



HM2F - KAOS



KAOS "Feminist Forum" is a part of every Meeting Against Homophobia since 2006; it was turned into a two day international forum and completed in Ankara Cebeci Campus on the 10th and 11th of March 2012.



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HOMOSEXUAL & MUSLIM

*Liberation and Secularism, Between
Islamophobia and Homophobia*

SUMMARY

<u>1 - Presentation</u>	<u>3</u>
A - January 2010 - why and for who ?	3
B - Diversity	3
C - Aim & operational goals	3
D - Complementary approaches	4
E - Inclusive and included	5
F - Empowerment, between the hammer & the anvil	5
<u>2 - Homophobia & Islamophobia: Secularism & double discrimination</u>	<u>6</u>
A - Infrhumanization, theoretically	6
B - Infrhumanizing sexual minorities	7
C - Is Islam a homophobic religion by essence?	8
D - Was the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ violently homophobic?	9
D - Were some companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ homophobic?	11
E - Secularism, a double chance against double discrimination	14
<u>3 - Structure & Accomplishments: empowerment, visibility, self-definition</u>	<u>15</u>
A - HM2F structure, a citizen network against all discriminations	16
B - HM2F structure, a citizen network against all discriminations	17
<u>4 - Conclusion, what about ethics and long term alliances?</u>	<u>20</u>

1 - Presentation



A - January 2010 - why and for who ?

Being homosexual - or LGBTQIA - & Muslim ? It is a reality. Our citizen network have always been opened to all, it is not a ghetto. Thus we needed a particular space, open to everyone, not a ghetto, to enhance our personal reflections. Fight back peacefully every kind of stigma, discrimination. Being a key stone in the deconstruction of the inhumanizing (dehumanizing) social representations. We are as human and dignified as anyone else, we have the right to conciliate our faith with our deep human nature

B - Diversity

Today, more than 260 members are registered, among which 35 % women, 65 % men, a few transgender individuals; and more than 1500 sympathizers (Facebook groups, Twitter, Youtube channel). The members are From different cultures, origins (France, Algeria, Morocco Tunisia, India, Mauritius, la Réunion, Caribbean, Ivory Coast, Senegal, etc.); and from different obedience - Sunna, Shi'a, Christians, Jewish, converted to Islam or atheists. The average is between 25 and 30 years old, from all kind of socio-cultural profiles (from the "elitist" neighborhoods to the proletarian suburbs).

C - Aim & operational goals

We built our network on two main axes: addressing homophobia, transphobia, from within the Muslim community - but not only; and addressing peacefully Islamophobia, racism, partisan nationalisms, from within the LGBT (gay, lesbian, transgender) community,

but not exclusively. Our aim is to work for an Inclusive Islam, and for a representation of secularism truly respectful of all beliefs.

HM2F's operational goals are:

- 1 - Sustain and council LGBTQIA Muslims and their families
- 2 - Talk and reflection groups organized regularly
- 3 - Inform the LGBTQIA community about being Muslim; inform the Muslim community about being LGBTQIA
- 4 - Meetings and events - peacefully addressing the violence of dehumanization, organized on a national or an international level
- 5 - Advocacy and concrete support for refugees from a Muslim background that flee their country because of persecutions and death threats, due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

D - Complementary approaches

To realize this aim, step by step and according to a fully democratic process, we adopted here triptych, complementary approaches:

- struggle for LGBT basic human rights
- reform the representation we have of our relationship to Islam, as a culture or/and or as a religion (10% of HM2F's members are daily practicing Islam).
- enhance the scientific analysis and understanding of these phenomenon of extremists, fundamentalist, dogmatic Muslims using Islam to justify their homophobia and misogynic (anthropology, psychology, historiography...).

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We understood, through our inner debates - and through national and international brainstorming with other NGOs, activists, intellectuals -, that these approaches, these struggles against all discriminations are complementary and it would be counter-productive to oppose them. Only self-definition, which is built on education and individual empowerment, could permit emancipation of citizens, appeasement of the social group he/she belongs to, and appeasement of the entire community.

During our meetings we established precise rules, each and us is committed:

- 1** – To talk as individuals; « **I** » **speak in my name**, not in the name of anyone else, of any political party, of any other social entity
- 2** – We ought to **listen to each other’s testimony** without questioning, nor interrupting, nor judging or doubting the veracity of that testimony.
- 3** – **Our testimonies are confidential**, what is said between stays between us.

