

**JUNE 2025** 

Canadian Muslim Lawyers' Association (CMLA) Association canadienne des avocats musulmans (ACAM)

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

#### A Message From the National Board

Asalaamu alaykum CMLA-ACAM members,

As we continue our work this spring, the CMLA-ACAM continues its mission of uplifting Muslim legal professionals across Canada. From providing mentorship opportunities to hosting national and chapter-level events, we continue to grow as a community.

We remain committed to supporting law students, lawyers, and paralegals in their professional journeys and the challenges they face.

Our advocacy efforts are at the center of this mission, as we actively address the issues that affect our members and the broader Muslim legal community. As demonstrated from some of our recent high-profile engagements, we have maintained an earned reputation for advancing equity-seeking interests.

Now more than ever, the support of our members is crucial in helping us advance our efforts. As always, we owe our continued success to your dedication and engagement. We hope you will continue to support us through your ongoing membership and your participation in CMLA events and activities. Together, we can amplify our advocacy and collectively contribute to our profession and community.

If you are interested in getting more involved with the CMLA-ACAM on a volunteer basis, please contact us at info@cmla-acam.ca.

Husein Panju Chair

## LEGAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE (LAC) HIGHLIGHTS



#### **IN FEBRUARY OF 2025**

The CMLA wrote to the Dean at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law regarding troubling content in a mandatory Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) course at the university. The Course relied on dangerous tropes and misleading interpretations of Islamic texts, both of which misrepresent Islam in a manner that reinforces negative stereotypes and promotes prejudice against Muslims. The Course incorporates harmful stereotypes about Muslims, such as conflating Islam with extremism or casting Muslim communities as inherently threatening.

In response, the CMLA has called for immediate action, including a public apology from the Dean, a retraction of the course, and a commitment to consult with Muslim student groups on EDI material in the future. The CMLA has met with students and faculty, and the Course has been temporarily paused for review. However, we remain concerned that the university has not yet addressed the Islamophobic nature of the content.

We continue to advocate for an investigation and the introduction of a seminar to educate students on Islamophobia to begin addressing the harm caused.

## LEGAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE (LAC) HIGHLIGHTS

#### **IN MARCH OF 2025**

The Advocates' Society (TAS) rescinded its invitation to Tareq Hadhad as the keynote speaker for its upcoming End-of-Term Dinner, citing anonymous complaints about his social media posts. The CMLA engaged directly with TAS throughout the decision-making process and, following the announcement, issued an open letter demanding accountability and transparency.

In response, numerous organizations, academics, and legal professionals issued their own statements echoing the call for greater transparency. This collective outcry has led to the resignation of several board members and the voluntary termination of memberships by others. Last week, TAS announced the cancellation of this year's End-of-Term dinner and committed to taking "concrete actions" to become a more inclusive organization.

The CMLA is continuing to call for a full and transparent investigation into how this underlying decision was made. We remain committed to holding TAS accountable and are urging them to initiate an independent, external review of the decision-making process. We will continue to make ourselves available as a resource, as true inclusion requires more than apologies and reactive damage control.

This incident highlights the persistent double standards faced by members of Muslim, Arab, and other marginalized communities within the legal profession. It reflects broader patterns many of us have experienced over the past year and a half—across law firms, law schools, and professional organizations. We are grateful to our members and allies for their continued support and solidarity in this important advocacy work.

Canadian legal group cancels upcoming event after uproar over disinviting Syrian Canadian entrepreneur

The Advocates' Society says it 'fell short' when tested on applying its 'core values'



Shanifa Nasser · CBC News · Posted: Apr 10, 2025 5:07 PM EDT | Last Updated: April 10



## LEGAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE (LAC) HIGHLIGHTS

#### **APRIL 2025**

On April 17, 2025, the CMLA participated in the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) consultation intended to support the development of a strategy to affirm Muslim identities and address Islamophobia within the TDSB.

During the consultation, we raised our concerns over how the TDSB implements its reporting policies related to incidents of Islamophobia, and highlighted the rising intersection between Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism. We expressed concerns and asked the TDSB to consider how the adopted IHRA definition of antisemitism—which includes classification of political and humanitarian critique of the State of Israel as antisemitism— will be implemented against students and educators who are also Palestinian--and to consider the chilling effect this will have over their freedom of speech, their safety, and sense of belonging at TDSB schools and facilities.

Thank you to Hafsah Memon who prepared for and attended on behalf of the CMLA to make these submissions.

