ISLAMIC SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL MUSLIM YOUTH CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Honouring Our Muslim Heritage

JULY 26 & 27 2025

8:30AM - 5:00PM

DEEP APPRECIATION TO OUR FUNDERS

Patrimoine canadien Canadian Heritage

THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION

TD READY COMMITMENT

**WE HUMBLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE ARE GATHERED ON TREATY 1 TERRITORY -
THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY OF THE ANISHINAABE, CREE, OJI-CREE, DAKOTA AND DENE PEOPLES
AND THE HOMELAND OF THE METIS NATION**

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DAY 1 AGENDA: SATURDAY,JULY 26TH, 2025

8:30AM - 8:40AM — **RECEPTION**

WELCOME
EMCEE: Jamie Carnegie
CONFERENCE CHAIR: Shahina Siddiqui

8:40AM - 8:45AM — **OPENING PRAYER**
Omar Siddiqui

8:50AM - 10:15AM — **SESSION 1: Police – Justice – CSIS**
TOPIC: *Know Your Human, Legal and Civil Rights*
PANELISTS: Lila Mansour, Zilla Jones

10:20AM - 11:35AM — **SESSION 2: Biases In Media Narrative**
TOPIC: *Promoting Islamophobia and Hijab Controversy in Sports*
PANELISTS: Shireen Ahmed, Ihsaan Gardee

11:40AM - 12:00PM — **SESSION 3: Conversation Café**
TOPIC: *Canadian Muslim Identity*

12:05PM — **GREETINGS**
The Honourable Minister Renée Cable

12:10PM - 12:50PM — **LUNCH**

12:55PM - 2:05PM — **SESSION 4: Discover Your Purpose And Be Empowered**
PANELISTS: Hassan Wadi, Ibrahim Fayaz

2:10PM - 3:40PM — **SESSION 5: From Trauma To Healing**
TOPIC: *Empowering Stories of Resilience*
PANELISTS: Khaled Abdulwahed, Izzeddin Hawamda, Kobra Rahimi

3:45PM - 4:30PM — **SESSION 6: Conversation Café**
TOPIC: *Inter-Community Challenges and Role of Social Media Muslim Influencers*

DAY 2 AGENDA: SUNDAY,JULY 27TH, 2025

8:30AM - 8:40AM **RECEPTION**

WELCOME
EMCEE: Jamie Carnegie
CONFERENCE CHAIR: Shahina Siddiqui

8:40AM - 8:45AM **OPENING PRAYER**
Omar Siddiqui

8:50AM - 10:00AM **SESSION 1: Healthy Marriage & Divorce**
PANELISTS: Shahina Siddiqui, Imam Abdul Fatah Tawakul (Online)

10:10AM - 11:15AM **SESSION 2: Addictions - Gangs - Predators**
TOPIC: *Building Resistance and Consent*
PANELIST: Omar Siddiqui, Kim Stitt

11:20AM - 12:30PM **SESSION 3: Healthy Sexuality**
TOPIC: *Navigating Gender Diversity*
PANELIST: Dr. Sharif El-Tobgui

12:35PM - 1:15PM **LUNCH**

1:20PM - 2:35PM **SESSION 4: Spiritual - Emotional Resilience - Vicarious Trauma**
PANELIST: Dr. Aamir Jamal, Ibrahim Fayaz

2:40PM - 3:55PM **SESSION 5: Building Allyship**
TOPIC: *Anti-Racism/Anti-Hate Activism*
PANELIST: Harriet Zaidman, Ramsey Zeid, Harold Shuster

4:00PM - 4:25PM **SESSION 6: Conversation Café**
TOPIC: *Key Learnings & Take-away*

4:30PM **WRAP-UP**
CONFERENCE CHAIR: Shahina Siddiqui



SPEAKERS' PROFILE

Lila Mansour



Lila Mansour is a Syrian-Canadian legal advocate raised in Prince George, BC. She earned her BA in Economics (Honours) from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in 2021, where she was class valedictorian. She then completed her JD at Toronto Metropolitan University's Lincoln Alexander School of Law in 2024. During law school, Lila interned with Justice for Children and Youth and the Office of the Chief Justice. In 2023, she received national recognition as one of the Canadian Arab Institute's "30 Under 30" leaders. One of her proudest achievements is founding the BC Arabic Legal Support Centre. She has also represented her province at the Daughters of the Vote initiative, delivering a speech in Parliament calling for stronger support against Islamophobia.

