

Khutbah Talking Points: Structural Racism & Black Struggles

While Islam categorically prohibits and denounces all forms of racism, it's imperative for Muslims to be educated on the roots of structural racism and police brutality in the USA and to be explicit about their support for the Black community in these difficult times. Besides covering the Islamic position on racism, we urge Imams and community leaders to also cover the following points in Friday Khutbahs.

What is structural racism? How does it affect black and brown communities? How does police brutality disproportionately target black people over white people?

- There are various forms of racism that exist. Racism is usually mistaken to be overt prejudice and violence towards another group of people, however, the most dangerous form of racism is **structural racism and structural violence**.
- Structural racism takes place at an institutional level that systematically disadvantages and marginalizes black people politically, economically, educationally, and socially thus making it extremely difficult and nearly impossible for them to attain any self-autonomy.
- Structural racism in the US has existed since slavery and takes on new forms in today's society.
- Structural racism imposes pre-existing systems of power on to black communities that are usually tied to capitalism and white supremacy.
- Structural racism also dominates in the media, where negative stereotypes are reinforced through images of black and brown people as violent thugs, terrorists, criminals, and assumed guilty before proven innocent.
- Institutional barriers in addition to prejudice enforced by negative stereotyping creates a very violent form of racism that immediately sees black and brown people as threats to society and strips them of their humanity, thus leading to the justification of violence against them through wars and police brutality.

- Structural racism is found nearly everywhere: it is tied to housing discrimination, gentrification, re-districting zip codes for electoral gains, the school-to-prison pipeline, jail offenses for non-violent offenses, lack of healthcare, Jim Crow laws, etc.
- Structural racism is tied to violent racism. Structures and institutions create the foundations for dehumanization as it creates an environment where black and brown people are seen as lesser, more inferior, uneducated, and criminal due to their lack of political, economic, and social capital.
- Structural racism and marginalization contributes to greater crime in lower socio-economic communities due to the lack of adequate resources and education to tackle social issues, and reinforces a cycle of violence and marginalization.
- Structural systemic racism and institutions rooted in white supremacy prevent transracial solidarity.
- Nearly 1/4th of police brutality incidents are against black people, even though they make up about 13% of the population. ¹
- Black people are 3x more likely to be killed by the police than white people and are less likely to be armed with a weapon than white people. ²
- 99% of killings by police from 2013-2019 have not resulted in officers being charged in a crime, therefore, leading to nearly zero accountability for police misconduct. ³
- The legal structure in the US makes it nearly impossible to hold police accountable through criminal prosecution.

How can Muslim immigrants and Black Muslims work together and tackle the Black struggle?

¹ <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

² <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

³ <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

- Imams, religious and community leaders must educate their communities about structural racism, oppression, and the importance of fighting against injustice
- Amplifying and empowering the voices of local black community and religious leaders
- Working together with black community and religious leaders to empower the black community financially, politically, and socially (i.e through Zakat & Sadaqa)
- Volunteering and working with inner city communities and food pantries
- Financing community-based projects in inner cities
- Organizing and protesting against police brutality & sending letters to political officials demanding proper training of law enforcement to de-escalate conflict without weapons or physical violence
- Investing in and amplifying Muslim Black institutions
- For Muslim business owners in inner cities, hire local Black youth, build better relationship with local grassroots organizations and leaders, and educate your workers about structural racism and anti-Blackness biases.