E - Inclusive and included

HM2F is working in tight collaboration with several sister organizations through different networks:

- member of the ***Fédération LGBT***
- member of the ***ILGA***
- member of the federation ***RAVAD*** (network to support victims of discriminations)
- member of the committee ***IPERGAY***
- international coordinator of ***CALEM***
- founder member of the ***MTE*** (federation against discrimination towards Muslim mothers)

F - Empowerment, between the hammer & the anvil

Our fight against double discriminations - namely, being French, Muslim, Homosexual, Women... - is not an easy work. We are always challenged in our struggle to find a middle way. For instance, when we decided to sustain Muslim French mothers against Islamophobic laws targeting them just because they wear *hidjab* - simple scarf on their head -, forbidding them to get their children from school, we have been asked several questions:

- are you sustaining the idea that women should be veiled!?
- are you “salafi” more than “homosexuals”
- are you “calling to pray”, instead of letting everyone choose freely?
- you are “Muslims”, you have a “double discourse”, we could not “trust you”, and so on...

We think that Atheism and other faith are part of our citizen network’s dynamic, but we think it is a shame, first of all, that women are once again targeted to ostracize Muslims under political pressures. Second of all, it does exacerbate social tensions and it does not help empowering French Muslims, nor fighting back homophobia or misogyny within the Muslim community in France.

2 - Homophobia & Islamophobia: Secularism & double discrimination

Both these symptoms of rejection, like all discriminations, lead to a dehumanization of woman or individuals belonging to a sexual minority. In Social Psychology that process is called *Infrahumanization*.



A - Infrahumanization, theoretically

That social phenomenon is tacitly held by an unconscious belief that one's in-group - social group of belonging - is more human than an out-group. That uncontrollable phenomenon is produced by an individual or a group of individuals; here is the "recipe" to ostracize someone without feeling guilty about it. Infrahumanization is a basic animal instinct, an instinctive reaction by which endangered groups reinforce their group frontiers; scapegoats to catharsis inner-group's fears!

That phenomenon relies on unconscious, non deliberate cognitive mechanisms. It doesn't mean they are not guilty; but analyzing infrahumanization that is the source of discrimination from a scientific point of view, allows us to addresses the issue of discrimination, without falling into the political pitfall of essentializing a culture or a belief, saying for instance: "Islam is homophobic by essence", full stop. That pitfall would close the debate with all Muslims about homophobia; plus, it shall make us appear - we LGBT and human rights activists - for Islamophobic racists.

Infrahumanization is seldom endorsed by individuals; it is generally endorsed by a majority, against a minority to deny - without any conscious emotions like guilt - the out-group's individuals humanity, sustaining for instance: "they have no true human emotions", "they are beast", "they have no human faith", "it is not a sin/a crime to hurt them", and so on.

That analysis of discrimination is based on solid, robust scientific studies that have been realized in trans-historically and trans-geographically: "*Denial of humanness associated with extreme intergroup violence such as genocide*"¹.

¹ Leyens & al. (2009). "From infra-humanization to discrimination: The mediation of symbolic threat needs egalitarian norms". Journal of experimental social psychology; 45-2, p.336-344.

B - Infrachumanizing sexual minorities

"I am not guilty". Why is it so important for fundamentalists to justify their homophobia, sometimes using Qur'an or the Islamic traditions? Some Muslims even consider that *"one of the most sensitive issues facing Muslims living in the West, particularly in Europe"*². Probably because every endangered human group (and the arabo-islamic civilization is a huge human group, no matter its size) desperately need to endeavor a "purification", they say, beginning with the outer-group: that is to say individuals belonging to sexual minorities.

But Infrachumanization also shows that God in his great kindness to create "empathy": an entire surat called *Al-Rahman*! And because of empathy, executioners need to infrachumanize their victims before they could think of eliminating them politically or sometimes even physically. Our spirit - *al-nafs* - could not straight forward reject some other human's dignity; it has first of all to consider him as inhuman ; but truly it is the executioner itself that has to alienate himself/herself before even to think about how to suppress other humans' dignity!

Discrimination and prejudices persist despite the fact that human sexuality is much more complex than the doctors of the 18th century were thought (by inventing the word "homosexuality", to classify sexual minorities into categories that do not correspond to reality). The European scientists were wrong and today they recognized their mistake; we are enhancing scientific knowledge about human sexuality. Yet that limited and discriminating misconception of sexuality and gender has exported in colonies, now free countries, which defend some discriminating European laws (in Africa or Middle-East).