Should you have any ideas or issues you think may be of interest to the LAC to consider engaging in--whether they may be court interventions, consultations with boards or agencies, or other advocacy efforts that impact the Muslim and legal community,

Please don't hesitate to reach out to:

info@cmla-acam.ca

# CALL FOR LEGAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE (LAC) Junior Lawyer



#### REQUIREMENTS

- Lawyer with 1-3 years in practice
- Strong research skills
- Self-motivated and able to lead projects
- Interested in social justice advocacy



#### TIME COMMITMENT

- 1 meeting per month
- Additional 2–10 hours/month depending on project involvement



#### HOW TO APPLY

Please send your:

- Resume
- Statement of Interest

To: info@cmla-acam.ca

#### NATIONAL UPDATE



## CMLA-ACAM Annual General Meeting June 4, 2025

CMLA-ACAM held its 2025 Annual Meeting of Members on June 4, 2025 where it presented on its National & Chapter Updates and financial statements to the members, as well as waived the appointment of a public accountant for the coming year (which means that it requires a simpler financial statement.)

The meeting minutes have been circulated with the newsletter.

#### NATIONAL UPDATE

#### **CMLA-ACAM Mentorship Program**



About 120 junior lawyers, articling students, and law students across Canada have been matched with experienced lawyers to provide guidance and help them explore their professional interests.

Applications for the next round of matches will open in the early academic year.

#### **NCA Experiences & BigLaw**

On January 16, 2025, the CMLA hosted our first NCA-focused online event. The session featured personal insights from internationally qualified lawyers who have written the NCA and tips on getting into BigLaw as an internationally trained lawyer.

## Read the full Transcript: <a href="https://www.cmla-acam.ca/post/nca-experiences-biglaw-transcript">https://www.cmla-acam.ca/post/nca-experiences-biglaw-transcript</a>



Stay tuned for upcoming workshops catered around student recruitment, and focused sessions on how to achieve success in the workplace, at all levels of practice!

#### ALBERTA CHAPTER UPDATE





#### The Alberta chapter has been focused on growth and recruitment.

We held our annual iftar in Calgary and in Edmonton simultaneously in March with an incredible turnout of over 150 legal professionals.

If you are interested in learning more about our chapter and executive, please email <a href="mailto:CMLAAlberta@cmla-acam.ca">CMLAAlberta@cmla-acam.ca</a>





#### BRITISH COLUMBIA CHAPTER UPDATE

On March 8, 2025 CMLA BC hosted the International Women's Day BC Sisters' Potluck Iftar. We had a great turn out during this event. A heartfelt thank you to all the sisters who joined us!

The CMLA BC has been active in its recruitment process for new executive members and will be onboarding soon.

Watch for our upcoming **Eid al Adha event this July.** We are excited to have you!









#### ONTARIO CHAPTER UPDATE

CMLA Ontario remains committed to providing legal and social support for Muslim legal professionals and students across the province.

CMLA Ontario has continued its important work with the Muslim Legal Support Centre (MLSC), expanding access to culturally relevant legal resources for our community. Through this work, CMLA Ontario has helped connect individuals with legal counsel to navigate a range of legal issues, including protest rights and workplace discrimination.

#### Photos from the MLSC and CMLA's Strength in Solidarity Iftars Across Ontario









London, March 5

Mississauga, March 10

Scarborough, March 13

Toronto. March 19













On February 18, 2025, CMLA
Ontario also hosted a unique and empowering combined
International Women's Day and
Black History Month event,
featuring an all-Black Muslim women lawyer panel.

The discussion centered on the importance of wellness in the legal profession and panelists shared personal journeys and community-rooted strategies to preserve well-being while advancing in law, offering inspiration and solidarity to attendees.

#### ONTARIO CHAPTER UPDATE

#### Mentorship

In addition to participating in CMLA National's mentorship matching program for law students, articling students, and junior lawyers, CMLA Ontario is continuing to roll out new sessions as part of its "Bay Street Academy" - a series of workshops and networking opportunities crafted so attendees can excel in the corporate legal world.



CMLA Ontario continues its engagement with legal workplaces to ensure firms are abiding by their commitments to DEI and the Rules of Professional Conduct or supporting individuals when firms fail to do so.





#### Ottawa Subchapter Spotlight

The CMLA Ontario - Ottawa Subcommittee has been active and thriving! Most recently, the subchapter hosted a networking event on February in collaboration with the uOttawa Muslim Law Students Association. The session brought together students and legal professionals, creating space for connection and mutual support. We're proud to see our Ottawa chapter continue to build community and elevate Muslim legal voices in the capital.

#### ONTARIO CHAPTER UPDATE





On May 4th, 2025, the Muslim Law Students' Association (MLSA) & CMLA-ACAM held the 3rd annual Spring Gala in collaboration with the Osgoode Hall MLSA. It was an incredible evening that honoured Muslim legal excellence, resilience, and community across Canada. 320 registered law students, lawyers and paralegals were able to network and connect with fellow Muslim legal professionals in an elegant setting.



We were inspired by the remarks of our keynote speaker, Muneeza Sheikh, who brought a powerful voice and fresh perspective on advocacy, representation, and leadership in today's legal landscape. We thank Muneeza for her powerful words!

