



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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On Saturday, September 23, 2023, two men dressed as Muslim women, robbed two nail salons in Philadelphia, PA. And unfortunately, one woman was shot, yet fortunately, is in stable condition, according to media reports. As of this writing, the subjects have not been captured.

The Majlis Ash-Shura of the Delaware Valley has been organized as a religious non-profit for over 30 years, acting as a consultative body for Philly area Imams and other stakeholders from the Muslim community. Sadly, this isn't the first time in our area someone has committed a crime while disguising themselves in typical Islamic clothes. In fact, one time, the Majlis, along with other nonprofits, local law enforcement, and elected officials, worked together intending to assist in the capture of the alleged criminals.¹

Throughout the world, people have disguised themselves in religious clothes to commit criminal activity; therefore, this is beyond a local phenomenon.² For instance, 170 crimes were committed by 50 people who wore Islamic clothing to conceal themselves from 2007-2009.³ And this was in a predominantly Muslim country, Jordan to be exact.

This is clearly a tribulation (*museebah*) for our community, specifically for Muslim women. As our sisters who are covered in *khimaar*, *hijaab* or a *niqaab*, are being looked at by business owners with cautious eyes, wondering if a robbery will take place. This creates apprehension on all sides: some of the law abiding covering sisters, and some of the business owners and law enforcement personnel. During any tribulation (*museebah*) we are told in Islam to have patience (e.g, keep your composure), amongst other things. Also, during difficult times people are sometimes more reflective and eager to work for the greater good. These recent incidents can hopefully spark such action by area Masjids, Muslim-ran organizations, and local individual Muslims who truly care. Part of the struggle with the Majlis Ash-Shura is soliciting and maintaining sincere participation. There are a plethora of serious concerns within our area that no one person, family, Imam, or Masjid can or should be expected to handle singularly. It's on all of us as a Muslim body, to at the very least, try to thwart such issues, ideally collectively.

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2012/04/27/151523344/thieves-cover-ups-raise-concerns-among-muslims>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2007/feb/10/ukcrime.hughmuir>

³ <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/mena/crime-wave-by-men-wearing-the-khimar-1.498567>



The Majlis encourages local Muslims to:

- Understand that even if we sincerely want things to change, it will not happen if Allah (swt) doesn't want them to. Accept the *qadr* (He knows and has decided everything) of Allah (swt), the good **and** the bad, for He is *Al-Hakim* (The All Wise). While at the same time seek '*adaala* (justice), because the two are not mutually exclusive, but balancing our approach is critical.
- If you can assist law enforcement with apprehending the subjects, quickly call 9-1-1.
- Oppose all acts of violence, be they against Muslims or non-Muslims, with a few exceptions (e.g., self defense, defending family).
- Remind non-Muslims who may have concerns with Islamic clothes to focus more attention on those who harmfully deceive the public, by posing as someone they're not. And not give any weight to any type of calls or suggestions for banning Islamic attire.
- Request that your local Masjid/Imam work with the Majlis Ash-Shura to sincerely assist in tackling larger problems, leaving aside petty differences.
- Be appropriately involved in your community, with regards to interacting with the young and the seniors. Continue to be an exemplary example with your character (*akhlaaq*) and Islamic etiquette (*adab*), which can have a direct impact on people's lives and especially their future decisions (we pray). This can be achieved by starting or continuing to volunteer in your area in a way that's pleasing to Allah (swt).
- Knowing that the Qur'an is a healing (*shifaa*) for all sicknesses; inward and outward; physical and non-physical, read the Qur'an with the hope that He'll remove this problem, if He so chooses.
- As many of us are honestly struggling to find solutions, if you have a legal and ethical proposal/suggestion that may help to fight against these abhorrent actions, please share it with us via email.

"Oh Mighty, Oh Invincible, keep away the evil of the unjust."
Aameen, Aameen, Aameen

Sincerely,

Majlis Ash-Shura of the Delaware Valley
Rabi Al-Awwal 1445 / September 27, 2023