It is a historical schizophrenia to defend homophobic laws in the name of Islam, since these laws elaborated during the modern era are not based on Islamic ethics! Neither Islam nor LGBT activists have anything to win from violence of infrachumanization. If we want to adopt the appropriate measures to fight back homophobia, transphobia, we have to analyze first with great scrutiny the real, deep, robust roots of that violence against individuals belonging de facto to sexual minorities.

² Answer to T. Ramadan's article entitled "Islam and homosexuality" : http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/infrachumanisation_deshumanisation_violente_et_justice_de_la_reforme_de_l-islam_de_france.html#Tariq_Ramadan

C - Is Islam a homophobic religion by essence?

Islam has no cell phone number, nor any address that you can write to; we are elaborating Islam, one generation after another. Thus, is it the Islam we elaborate that is fundamentally homophobic, or is it the representation of a hegemonic, almighty masculine identity that is not truly adapted to the reality we are living in?

Islam, in Arabic means *to be at peace*. It is a grammatical form that implies a process of being under an *in-progress evolution*, which is theoretically based on the knowledge of the self, the knowledge of others and the proactive respect for diversity. Thus, we ask, how can the knowledge of Islam, especially the representation that "new Islamic theologies" are trying to develop³, help combat homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia and transphobia peacefully? How can knowledge of the *Islamic theology of liberation*, and in particular the contribution of LGBT and feminist intellectuals or activists in this field, add value to human consciousness? In a word, how can the Islamic *Tawheed*⁴ doctrine enable individuals belonging *de facto* to a sexual minority to live better and empower themselves⁵?

To answer these questions about Universal equality and unconditional respect of human diversity, we could get back to the first era of the Islamic culture. Our beloved Prophet ﷺ⁶ is still a row model for millions of Muslims. He was just a man, it is said again and again in the Quran here and there. It is said in the Quran: "*And they say: What aileth this messenger (of Allah) that he eateth food and walketh in the markets? Why is not an angel sent down unto him, to be a warner with him*"⁷. And it is said also: "*O Prophet! Why bannest thou that which*

³ It was the main subject of Amina Wadud's presentation, at the CALEM 2011 conference at the EHESS (High School of Social Studies - Paris). Videos of that presentation are available online - http://www.calem.eu/publications.html#CALEM__2011

⁴ The uniqueness of our humanity, mirroring the uniqueness of God.

⁵ It was the main subject of Amina Wadud's presentation about *Tawhid*, at the CALEM 2011 conference at the EHESS (High School of Social Studies - Paris). Videos of that presentation are available online - http://www.calem.eu/publications.html#CALEM__2011 ; The uniqueness of our humanity, mirroring the uniqueness of God. Tawhid is also in 2012 the main theme of HM2F's Green Book against homophobia, published on the 17th of May every year since 2010 - http://www.calem.eu/GREEN-BOOKS_against-homophobia-lesbophobia-biphobia-transphobia.html

⁶ May peace and mercy be upon him.

⁷ Quran: 25-7

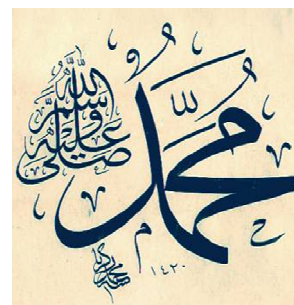
Allah hath made lawful for thee, seeking to please thy wives? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

Our Prophet ﷺ was just a man, which also is a message. Because despite is human condition he was able to extirpate an entire civilization (that later influenced European Renaissance) from the Arabic peninsula’s desert sands. He did not that by imposing a static dogma that failed from the sky; he try and succeeded in elaborating a more fair social order, brainstorming ethical matters with his people for twenty three years, in a very pragmatic, immanent way. We shall not forget our Prophet’s wisdom ﷺ; his last *khoutbah* ﷺ (sermon) after his last hajj was dedicated to human rights and human dignity (no coincidence): “*Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.*”

That is truly the basis of the Islamic humanism, 14 hundred centuries ago. No need to be mad at Islam, or to through away some of the wisdom with anger: the true, powerful wisdom of the “*salaf al-saleeh*” (first Muslims, the Prophet ﷺ and the companions) was to adapt to contingencies (that is the psychological definition of true “intelligence”): when a verse or a hadeeth was not adapted anymore, they just replace it, and they did even after our beloved prophet death ﷺ. Thus, what the Prophet ﷺ would do today, being confronted to gays and lesbians wanting to get married? He would most probably marry them since it is a basic civil rights that several LGBT organizations are able to ask in the West.

D - Was the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ violently homophobic?

