safety.

We accept that misogyny and extremism exist in all societies. We always stand in solidarity with those who challenge reactionary values and practices. But our background means we can highlight the issues within our own communities.

Rather than remaining silent, this site has been set up to provide such voices with a platform to express views that might otherwise go unheard.

WRITERS

[Writer's photos are not reproduced here.]

Iram Ramzan - editor/founder

Iram is a journalist based in Greater Manchester and the founder and editor of Sedaa.

Iram decided to set up Sedaa after seeing a lack of progressive voices in the media, particularly those of Muslim heritage. She pitched the website idea to the Women in Journalism committee, for which she was shortlisted in the Georgina Henry Prize 2015, and a subsequent runner up in the 2015 Press Awards.

The judges said, "never has there been a greater need for such a forum" and praised her bravery in "saying the often unsayable" and "fanning the flames of reason". They were also much taken with her "new, fresh voice from the north west of England".

She has written for various publications including The Sunday Times and Left Foot Forward and has been interviewed on Radio 4.

Visit her blog and follow her on Twitter

<http://www.iramramzan.wordpress.com>

https://twitter.com/Iram_Ramzan

Arshia Malik

Arshia is a Delhi-based writer, blogger and social commentator with focus on women issues and conflicts in societies with a particular focus on South Asia. She makes her living as a school teacher and is an avid collector of literature.

She is an advocate of humanism and a strong proponent of pluralistic and multicultural societies. Her fields of interests are education, minority and child rights, secularism and tolerant attitude in a fast developing world.

Follow her on Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/arshiaunis>

Gulnur "Sofia" Demirturk

Sofia is your average Turkish accountant based in Istanbul. Apart from worrying about balance sheets and income statements, she is interested in financial crimes, politics, feminism, Abrahamic religions and Bollywood.

She is an ex Muslim but still feels Islam is an important part of her identity. Despite growing up with religious family members, she has no bitter experiences.

Follow Sofia on Twitter.

https://twitter.com/_macaryos

Jimmy Bangash

Jimmy is a gay, British, Ex-Muslim Pakistani. He grew up in a traditional Pashtun family in London where he stood in ardent opposition to the patriarchy and misogyny in his community. A frequent contributor to Sedaa his poems and prose focus on Islamic patriarchy and the experience of gays of Muslim heritage. He is a co-founder and integrative coach at integratedwellness.co.uk.

As an LGBT ex-Muslim activist, he is committed to unbridling the reins of patriarchy from gays and women of Muslim heritage. As a coach, he seeks to empower individuals to step into their voices to live a life of wellness, authenticity, self-assurance and self-expression.

You can follow him on Facebook and Twitter.

<https://www.facebook.com/jimmy.bangash>

https://twitter.com/_macaryos

Khadija Khan

Khadija is a journalist and a commentator based in Frankfurt, Germany. She writes for different publications, focusing on human rights, mainly women's rights, as well as minorities and extremism.

Khadija has a master's degree in political science and she believes in tolerance and equality among all human beings. Follow her on Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/KhadijaKhanlodh>

Mo Dawah

Mo Dawah is a community leader, inter-sectional Jihadi, Trans-Sharia campaigner, advocate of the "Censorship is Free Speech" student campaign, Counter-Anti-Extremist, Machete-Secretary of the Beheading Civil Rights org DECAP, and promoter of Inter-Faith obedience.

You can follow him on Twitter. Visit his Tumblr page here.

<https://twitter.com/kingofdawah>

<http://kingofdawah.tumblr.com>

Rasool Bibi

Rasool Bibi writes about her experiences living in a "mainstream" Muslim community in the West Midlands, UK. She is what is considered immodest, modern and shameless by her elders and a "coconut" by her neighbours and peer group. Informing on the natives who make life hell for Muslims who don't fit the mould.

Saima Baig

Saima is an environmental management, environmental economics and climate change consultant based in the UK. When she is not working on adaptation and mitigation strategies, she writes about religion, feminism, politics and secularism. She is a staunch advocate of science education, in particular astrophysics. Follow her on Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/honeybadger>

Sarah Ager

Sarah is an English teacher who lives in Bologna, Italy. As the daughter of Protestant ministers, her conversion to Islam in 2011 came as quite a surprise and was the catalyst that sparked her passion for interfaith work. Since 2013, Sarah has curated an annual Interfaith Ramadan blog where people of faith and none are invited to write about interfaith, intrafaith, and inclusion in society, with a

particular focus on taboo subjects and individuals often neglected by mainstream interfaith dialogue. Given half a chance, Sarah will talk about tea, skincare, politics, feminism, and human rights for hours.

Visit her website and follow her on Twitter.

<http://www.interfaithramadan.com>

Shamila Ghyas

Shamila Ghyas is a Pakistani fantasy fiction author and journalist who writes for various publications. Her main focus is on rights of women and minorities. Nutella-holic, music obsessed, and Superman's alter ego. Find her on Facebook.

Follow her on Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/ShamilaGhyas>

Tehmina Kazi

Tehmina Kazi is a human rights activist and writer based in Cork, Ireland. Tehmina was the Director of registered charity British Muslims for Secular Democracy from May 2009 to August 2016, where she worked to raise awareness of secularism among British Muslims and the wider public.

Tehmina is a trustee of Hope Not Hate, an advisory board member of the Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks project, an Inclusive Mosque Initiative volunteer, and an advisory board member of Tell Mama.

Tehmina was named one of the BBC's 100 Women in October 2013 and 2014, and held the Eric Lane Fellowship at Clare College, Cambridge from January to March 2014.

You can contact her on TKazi83 yahoo.co.uk

Ziddi

Ziddi is based in London and works in the City. She assists progressive causes which promote secularism and rational thought within her own community.

Ziddi has had a very interesting upbringing, exposing her to a wide range of people and ideologies which constantly inspire her to challenge the status quo. She is interested in European and Asian/Muslim literature, history and politics.

P.S.

- <http://www.sedaa.org>