Zilla Jones



Zilla Jones is an African-Caribbean-Canadian lawyer, educator, and writer based in Winnipeg on Treaty 1 Territory. She runs Jones Law Office, focusing on criminal, refugee, and child protection law, and has appeared at all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada. A sessional instructor at Robson Hall, she is also a dedicated anti-racism educator, having presented for groups such as the Islamic Social Services Association, Red River College, and the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Her work bridges law, justice, and education, empowering marginalized communities. Zilla is also an award-winning writer whose stories explore identity and resistance, and she serves on the boards of the John Howard Society of Manitoba and Canada.

Shireen Ahmed



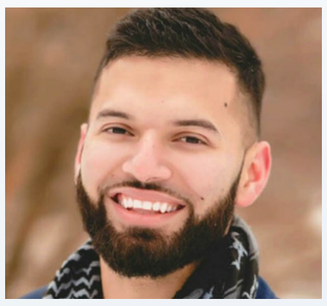
Shireen Ahmed is a Toronto-based sports journalist, public speaker, and award-winning activist known for tackling racism, misogyny, and Islamophobia in sports media. A Senior Contributor with CBC Sports and commentator for outlets like The Guardian and TIME, she is widely recognized for shifting the global conversation on hijab in athletics—helping influence FIFA's 2014 policy change. She co-hosts "Burn It All Down", North America's first feminist sports podcast, and teaches Sport Media at Toronto Metropolitan University. Shireen also serves as Vice Chair of the Hijabi Ballers and works to decolonize sports journalism through curriculum reform, advocacy, and mentorship.

Ihsaan Gardee



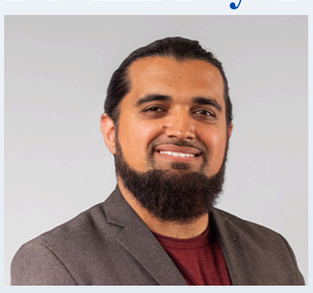
Ihsaan Gardee is a strategic communications and public affairs expert with over 20 years of experience advancing human rights, equity, and systemic change. He currently works as a management consultant, guiding mission-driven organizations through media strategy, crisis communications, and stakeholder engagement. Formerly the Director of Mobilization and Communications at Amnesty International Canada, Ihsaan led national campaigns and launched the organization's acclaimed podcast "Rights Back At You". He also served for over a decade as Executive Director of the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), where he helped establish its national impact on civil liberties and anti-racism.

Hassan Wadi



Hassan Wadi is a professional speaker, entrepreneur, and philanthropist recognized as one of the Top 50 Most Influential Muslims in North America (2024) and one of Canada's Top 25 Canadian Immigrants. He is the founder of Youth Speaker Academy, where he has coached over 5,000 students worldwide in public speaking and leadership. As a sought-after speaker, Hassan has addressed audiences of up to 60,000 at conferences, schools, and mosques across Canada. He also serves as the Global Fund Development Director at Human Concern International, overseeing fundraising across Canada, the U.S. and the U.K., and has helped raise over $100 million for humanitarian causes. In 2021, he was awarded the COVID Hero Award for his service and impact.

Ibrahim Fayaz



Ibrahim Fayaz is a Registered Psychotherapist, clinical supervisor, and researcher specializing in faith-informed and culturally responsive mental health care. He is the BIPOC Student Support Counsellor at Nipissing University and runs a private practice, Canadian Muslim Counselling, serving individuals, couples, and families. Holding graduate degrees in Pastoral Care and Counselling Psychology, with advanced training in Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy, Ibrahim's work centers on Muslim mental health and the intersection of psychology, religion, and spirituality. He also serves as a freelance Imam, offering spiritual guidance, youth mentorship and community outreach. His practice bridges clinical care, research, and spiritual support to foster the holistic well-being of Muslim youth and communities.

