



MUSLIM BAR
ASSOCIATION
OF NEW YORK

Officers: P.O. Box 2244, New York, New York 10185 – www.mubany.org

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M. Umair Khan

April 23, 2020

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Sayed Abbas

Dear Colleagues:

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On behalf of the Muslim Bar Association of New York (MuBANY), I write to inform you that beginning at sunset tonight, many Muslims will mark the beginning of the month of Ramadan. For those observing, this is a special time that affects the lives of many of your Muslim colleagues. During this month, Muslim lawyers and law students will be observing the fast, reflecting in prayer, supporting charitable efforts amongst other activities, all-while engaging in social distancing. Thus, it is an opportune time to share MuBANY's: *A Legal Employer's Guide to Islam in the Workplace*.

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This guide provides an introduction to the religious practices and expressions of many Muslims and is meant to serve as a reference tool for law firms, law departments, and other legal employers when responding to the needs of their Muslim employees. We believe the attached guide will be helpful in informing legal employers about this special time and what it means for their Muslim colleagues.

During Ramadan – which this year is expected to run through May 23rd – Muslims who observe will fast from dawn to dusk, this includes abstaining from eating and drinking. Typically, Muslim legal professionals will strive to perform their prayers at five prescribed times during the day and will break their fast and have something to eat at sunset. Such observances rarely take more than a few minutes, but they may occur during working hours. That said, Muslims across America have been fulfilling their Ramadan obligations for years and rarely has it disrupted their professional responsibilities.

We understand that many law firms, corporate legal departments, government entities, judicial chambers, and other organizations may not be aware of the religious observances followed by many Muslim lawyers during Ramadan. However, we are confident that if informed, legal employers would be more than willing to provide reasonable accommodations that may be necessary to assist their Muslim colleagues, even when working from home. While each person's needs are unique, such accommodations are often as simple as briefly excusing a colleague from a meeting so that she or he may break their fast or offer prayers. Despite unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, employers should remain mindful of their obligations to accommodate employees even while their workforce is in large part telecommuting. In addition, the end of Ramadan is marked by the joyous holiday of Eid-al-Fitr, and many Muslim lawyers may seek time off.

Through our guide, we would like to help educate legal employers, particularly those in management positions, so that they may be better informed about the needs of those lawyers, law students and legal professionals observing Ramadan. We will likewise encourage our members to engage with their employers about Ramadan so that there is an open and informed channel of communication.

Finally, last year we suggested that your organization consider establishing an "Interfaith Attorney Affinity Group" or, to the extent there is a sizeable Muslim population, a "Muslim Attorney Affinity Group" as a means of providing a safe place for attorneys that identify with the faith to address issues and struggles that may affect them in the workplace. We are encouraged to learn that more firms are pursuing this invaluable resource in supporting their employees.

As we all adjust to new normal amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, please do not hesitate to contact me at president@mubany.org if you have any questions. We hope that we will have your organization's support and wish you a "Ramadan Mubarak!" (Blessed Ramadan!).

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Umair Khan', written over a light blue rectangular background.

M. Umair Khan, Esq.

President

Muslim Bar Association of New York

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MuBANY is a member-based professional bar association serving the educational, professional, and social needs of Muslim legal professionals and law students living and working in the New York metropolitan area. Visit www.mubany.org for more information.