

عنوانيڻ زيب اش مسالم قوانيني
Women Living Under Muslim Laws
النساء في ظل قوانين المسلمين
Femmes sous lois musulmanes

International Solidarity Network

30 November 2010

Seeking your endorsement for the nomination of Ms Zarizana Abdul Aziz, Malaysia, for membership of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice

The Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) international solidarity network would like to nominate Ms Zarizana Abdul Aziz, a Malaysian human rights lawyer and advocate with over twenty four years of experience in promoting human rights from within national and international legal frameworks, for membership of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice. WLUML hopes that you will support and endorse this nomination.

In September 2010, the UN Human Rights Council decided to establish, for a period of three years, a working group of five independent experts on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice (A/HRC/RES/15/23). The mandate of this working group includes:

- (a) To develop a dialogue with States, the relevant United Nations entities, national human rights institutions, experts on different legal systems, and civil society organizations to identify, promote and exchange views on best practices related to the elimination of laws that discriminate against women or are discriminatory to women in terms of implementation or impact and, in that regard, to prepare a compendium of best practices;
- (b) To undertake a study, in cooperation with and reflecting the views of States and relevant United Nations entities, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations, on the ways and means in which the working group can cooperate with States to fulfil their commitments to eliminate discrimination against women in law and in practice;
- (c) To make recommendations on the improvement of legislation and the implementation of the law, to contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular goal 3 on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- (d) To work in close coordination, in the context of the fulfilment of its mandate, with other special procedures and subsidiary organs of the Council, relevant United Nations entities, including the Commission on the Status of Women and UN Women and, in particular, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other treaty bodies, within their respective mandates, with a view to avoiding unnecessary duplication;
- (e) To take into account the views of other stakeholders, including relevant regional human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations; and
- (f) To submit an annual report to the Council, starting at its twentieth session, on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, and on good practices in

International Coordination Office, P.O. Box 28445, London, N19 5NZ, UK
Tel: +44 207 263 0285 Fax +44 207 561 9882
Email: wluml@wluml.org Website: www.wluml.org

eliminating such discrimination, drawing upon the findings of the United Nations human rights machinery and the broader United Nations system.

Zarizana Abdul Aziz has been an active networker of WLUML since 1994, where she oversaw the implementation for the very successful International Women & Laws Initiative in the Muslim World, looking at discriminatory laws justified in the name of religion and custom across more than 30 countries and communities. She has continued to work with the network since on a diversity of projects and has been involved in legal reforms initiatives, working with stakeholders and governments in several countries.

Zarizana Abdul Aziz also has extensive experience advocating for national legal reform and the adoption and domestication of international human rights laws and norms, particularly women's human rights, through her involvement with the Women's Crisis Centre in Malaysia. She was President of the Centre (later know as Women's Centre for Change) for 3 years, and led several initiatives by the coalition of women's rights groups in Malaysia to advocate for changes which included amendments to the rape laws, family laws, sexual harassment as well as advocating for a new domestic violence law and gender equality (gender anti-discrimination) law.

From 2008-2009 she was the Human Rights Committee Co-Chairperson of the Malaysian Bar Council, where she initiated, oversaw and/or led human rights programmes and initiatives ranging from the rights of detainees, to court interventions, the rights of children, and the rights of women.

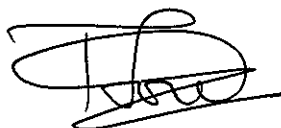
Her legal expertise has been widely recognised and she has been called upon to act as an expert by various United Nations agencies, including OHCHR, UNIFEM, UNFPA, and UNDAW. Presently, she is the Co-Director of a two year research on "Developing Due Dilligence Standards and Indicators on Violence against Women", which aims to facilitate evidence-based analysis of good practices in addressing violence against women nationally, regionally and globally as well as to further develop indicators on the international principle of due diligence to prevent, protect, investigate, punish and provide reparation in relation to violence against women. The project is supported by UN Women and the OHCHR, and is being undertaken in consultation with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

WLUML believes Zarizana Abdul Aziz's expertise on law and HR, her active involvement in promoting gender equality and universal rights in the region, well as her long-term cooperation with legal bodies, states, civil society groups and United Nations division make her a particularly suitable candidate for the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice. She has a solid and grounded understanding of sensitive ways to balance the legal, economic, social and cultural specificities of different contexts, as well as human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and CEDAW instruments.

Please endorse Zarizana Abdul Aziz's nomination for membership of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice by emailing your endorsements to us at wluml@wluml.org or to HRC Secretariat, c/o Fei Xing at hrcspecialprocedures@ohchr.org and a copy to us as soon as possible.

Your urgent attention is appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,



Fatou Sow

International Coordinator - Women Living Under Muslim Laws