Khaled Abdulwahed



Khaled Abdulwahed is a Syrian-born community leader and youth advocate dedicated to refugee empowerment and advancing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. After experiencing displacement firsthand, he began his humanitarian work with the Molham Volunteering Team, coordinating projects that improved access to food, education, healthcare, and housing for Syrian refugees and IDPs. Now based in Canada, Khaled leads a local Molham chapter and volunteers with organizations like the Syrian Canadian Foundation. He also serves as a Youth Assembly Ambassador and a member of the Global AFS Youth Advisory Council, helping refugee youth access global leadership opportunities. In 2023, he was recognized as a "Top 30 Under 30" by the Canadian Arab Institute and received the AFS Award for Young Global Citizens.

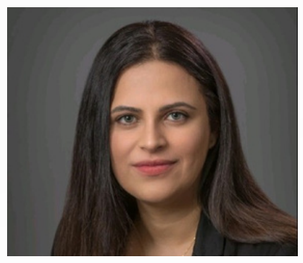
SPEAKERS' PROFILE

Izzedin Hawamda



Izzeddin Hawamda was born and raised in the West Bank, Palestine. He currently serves as the Anti-Racist Education Professional Learning Initiative Coordinator with Louis Riel, River East Transcona, and Winnipeg School Divisions. Izzeddin has completed his PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba. Izzeddin Hawamda is the founder of Sadaa صدى that strives to create spaces where people can connect, share stories, and foster empathy through meaningful dialogue. Izzeddin is a faculty fellow at Canadian Mennonite University. Izzeddin has been actively speaking about the power of dialogue and the importance of sharing, listening, and respecting diverse perspectives and narratives.

Kobra Rahimi



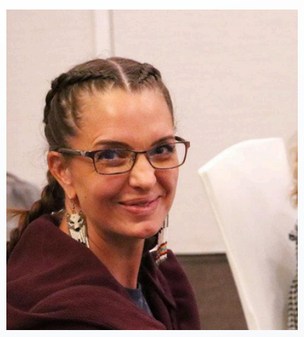
Kobra Rahimi is a practicing lawyer in Winnipeg. Kobra was born and raised in a refugee camp until the age of 14. She is originally from the Kurdish region of Iran. She came to Canada as a government-sponsored refugee in 2001. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Winnipeg as well as a Juris Doctor from the University of Manitoba.

Omar Siddiqui



Omar Siddiqui is a volunteer Khateeb and community liaison focusing on social Justice and bringing people of diverse backgrounds together. He has dedicated his life to anti-racism and decolonization, and presents widely on the intersections between law and systemic change. He has practiced law since 2003 with a focus on mental health, addictions, and criminal Justice. He is deeply committed to reconciliation and confronting the challenges faced by the next generation of Muslim Canadians. He focuses his practice on a trauma-informed approach with a goal towards addressing the historic injustices of Canada, drawing strength from the resilience of our communities. He is a passionate advocate for social change sourced in our traditional teachings.

Kim Stitt



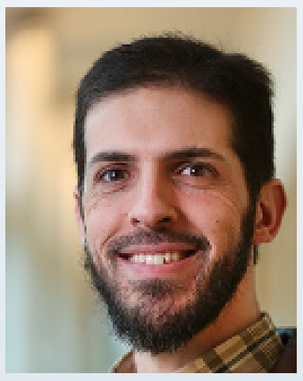
Kim Stitt is a BSW, RSW providing clinical mental health services and the founder of Still Waters (est. January 2024). With 17 years of experience in social services and registered since 2015, Kim's background spans mental health, domestic violence, addictions, justice, harm reduction and community health. She also works as a Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) mental health provider through the First Nations and Inuit Branch of the federal government, and regularly offers counseling in First Nations communities, including a rotation in Waywayseecapo. Adopted into Peguis First Nation through the Sacred Pipe to Cheryl Thomas, Kim is deeply committed to reconciliation and decolonization in both her practice and life.