Nowhere, neither in the Qur’an nor in the Sunna – *hadeeth*, oral traditions of the Prophet ﷺ- homosexuality is condemned, as recalled on May 17th, 2010 by the rector of the Mosque of Bordeaux, Imam Tareq Oubrou ⁸. According to that statement, today it is a duty to change some misogynistic and homophobic traditions, and talk about real issues, without amalgams, or



⁸ Le Livre Vert de HM2F a été présenté à l’Assemblée Nationale le 17 mai 2011, à l’occasion de la journée mondiale contre l’homophobie, la transphobie - http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/IDAHO_17_mai_2010_colloque_assemblee_nationale_francaise_HM2F.html

misunderstandings, or political manipulations.

First of all, the verses mentioning "the people of Lut" in the Qur'an, never speak of homosexuality by nature; homosexuality - الجنسية المثلية - is not mentioned once. The Qur'an mentions violent sex, dominative, inhuman practiced by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and other criminal practices that have nothing to do with homosexuality - rape, theft, refusal of hospitality, murder, etc.⁹. Moreover, their traditional sex was described as unprecedented. It is said in the Qur'an: "How dare you practice a vice than any people before you had practiced"¹⁰. And we know today that homosexuality has not been "invented" by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Considering that these crimes - rape, theft, etc. - Are characteristic of homosexuals is discriminatory and it is an amalgam. If one replace the term "people of Lot" with "Jews" or "Blacks", we would see that we cannot now condemn all "Jews" or "Blacks" for a crime committed by a city populated predominantly, 5000 years ago (!), of "Jews" or "Blacks". In this example, the discrimination and the amalgam are obvious. But when it comes to homosexuality, it is less obvious and some dogmatic Muslims continue to accuse us of all these heinous crimes committed by people who had, among other things, homosexual *violent and dehumanizing* practices.

Therefore, these sexual practices and are often cited by dogmatic Muslims because they think homosexuality is mentioned in the Qur'an *indirectly*. But these violent practices have in fact nothing to do with homosexuality per se. It would be more likely that these sexual practices have been described by the ancient historian, Herodotus: "... Once in a lifetime to sit in the temple of love [dedicated to the goddess Ishtar] and ... have sex with a stranger ... men pass and make their choice. Whatever the money, the woman never refuses, because that would be a sin, the money being by this act made sacred"¹¹. In good faith, these acts do not describe homosexuality per se. These are sexual domineering, violent practices which can be equated with prostitution in public.

⁹ Quran: 7.80-84, 11.69-83, 15.51-77, 21.71-75, 22.42-43, 25.40, 26.159-175, 27.54-58, 29.28-35, 37.133-138, 50.12-13, 54.32-40 37, 66.10.

¹⁰ Quran: 7.80

¹¹ Denig, S. (1996). « *The Mythology of Sex* », Chapter 3, Macmillan General Reference, New York.

These domineering and violent sexual practices also seem to be still in force among the Arabs until shortly before the end of the modern era (nineteenth century), as reported by *Khaled Al-Rouyaheb* in his wonderful book "*Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World*"¹². And so the hadeeth attributed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, that says: "If you find two men to commit the crime of the people of Lut, kill the active and the passive"¹³: well this hadeeth does not apply to homosexuality per se, but applies to acts of prostitution made in public. Today there is no question of practicing such a punishment for acts of prostitution made publicly¹⁴. But it will still take time before the Arabo-islamic countries - often within the scope of dictatorial regimes - evolve on these particular issues¹⁵; dictatorships, despotic regimes, which cannot be honestly considered as Islamic.

D - Were some companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ homophobic?

Besides this hadeeth was narrated by one of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ with the most sulfurous reputation, which itself was involved personally with homosexuality. Aisha RAA, with whom Abu Huraira also had an altercation, said that what Abu Huraira considered the words of the Prophet ﷺ, actually was not the word of the Prophet ﷺ. These are inconsistencies about hadeeth narrated by Abu Huraira - hadeeths attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, in reality often misogynistic and homophobic hadeeths - in total contradiction with the facts as reported also by other companions of the Prophet ﷺ whose reputations are safer. Inconsistencies about Abu Huraira that have already been highlighted in 1983 by the famous Muslim feminist, *Fatima Mernissi* in her famous book: "*The political harem, the Prophet and women*"¹⁶. We, sexual minorities who are fighting for human rights, must be aware that the opinion of one man of bad reputation is not valid in front of the advice of the

