



## **Statement on the Assassination of Imam Muhsin Hendricks**

**Los Angeles, February 17, 2025** | It is with immense sadness that we at MPV mourn the assassination of Imam Muhsin Hendricks. He was widely known as the world's first openly gay Imam, who preached love, equality, and acceptance. His death is a devastating blow not only to progressive and queer Muslims worldwide, but for all of humanity.

As Imam Muhsin famously said, “The heart is not big enough to contain both fear and faith. You choose.” He chose faith, and was willing to be true to his interpretation of Islamic teachings, despite years of experiencing threats of violence from conservative extremists. Through his teachings and queer-affirming Al-Ghurbaah Mosque in South Africa, he inspired Muslims locally and globally to live authentic lives without abandoning their faith.

In addition to our gratitude for his work overall, we at MPV particularly want to acknowledge his contributions to our advocacy efforts in Urdu, including delivering [this lecture](#) to Urdu-speaking audiences.

While there is much we don't yet know about the circumstances of his death, we know too well the many death threats Imam Muhsin had received over the years. We are disgusted by those condoning his murder and it is this theology of hate and of homophobia that has resulted in the intense threats on his life. We join Muslims and allies around the world in calling for the South African government to leave no stone unturned in investigating the motivation for his murder, and as a possible hate crime.

The attack on Imam Muhsin comes at a chilling time of increased violence against LGBTQ people all around the world, including in the US, and we call on Muslims to show compassion and support for this increasingly vulnerable population.

We join Muslims and allies worldwide in offering prayers for justice and healing for all of those impacted by this horrific killing. We call on all Muslims, regardless of our political and religious differences, to build a culture of tolerance and curiosity for various interpretations of Islam. At MPV, we will continue to advocate for freedom of religion for



all, and freedom from persecution for all, demonstrating the beauty of Islam just as Imam Muhsin did.

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## **A Statement from the Colleagues of Imam Muhsin at the Center for Contemporary Islam at University of Cape Town.**

Indeed to Allah we belong, and indeed, to Allah we return. We are reeling from the targeted assassination of Imam Muhsin Hendricks, the first openly queer Imam in South Africa. Imam Muhsin was a pioneer in the rights of queer Muslims having previously led The Inner Circle and more recently the Al-Ghurbaah Foundation. He was recognised as a global leader who created a space to reconcile Islam, faith and sexual diversity, and provided a refuge for young queer Muslims that had been rejected in their homes. Muhsin courageously tracked a path of religious inclusivity and a vision of Islam as a home for all.

His theology was a liberation theology: God is a God of radical love and justice for all human beings. The safe space created by his work brought relief beyond the community of queer Muslims, extending to refugees, people who were homeless, those marginalised without community and belonging, for whom he provided a space of inclusion.

Despite this, we are also reeling from the ways in which some Muslims are condoning his assassination on social media. The compounded horror of such violence and brutality has brought into sharp focus the intense homophobia permeating the Muslim community. This is a time for each of us as individuals, as well as in our collectives, whether in mosques, in community organisations, in our Palestinian solidarity formations, to deeply reflect on the ways in which our work for justice must be all-inclusive, and the right to dignity is unconditional.

In the last two years we have witnessed a genocide enabled by the language of dehumanisation of Palestinian people. It is the same underlying logic of dehumanisation that enables a targeted assassination of a queer human being who stood up for justice. We must recognise that when we are silent in the face of homophobia, patriarchy and



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Zionism, we enable not only violent systems, but systems that perpetuate violence and death. We are both ethically and spiritually accountable.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was sent as “Rahmatan li-l-Aalamin,” a mercy to all worlds, everywhere in all times. Every human being deserves justice and dignity.

Imam Muhsin has completed his work on this earth; it is for us to begin ours. Let us have the difficult conversations, let us grow seeds of love, justice and compassion. Let us truly engage what it might be to follow the sunnah of the Mercy to the worlds.

We salute your courage, Shaheed (Martyr) Imam Muhsin. May your soul be embraced in love and compassion by Allah. Dear contented soul, return to your Lord; may your Lord be pleased with you, may you be pleased with your Lord. May the work of justice, love and inclusivity that you worked so hard towards be realised. May we grow our communities in the work of justice, love and all-inclusive dignity.