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**Muslims For Progressive Values Responds Vehemently To News Of Extradition Of Saudi Blogger Hamza Kashgari**

Los Angeles, CA – February 11, 2012 – Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) Calls Muslim organizations and international leaders to take a stand for human rights in the face of extradition and apostasy charges of Saudi blogger Hamza Kashgari.

Muslims for Progressive Values support freedom of expression and freedom of dissent, whether political, artistic, social or religious, even when that expression may be offensive and that dissent may be considered blasphemous. No one should be legally prosecuted, imprisoned or detained for declaring or promoting unpopular opinions.

As such we denounce the order of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia for the arrest in Malaysia of twenty-three year old Saudi writer, Hamza Kashgari for publishing comments online via Twitter in which he portrayed an imaginary conversation with the Prophet Muhammad. We also appeal to the Malaysian government to not acquiesce to the demands of Saudi Arabia for his extradition.

We demand the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia quash the order for Hamza Kashgari's arrest and any criminal charges that may be pending against him. Any state enforced penalty, either for apostasy or for criticism of our Prophet Muhammad, runs contrary to the true spirit of Islam, who was compassionate even to those who scorned him.

In defense of freedom to think, we invite Muslim, human rights and community organizations, and individuals of conscience to join us in urging international leaders to grant Hamza Kashgari asylum, in the absence of which may lead to death penalty for apostasy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

To learn more about MPV please visit [www.mpvusa.org](http://www.mpvusa.org).

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To arrange for an interview of Ani Zonneveld please contact her at 323-842-2869 (PST) or [ani@mpvusa.org](mailto:ani@mpvusa.org)

Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) is a 501 (c) (3) founded in 2007. MPV asserts that Islam is inherently progressive, inclusive and egalitarian which is an understanding that informs the ten principles by which the organization is guided. In the short years since its inception, MPV has expanded to include chapter and affiliates in Los Angeles, New York, Washington DC, Atlanta and Philadelphia as well as in Ottawa and Toronto, Canada. More information can be found at [www.mpvusa.org](http://www.mpvusa.org).