¹² El-Rouayheb, K. (2010). "*Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800*". University of Chicago Press

¹³ El-Tarmidi - hadeeth 1376

¹⁴ CALEM 2010 Manifesto for a moratorium on criminalization of affective and homosexual relationships between consenting adults – <http://www.calem.eu/Manifesto-2010.html>

¹⁵ Amnesty International report: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/POL30/003/2008/en/d77ce647-4cd3-11dd-bca2-bb9d43f3e059/pol300032008eng.pdf> ; and Human Right Watch: <http://www.hrw.org/fr/news/2003/07/21/egypt-homosexual-prosecutions-overturned>

¹⁶ F. Mernissi (1987). « *Le harem politique : le Prophète et les femmes* ». Albin Michel, Paris.

wife of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ; Aisha RAA¹⁷, the closest of his wives, the first scholar woman within Islam.

Plus Abu Huraira, the companion of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ - the reputation of the companions is considered sacred to the majority of Muslims - seemed to be himself questioning about his sexuality. He spoke to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who, far from condemning him, urged him to accept his fate¹⁸. But Abu Huraira preferred to marry and have kids. Then he used to be one of the fiercest persecutors of those whom they use to call the "mukhanathun" - مخنثون. The mukhanathun were men effeminate, androgynous men, who had no desire to women, who did not marry women, before whom the Prophet's wives did not veil with their hijab¹⁹. Today mukhanathun could have been described as "gay" or "transgenders". The Prophet ﷺ defended, proactively, one of these mukhanathun; Abu Huraira wanted to kill because of his effeminate manners and way of dressing²⁰. It is therefore obvious that the opinion of Abu Huraira on homosexuality was not neutral, and in total contradiction with the ethical position of the Prophet of Islam ﷺ who, again, defended proactively these individuals belonging to what we call today "sexual minorities". What religious or political leader had given such an example, one thousand and almost five hundred years ago ?

Moreover about the Arabo-Islamic traditions considered to be "authentic" - often wrongly attributed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as we have seen - there is also the hadeeth often quoted saying: " When two men have sex as did the people of Lut, the throne of the Merciful is shaken²¹. This hadeeth is apocryphal, which means it was added to the Arabo-Islamic tradition long after the death of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who never claimed that the universe can shake simply because of a sexual relation between two consenting individuals. So why do some Muslims, often dogmatic, still repeat this apocryphal hadeeth, if it was so obvious from the Qur'an that homosexuality is sinful by nature!?

¹⁷ May Allah accept her in His Mercy.

¹⁸ *"innee rajulun shaabbun wa ana akhaafu 'alaa nafsee al-'anata wa laa ajidu ma atazawwaju bihi an-nisaa'a"*; Bukhari LXII, hadeeth 8.

¹⁹ Sunan Abu Dawud – book of al-Adab - 4928 (4:282); see also Rowson, E., K.: *"The effeminates of early Medina"*, Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 111, No. 4. (Oct. - Dec., 1991), pp. 671-693.

²⁰ Sunan Abu Dawud, book 41 - 4910.

²¹ S. Kugle (2010). « Homosexuality in Islam ». Oneworld Publications, London.

Similarly, there is never any mention of feminine homosexuality anywhere. The only hadeeth that talks about sexual relationships between women is also apocryphal, first cited by al-Tabaraani رحمه الله over three hundred years after the Prophet's death ﷺ and was added after the elaboration of the six so called “authentic” books of Hadeeths. This fact tends to prove in this case, after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, that women's sexuality was controlled by the men in power's vision, who did not think a woman without a penis could have an “independent” sexuality – for several Muslim scholars, adultery was considered to be the penetration of a penis into a vagina²². Moreover, these apocryphal hadeeths suggests that with the dogmatization of Islam, "Arabs" no longer saw “homosexuality” – defined here as the exclusive research of a same sex partner - as a threat to filiation, a sacred concept for the tribal morality of that time ; but for the first time probably in the history of the Arabo-Islamic world, several decades after the Prophet's death ﷺ, this behavior was seen as a pathology.

Remember also the verses of that Surat who speaks of the celestial journey accomplished through Jerusalem by Muhammad ﷺ: "Say: Everyone acts according to its kind - in Arabic *shakilat*, شكلة - but your Lord knows best who follows the best path. They ask you about the soul. Say: "The soul comes under the command of my Lord, and indeed of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little." If We willed We could withdraw that which We have revealed, and then you will not find anyone to defend you against Us”²³. Here "shakilat" could be translated as "deep nature on which the individual was shaped" or "gender identity". It is an interpretation certainly much more modern and progressive than most dogmatic Muslims would like to impose. Only God knows why He created us so and why each one is acting a certain way, depending on its gender or sexuality.

