

Advice to Irish Muslims in regards to the upcoming Marriage referendum

For the past many days the Islamic Centre has received many queries from Muslims living in Ireland about the upcoming Same-Sex Marriage referendum. Please find below the response by the Head Imam of Al-Mustafa Islamic Centre, Shaykh Umar Al-Qadri.

Voting in the Referendum

Being entitled to vote and to participate in the political process is a privilege that no one should forsake. To participate actively in political process of the country we live in is a duty of every Muslim that resides in Ireland. All Muslims that are eligible to vote are urged to register to vote if they are not yet registered.

Referendum

The referendum is about an amendment in the Irish constitution that will allow a new legal meaning to marriage, as between two people of the same sex. If the amendment is passed then same sex married couples will be recognised as a Family. This will mean that same-sex couples will be able to adopt and raise children. The referendum is not about changing Islamic marriage, but about changing marriage in the Irish constitution. Imams will not be obliged legally to conduct an Islamic marriage (Nikaah) between same sex couples.



Islam on Homosexuality

The Islamic tradition has always acknowledged that some people may have homosexual impulses and these impulses are not considered as sins in Islam. However to act on these sexual impulses is considered a severe sin and is strictly prohibited (Haraam) in Islam. The Quran mentions the story of the nation LUT that was punished for acting on homosexuality (Al-Quran 7:80-81 / 26:165). Various Hadith also condemn the act of homosexuality. As Muslims we believe homosexuality is dangerous for the health and for society as it threatens the foundation of the society which is the Family. As Muslims we also believe all humans are born on Fitrah (natural disposition) and that nobody is born as a homosexual.

There is difference of opinion however among Muslim jurists whether homosexuality is a punishable crime or not. These are the beliefs of Muslims, but Muslims are not allowed by Islam to impose their beliefs on non Muslims.

Attitude towards Homosexuals

As Muslims we must believe in equality and inclusiveness. People should not be discriminated for any reason. It is important to humanize people and not to de humanize.

The Islamic tradition teaches to hate the sin but not the sinner. The attitude of some Muslims towards homosexuals is incompatible with the spirit of mercy and kindness in Islam.

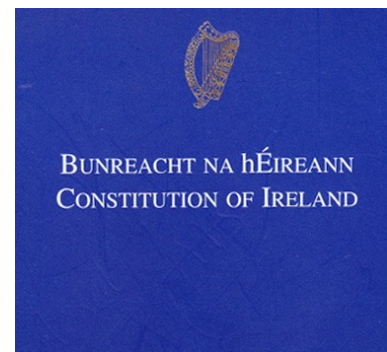
Attitude of Same-Sex advocates

Same-sex advocates should also accept that others cannot be forced to approve of what they sincerely believe is wrong. They should also not dehumanise anyone who believes homosexuality to be a sin. The essence of religious freedom is that individuals and communities must have freedom to determine their core doctrinal beliefs and they must be tolerated in the public sphere.

Consequences of Amendment

The amendment is about the Article on the Family (Article 41). Marriage is contained within this article, as “the institution upon which the family is founded”.

Supporters of the same-sex marriage amendment say the referendum is about “equality” for gay people and acceptance in mainstream society. It is however not as simple as that. The amendment will have serious consequences, as it will redefine marriage and parenthood. It will open the door to new definitions of marriage, which could extend further. These are consequences on children and future generations.



How to Vote as an Irish Muslim ?



When voting do not only keep in mind the Islamic stance on homosexuality but also keep in mind the consequences of the amendment in the definition of marriage for the society. The Irish constitution guarantees all Irish citizens the freedom of conscience and Muslims must exercise this right when voting on 22nd May 2015.