

THE SALAAM NETWORK STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND JUSTICE

The Salaam Network expresses its deepest sympathy and empathy for the families of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd who were murdered by aggressors driven by racist hatred of African Americans. We stand in strong solidarity with the justice-seekers who are protesting against the callous and heinous crimes that have been perpetrated on vulnerable victims. We acknowledge with profound anguish and anger that African Americans have been subjected to systematic inequity and discrimination since slavery first scarred this beautiful land. We recognize without equivocation that in a country in which all human beings are not deemed equal, there can be no peace or justice. We affirm our unswerving commitment to strive to build, through education and advocacy, a society which honors the identity, security and dignity of all people regardless of their color, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic status and other differentiations.

Upholding the sanctity of all human life and standing up for justice are amongst the most fundamental ethical imperatives for the followers of the prophetic religions and wisdom traditions. We are reminded by the Qur’anic proclamation that God has conferred dignity on all human beings (Surah 17: *Al-Israa*: 70). We are also instructed that “*if anyone slays a human being ..it shall be as though he had slain all humankind, whereas if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all humankind.*” (Surah 5: *Al-Maa’idah*: 32). The duty to do justice is made mandatory for all believers: “*O you who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in upholding equity, bearing witness to the truth for the sake of God, even though it be against your own selves or your parents and kinsfolk. Whether the person concerned be rich or poor, God’s claim takes precedence over (the claims of) either of them. Do not, then, follow your own desires, lest you swerve from justice: for if you distort (the truth), or refuse to testify, behold, God is indeed aware of all that you do!*” (Surah 4: *An-Nisaa*: 135).

We end with the prayer that the wrong-doings we have witnessed make us more determined than ever to work toward their eradication by our words and actions, both in our Beloved Community and in the larger society.

Riffat Hassan

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