In conclusion, I would quote another verse of the Quran saying: “*We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other*”²⁴. It is a verse of the most deceptively

²² Hendricks, M. (2010) “Islamic text ; a source of acceptance of queer individuals into mainstream Muslim society” - available online from the CALEM 2010 publications page:
<http://www.calem.eu/publications/Islamic%20texts%20-%20a%20source%20for%20acceptance%20of%20queer%20individuals%20into%20mainstram%20society.zip>

²³ Progressive imam Tareq Oubrou at the French National Assembly, on the occasion of the Conference “Homophobia and Religions” organized on the initiative of HM2F and its partners. Videos and publications are available online: http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/IDAHO_17_mai_2010_colloque_assemblee_nationale_francaise_HM2F.html

²⁴ Quran : 49.13.

simple, but which actually embraces a reality that speaks to us across the ages of Islamic humanism. Far from religious and civilizations wars, or discrimination against any community whatsoever, this Islamic Humanism sanctifies diversity as being the cornerstone of our Humanity.

E - Secularism, a double chance against double discrimination

Once again, we think it is possible to understand Islam as a culture and a spirituality that never finished evolving since from 1400 years ago to nowadays. But religious dogma and extremism is not the only pitfall we could be trapped in. Being politically partisan - namely, using our fights for human LGBT rights toward political advantages or under ideological pressures -, against one social group or the other, is also a behavior that is built on the same inhumanizing process that homophobia, racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism are built on. We have to be very careful, since politicians and ideologues understood very well the advantages of recuperate LGBT noble activism for human rights as a moral caution for their political, partisan struggles.



Thus, we positioned ourselves very clearly against any kind of homonationalism, in an era where in Europe these kind of political recuperation of LGBT activism for human rights is at its highest. Homonationalism could be seen as the internalization of nationalist – racist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, misogynous, transphobic (...) – thesis by a part of LGBT activists.

- These homonationalists have the illusion they shall be accepted by mainstream nationalists? They just reinforce racist, misogynous, nationalism that is the main cause for any discrimination
- Homonationalism has been denounced by intellectual like Judith Butler, taking her “distance” with openly racist LGBT activists
- HM2F Board and Council (22 November 2011) decided our duty is to denounced that homonationalism wherever we encounter it

We think that Secularism - in French *Laïcité* - is a double chance against double discrimination:

- We stay independent from any ideology, religious dogmatism, or political party; it is hard but mandatory not to fall in one Infrahumanization or the other
- Secularism and political neutrality protects us from dogmatic religious authorities, condemning homosexuality on the basis of their own prejudices
- Secularism and political neutrality protects also against homophobic ideologies
- Hence, denouncing one form of homonationalism without another, could be taken as a political use of human rights²⁵

Finally, neutrality - not being a political partisan of this or that party - does not mean being passive and watch while injustices are committed; just the opposite. We have to stay focused on our aim. And making a place for LGBT rights among Muslim cultures and community, in Europe and/or elsewhere, is already a piece of work.

3 - Structure & Accomplishments: empowerment, visibility, self-definition

HM2F works today on solid ground with major French and international LGBTQIA organizations. We organized since 2010:

- A conference about religious authorities and homophobia at the French National Assembly - IDAHO, 17th of May 2010²⁶.
- « Green Books » against homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia, transphobia²⁷.
- Trimestrial newsletter – registration on homomusulmans@gmail.com²⁸
- Seminars in several French main cities²⁹

²⁵ More on information on: http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/HOMONATIONALISM__Liberation-of-homosexual-Muslims-of-France-beyond-Islamophobia-and-anti-Semitism.html

²⁶ Report on: http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/IDAHO_17_mai_2010_colloque_assemblee_nationale_francaise_HM2F.html

²⁷ Available for free online: http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/Livres-Verts-contre-homophobie-islamophobie__Green-Book-against-homophobia-islamophobia.html

²⁸ <http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/websitemap.html#NEWSLETTERS>

²⁹ Reports of activities online: http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/compte_rendu_reunions.html

- Journey in Holy Land - Israël and Palestine; November 2011. We visited the sanctuaries and met representatives from LGBT organizations (The Agudah, Aswaat, Al-Qaws in Rammallah, activists in Bethlehem or Amman...) ³⁰.
- « CEW » conference – Muslims lesbians' conference in 2010 (we sustained financially sisters from France, Algeria, Tunisia to assist the conference in Cape Town, South Africa) ³¹.
- CALEM international conferences, workshops and seminars: 2010, 2011 and 2012 (in Paris, Brussels, Madrid, Lisbon, Geneva, Amsterdam...) ³².