Imam Abd Alfatah Twakkal (Online)



Imam Twakkal was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta. He holds a BA Honours in Religious Studies, a BSc in Zoology, and a Master's degree in Islamic Studies. Based in London, Ontario, he served as the Imam of the London Muslim Mosque for four years and as its Director of Community Outreach and Engagement until June 2018. He currently serves as the Intercultural Community Relations Coordinator at the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration, where he provides faith-based support in a social service setting. Since 2019, he has been the Resident Scholar and teacher at the Al-Ghazali Centre. Imam Twakkal also volunteers as a Muslim chaplain with London Police Services, the RCMP, London Health Sciences Centre, and the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre.

Dr. Sharif El-Tobgui



Dr. Sharif El-Tobgui is Associate Professor of Arabic & Islamic Studies and Director of the Arabic Language Program at Brandeis University. He holds a PhD and MA in Islamic Studies from McGill University and a BS in Arabic from Georgetown University. His research centers on Islamic theology, law, and the dynamic between reason and revelation in classical Islamic thought. He is completing a major monograph on Ibn Taymiyya's Refutation of Contradiction Between Reason and Revelation, a 10-volume theological work. A former instructor at Harvard and Middlebury, Dr. El-Tobgui is deeply passionate about Classical Arabic, teaching courses in language, literature, and Islamic intellectual history. His broader work explores Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and the intellectual encounters between Islam and the West.

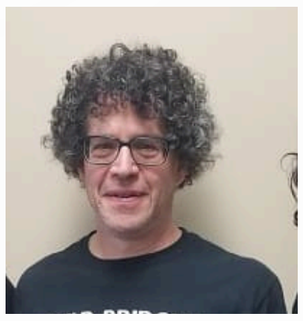
Harriet Zaidman



Harriet Zaidman is a Winnipeg-based author, journalist, and retired teacher-librarian. With a strong background in education, she writes historical fiction for children and young adults that explores themes of social justice, including labour rights and racial equity. Her novel Second Chances won the 2022 Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction, and City on Strike was a finalist for the same award in 2020. Harriet also reviews books for the Winnipeg Free Press and CM: Canadian Review of Materials, and she writes the food blog North End Nosh, celebrating Jewish culture through recipes and storytelling. Her work reflects a deep commitment to youth education, collective memory, and community advocacy.

SPEAKERS' PROFILE

Harold Shuster



Harold Shuster is a prominent member and spokesperson with Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) – Winnipeg, a grassroots Jewish advocacy group dedicated to promoting justice in Israel–Palestine and opposing all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism. He has represented IJV at multiple public forums, including anti-racism and solidarity events—most notably speaking at the Winnipeg Walk for Peace in June 2019 and at rallies during Hanukkah, where he criticized the "weaponization" of anti-Semitism to suppress pro-Palestinian advocacy. Shuster also serves as Chair of Independent Jewish Voices Canada. He engages actively in local and national dialogue on human rights, frequently collaborating with organizations such as Peace Alliance Winnipeg and addressing issues like freedom of expression, mutual solidarity, and social justice.

Dr. Aamir Jamal



Dr. Aamir Jamal is an Associate Professor at the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work and Director of Global Engagement. With over 25 years in international development, his research focuses on engaging men in gender justice, girls' education, and Muslim youth well-being—particularly in the Global South. He is the author of The Gatekeepers, a groundbreaking study on Pashtun men and gender justice in Pakistan. His work has shaped policy for governments and global agencies and helped launch a grassroots movement for gender equity in conflict-affected regions. Dr. Jamal's contributions have earned him multiple awards, including the City of Calgary International Achievement Award (2021) and the Immigrant Impact Award (2024