Proceeds from the Gala will go towards the annual CMLA/MLSA Law Student Bursary. Please consider donating via etransfer to info@cmla-acam.ca.









#### QUEBEC CHAPTER UPDATE

En décembre, CMLA Québec a fièrement célébré son 10e Anniversaire lors d'un événement mémorable qui a réuni les membres ainsi ces fondateurs. La soirée a été un véritable succès, marquée par des échanges inspirants, des liens significatifs et un retour sur une décennie de croissance et de réalisations. Ce fut un honneur d'accueillir les fondateurs et de souligner leur vision et leurs contributions!

In December, CMLA Québec proudly celebrated its **10th Anniversary** with a memorable event that brought together members and the chapter's original founders. The evening was a great success, filled with inspiring conversations, meaningful connections, and a look back at a decade of growth and achievement. It was an honour to welcome the founders and recognize their vision and contributions that laid the foundation for CMLA Québec's vibrant legal community today.

#### CÉLÉBRATION DES 10 ANS DE L'ACAM QUÉBEC

**DÉCEMBRE 19, 2024** 



Thank You For Celebrating With Us!

#### CMLA-ACAM MEMBER K.C. RECIPIENTS

#### **MUHAMMAD WAJAHAT FAIZAN**

CMLA ONTARIO MEMBER

Following his receipt of the Queen Elizabeth II
Platinum Jubilee Award in 2022, Faizan was recently
awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal in
recognition of his continued contributions to law and
public service.





#### NAFISAH CHOWDHURY

**CMLA ONTARIO MEMBER** 

Nafisah Chowdhury has been awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal in recognition of her dedication, leadership, and significant contributions to both Canada and the legal profession.

#### **MUNEEZA SHEIKH**

CMLA ONTARIO MEMBER

Muneeza Sheikh has been awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal and is celebrating the one year anniversary of launching her firm.





#### **NASEEM MITHOOWANI**

**CMLA ONTARIO MEMBER** 

Naseem Mithoowani has been awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her service to the community.

#### CMLA-ACAM MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

#### **SADIA MASUD**

CMLA ALBERTA - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Masud is committed to trauma-informed, justice-centred advocacy for refugees, asylum seekers, and survivors of gender-based violence.

Masud's experience includes research with the Legal Centre for Palestine, restorative justice work with Équijustice, and legal advocacy with NCCM, where she helped develop an anti-Islamophobia strategy in Alberta and developing a human rights complaint resource.





#### **AARIJ WASTI**

**CMLA ONTARIO - MEMBER** 

Wasti is a Toronto based Partner at Gowling WLG and a member of its Entertainment & Sports Law Group. Wasti has recently been appointed as a member of the International Committee of the Sports Lawyers Association (SLA) based out of Virginia and elected to the School Council at Oakville Trafalgar High School.

#### **HASAN ALAM**

CMLA BRITISH COLUMBIA - MEMBER

Alam was appointed by the Attorney General of B.C. to serve the as the Chair of British Columbia's First Anti-Racism Committee.



New provincial committee tackles systemic racism

Alam also received the Canadian Bar Association of B.C.'s 2025 Equality and Diversity Award.

#### CMLA-ACAM MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS



#### **SALIHA HAQ**

CMLA ALBERTA - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Haq advocates for inclusion and equity in the legal profession, securing scholarships and religious accommodations for Muslim students and contributing to legal reform for stateless refugees in Myanmar.

As a CMLA Executive Committee Member and an active voice on her firm's diversity committee, Haq is helping shape a more representative and accessible future for Canadian law.

#### **NADER HASAN**

**CMLA ONTARIO - MEMBER** 

Nader Hasan was recognized by the Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory, 2025: Leading Lawyer to Watch in Corporate Commercial Law.

Hasan has also been recognized as Thomson Reuters Stand-out Lawyers, 2025.



We take pride in celebrating the incredible accomplishments of our members!

Please keep us up to date on your achievements Email us at info@cmla-acam.ca



## CMLA-ACAM About Us

#### CMLA-ACAM NATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS



**Zoya Alam** 



**Hanaa Al Sharief** 



Zaynab Al-waadh



Lina Chaker



Sania Chaudhry



Marta Miazek



**Basmah Osman** 



Husein Panju



Saquiba Rahman



**Fady Toban** 

#### **OUR MISSION**

- 1.PROFESSIONAL ADVOCACY
- 2.EDUCATION
- 3. NETWORKING
- **4.PEER SUPPORT**

Founded in 1998, CMLA-ACAM is a not-for-profit association dedicated to promoting the objectives of self-identifying Muslim members of the legal profession. Our organization also welcomes membership from all individuals who want to support our initiatives, from legal advocacy to networking.

CMLA-ACAM members represent all areas of the legal professional community across Canada, including lawyers at small and large firms, corporate counsel, government lawyers, academics, and non-practicing lawyers who are still interested in the law. Our past members include several current judges and other prominent members of the community.