A - CALEM, the inclusive international dynamic of an informal confederation

CALEM is an informal confederation of LGBT, European or Muslim organizations, that works * toward sexual and gender diversity within Islam. CALEM is a **secular and non political organization, independent** from any political party, financial sponsor, from any kind of ideology and not submitted to any kind of absolute religious authority.

Our aim is to **sustain - in their empowerment and liberation process - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender** individuals that are Muslims or come from a Muslim background. CALEM in Arabic, is the tool we use to acquire knowledge and write Destiny. Knowledge and cooperation are the tools we shall use to make us free. CALEM operational aim are:

- 1 - increasing each others **visibility**
- 2 – sustaining each others **inner dynamic** – together we are stronger
- 3 – work on common projects, built on a **common ethic**

³⁰ Videos and pictures on HM2F travel blog:

<http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/INCLUSIF/BLOG-voyage-isreal-palestine-spiritualites-LGBT.html>

³¹ Report on: http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/compte_rendu_FF.html#ICEW

³² www.calem.eu.

4 – our brothers and sisters shall **not go through that journey alone**

5 – The ultimate goal is **to be seen as Muslims**, full stop – our sexuality shall become just a secondary detail and LGBT people are **as human as anyone else** to choose, or not, to express their spirituality, or not at all.



CALEM 2010 welcome more than 80 participants from 11 countries, among which the two gay imams and activists from the Arab world (just before the “Arab spring”).

CALEM 2011 had the honor to welcome almost 250 participants in four different European countries, which gives CALEM - and our fights for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual) human rights - a modest continental dimension; *Alhamdoulillah*. As an inclusive conference, CALEM's seminars were opened to all. We ensured that fact as far as possible. Thus the participants embodied a great diversity: LGBT citizens, inclusive and progressive Muslims, associations' volunteers and activists, professionals of social psychological support, intellectuals and academics.

In 2011, CALEM Paris welcomed almost 100 participants for the presentation of Amina Wadud, thanks to the [EHES](#) that accepted exceptionally to work with an activist confederation. In Brussels we were pleased this year to offer empowering trainings for individuals and workshops for professionals; CALEM Madrid benefited a great media interest (especially from the national TV channel [Sexta](#)), in a country where religious conservatism is an issue; CALEM Lisbon we were honored to exchange information and ideas with professional human rights activists and volunteers that have to deal with a small and new Muslim community in Portugal.

B - HM2F structure, a citizen network against all discriminations

The structure of HM2F has been built on different groups and commissions, in transparency & collegiality – *Shura* -, according to the will of the founder members that democratically expressed their intentions at our first General Meeting. Commissions are mainly focused on brainstorming and publications:



- Commission « **Welcome and Share** ».
- Commission « **Sexualities, prevention and sérodifférence (HIV/AIDS)** ».
- Commission « **Color Islam** ».
- Commission « **Reflection Islam** ».

Groups are mainly about organizing activities:

- Group « **Women and Feminities** ».
- Group « **Prayers & Meditations** ».
- Group « **Festive Queer** ».

For instance, within the Commission *Welcome and Share*, we focus on empowering LGBT Muslims from France, Europe and elsewhere:

- **Once a month at the LGBT center**, welcome new members and sympathisers by HM2F trained members (training online: http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/publications/accueil_HM2F.ppt ; Agenda online: <http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/AGENDA.html>).
- **Sustain refugees from Arab-Islamic and African countries**, persecuted because of their gender identity or sexual orientation (providing letters of recommendations, sustaining them in asylum and administrative procedures).
- **Launching dedicated campaigns** (petitions, like for Nessma, a young lesbian refugee from Libya - http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/NESSMA-jeune-libyenne-homosexuelle-doit-rester-en-france_appel-signature_petition.html - Or to sustain the feminist, antimilitarist Turkish lesbian PINAR SELEK - http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/PINAR-SELEK-militante-turque-feministe-antimilitariste_turkish-feminist-antimilitarist-activist-PINAR-SELEK.html).
- eventually, we could also **provide free shelter for them up to three month**, at one of our volunteer's home (and we are planning to associate our efforts with other organizations to acquire a flat dedicated to this use).