Ramsey Zeid



Ramsey Zeid is the President of the Canada Palestine Association of Manitoba (CPAM): a Winnipeg - based advocacy organization in support of Palestinian Human Rights. Ramsey is also a board member of both Canadian Muslims for Palestine and the Coalition of Canadian Palestinian organizations - the latter nationally representing Palestinian support associations in reaspect of federal, political advocacy. In January 2024 - and together with five Canadian MPs and 13 NGO representatives - Ramsey visited the northern West Bank city of Jenin (and its refuge camp), Ramallah, east Jerusalem and refugee camps in Hebron and Jarosh. His witnessing accounts of the increasing humanitarian crisis in the OPT was widely reported in Canadian media. In winnipeg, Ramsey's grassroots mobilization and public awareness efforts have been an examplar of critically - informed and peace - building activism in the global movement to #FreePalestine. Ramsey is a proud Palestinian - Canadian husband, father of four and son of saud and wajih zeid: founders of Winnipeg's Foodfare grocery chain

Jamie Carnegie



Emcee

Jamie Carnegie is a seasoned public sector leader and former Executive Director of Women and Gender Equity Manitoba. With over 22 years of service, she has built strong community partnerships to address gender-based violence and advance the MMIWG Calls for Justice. Raised as a settler, Jamie is reconnecting with her roots in the Missanabie Cree First Nation. She believes that when women do better, everyone does better.

The Honourable Minister Renée Cable



Minister of Advanced Education and Training

Renée Cable was elected as the MLA for Southdale in 2023. She is a proud Métis mom who is passionate about building stronger, healthier communities. Prior to becoming an MLA, Cable's background was in management, HR, advocacy and public policy including working in various staff roles in the Manitoba legislature. She has also served on several child-care, community centre and non-profit boards. Cable holds a bachelor's degree in political science and diplomas in human resource management and management, all from the University of Winnipeg. Cable grew up in Brandon and now lives in Windsor Park in the Southdale constituency with her family.

ISLAMIC SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers, Facilitating Access

ISSA is a not for profit community based charitable organization that serves as a network for addressing the multifaceted needs and concerns of Canadian Muslims and their families and is guided by the teachings of justice, equality, and respect for human rights as laid out in the Islamic tradition and bound by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

CONTACT ISSA

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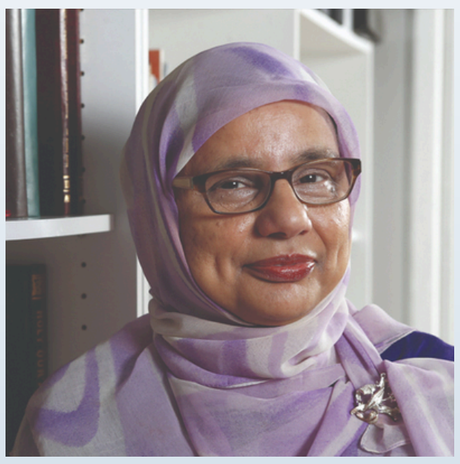
LEARN MORE

Shahina Siddiqui, LLD



Conference Chair

Shahina Siddiqui is the co-founder of the Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA) of the USA and Canada and serves as the volunteer executive director of ISSA Canada. She has been widely recognized for her work in antiracism advocacy, social justice, and combating extremism and Islamophobia. For over two decades, Shahina has worked to highlight the growth and impact of Islamophobia through her writings, community organizing, media engagement, public speaking, and training various sectors of service providers on Islam and Muslims. She has developed professional, sector-specific training on Islamophobia, Islam, and Muslims and regularly conducts Anti-Racism Training. She has produced booklets for all the sectors directly serving the Muslim community.

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

20 YEARS WCM WINNIPEG CENTRAL MOSQUE

IMMH INSTITUTE FOR MUSLIM MENTAL HEALTH



“You suppose you are the trouble,
but you are the cure.
You suppose that you are the lock on the door
but you are the key that opens it.
It’s too bad that you want to be someone else.
You don’t see your own face, your own beauty.
Yet no face is more beautiful than yours.”

.....RUMI