



Committee against Islamophobia in France
Press release
10/01/2012

Legislative bill voted on by the Senate

I'm writing to you as a follow up to the numerous protest mails that have been sent to you from citizens of all origins, regarding the legislative bill that you support. This bill is once again, a way to diminish the religious freedom of Muslim women, this time in the private sphere.

Clearly, it seems that the Socialist Party does not seriously consider the change our society is currently experiencing and does not realize the impact of such a bill. It is nothing but yet another tool for exclusion, one step towards the complete exclusion of veiled women, which you pretend to be willing to emancipate.

It is not enough that the Socialist Party expresses its wish not to stigmatize the Muslim community in order to be exonerated from their responsibility in the current situation. Islamophobic attacks are more and more common in the country, from the simplest discrimination to the most violent assaults. Those racist attacks are unfortunately fuelled and justified by such legislative bills. Moreover, it is shocking that the Socialist party, which has always been progressive, is now cooperating with the more extreme parties. The Socialist party is playing two sides in order to gain both the populist's and the Muslim community's vote: this ambiguous position seems to be the result of an absence of ideas and a loss of the essential values that hold together all citizens.

Furthermore, the Socialist party seems to unwrap ideas like secularism to transform them into tools of discrimination. You talk about "living together" when at the same time, you are also altering one of the most essential concepts: unconditional respect of the Other, of his/her appearance, religion and how one chooses to express it. This shift of some of the most central values of your movement results in a very dramatic paradox in the positioning of your party.

A discourse of inclusion to support exclusion measures.

We are very surprised to see that among the main actors of this exclusion policy, someone like Manuel Valls is along the side of the socialist presidential candidate Francois Hollande. It seems important to remind you about the message Francois Hollande wishes to broadcast to

millions of Muslims citizens, and more broadly, to anybody for whom respect and fraternity still have a meaning.

Effectively, we have some reserves and worries about the choice of a man like Manuel Valls to manage a presidential campaign during this very important moment for our country, when one should try to gather people together instead of creating a division. Mr. Valls is known for his verbal abuse, to which the far right wing would certainly not be opposed. For example, let us remind you of this incident at a market where Mr. Valls thought there was not enough “whites” for his taste. Moreover, he was one of the biggest supporters of the legal ruling on the BabyLoup case, the first step of marginalization that led to the legislative bill that we are now fighting against. Oddly enough, the brutality of some of his extreme security measure proposals and his hegemonic will to control everything in the Hollande campaign seems inversely proportional to his results during the socialist primaries.

Consequently, we suggest that you ask yourself some questions if you would like to participate constructively to the future of this country. The potential voters, those millions of French, mainly with foreign origins, Muslims, that you think will without a doubt vote for you, may want to reconsider their vote.

We ask the Socialist Party to release a clear position on these questions and to choose between intolerance, rejection and division or brotherhood and mutual respect. Therefore, we want to address a simple message: unless we get a very clear answer, at every single election,

IF YOU VOTE THIS LAW, WE WILL VOTE AGAINST YOU.

P.S. This choice of focusing on a particular law was made because we believe this bill is a crystallization of the Islamophobic climate that is currently ravaging our country

Marwan Muhammad