Another example, within the Commission *Reflection Islam*, we focus on anthropological, historical and theological approaches to the struggle against homophobia within Islam. These subjects are brainstormed mainly in the commission Reflection Islam of HM2F, and during our CALEM plenary conferences and seminars. We talked among others about the book of **Khaled Al-Rouayheb: "Before homosexuality in the Arab- Islamic world"**. Here The author gives great bibliographical references about sexual orientation and gender diversity within Islam, as a civilization, before the modern era. The book as been discussed during on of our sessions of the Reflection Islam on the 14th October 2011 ³³.

But there is also other main book that guide our reflections here: Samar Habib: "Islam and homosexuality". The author put in exergue self-determination of queer from the arab-Muslim (mainly those who lives in the West) and their emancipation toward neocolonialism. **Scott Siraj Kugle: "Homosexuality in Islam"**. The author analyses in a brilliant, but nonetheless personal way, the evolution of same-sex relationships' representation among the Islamic civilization, from an essentially theological perspective. **Amina Wadud: "Inside the Gender Jihad"**. The author relates her personal experience searching a third way between misogynia, islamophobia and sharing the *imamat*. **Ludovic-Mohamed Zahed: « Le Coran et la chair »** (The Qur'an and the Flesh). Between autobiography and essay, the author is speaking here about his personal spiritual quest from the salafi brotherhood, to the reconciliation with his sexual orientation.

Concerning HIV/AIDS and sexual prevention, the Commission *Sexualities, prevention & Serodifference* (HIV/AIDS different status) has realized several main actions:

- Trainings toward LGBT Muslims, available on our website, mixing self-esteem reinforcement, empowerment & HIV/AIDS prevention ³⁴.
- 2010 Inclusive Muslim's Statement against the serophobia & homophobia of some religious institutions ³⁵.
- 2011 documentary and book about Aids children and teenagers, in cooperation with our sister organization TDMES ³⁶.

Please note that HM2f is a member of the *IPERGAY* committee, concerning the unique trial amongst French gays against the HIV/AIDS pandemic³⁷.

³³ The audio file of that meeting is available online: http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/compte_rendu_RI.html

³⁴ http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/publications/pratiques%20sexuelles-a-risque_VIH-Sida_&_autres-maladies-sexuellement-transmissibles.ppt

³⁵ <http://www.webpetitions.com/petition/musulmans-inclusifs-contre-la-srophobie-inclusive-muslims-statement-against-serophobia/74>

³⁶ <http://www.tourdumondedesorphelins.com/TDMES-enfants-du-sida-docu-aids-children.html>

4 - Conclusion, what about ethics and alliances?

LGBTQIA Muslims are a strength to the sexual minorities' political *fight for our civil rights and human dignity*; As well as a promoter for the diversity within the European communities. We have to learn from each others, despite our differences we have more in common. HM2F – as one of the key stone of an LGBTQIA Islamic activism movement - is ready to fight back efficiently prejudices, stigma, discrimination, *on several levels of long term alliances*. As full citizens, we shall contribute to intellectual advancements, for the welfare of our human brothers and sisters.

Once again, as free citizens, we do not recognize any spiritual authority; we work with one another as equal, trying to elaborate peacefully “**self-definition**” of who we are. Once again, we are not submit to any ideology nor political party; we are free to **denounce discrimination anywhere** we see it. Our ultimate aim is the welfare of queer **inclusive** Muslims. So far we adopted here a triptych complementary approach:

- Struggle for LGBT human rights
- Reform the representation we have of our relationship to Islam
- Enhance the scientific analysis and understanding of these phenomenons (anthropology, psychology, historiography...).

These approaches, these struggles against all discriminations are complementary and it would be counter-productive to oppose them. Only self-definition - that is built on education and individual empowerment - allows emancipation of citizens, appeasement of the social group he/she belongs to, and of the entire community.

In conclusion I will quote Lilla Watson (a Gangulu Indigenous Australian feminist woman): “ *If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.* ”



Thank you, Ludovic-Mohamed ZAHED ³⁸

³⁷ http://www.ipergay.fr/Le-Comite-Associatif-Ipergay-le-representant-des-associations-LGBT-et-VIH-dans-IPERGAY_a22.html & also http://www.homosexuels-musulmans.org/communique-de-presse-10avril2012_IPERGAY-SIDA-AIDS-associative-committee-comite-associatif.html

³⁸ A short resumé of is available here: <http://www.calem.eu/Ludovic-Lotfi-Mohamed-ZAHED-&-Azzah-H-B.html>