

Press Release

## When Representation Replaces Revelation

The inauguration of Zohran Mamdani on January 1, 2026, like many before it, is being celebrated as a milestone for “Muslim representation” within Western democracy. However, beyond the symbolism and identity politics lies a far more serious question, one that strikes at the very foundation of Islam’s political doctrine: Is it permissible for a Muslim to hold a legislative position?

Such moments of political visibility inevitably raise important questions for Muslims about principles rather than mere representation. Islam does not evaluate actions based on popularity, symbolism, or perceived benefit, but according to divine guidance. As Muslims, our actions are measured by their conformity to revelation and not by social acceptance or political expediency. Central to this evaluation is the question of who possesses the right to legislate.

Democracy is not a neutral or value-free mechanism of governance. It is rooted in secularism and the principle that sovereignty belongs to human beings, expressed through legislation where laws are made, amended, or repealed based on majority opinion. Islam, by contrast, asserts unequivocally that sovereignty and legislation belong to Allah (swt) alone. Allah (swt) says: ﴿إِن الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ﴾ **“Legislation belongs to none but Allah”** [TMQ Yusuf: 40].

This declaration leaves no ambiguity regarding the source of law and authority in Islam. Only Allah (swt), who is free from bias, self-interest, and error, can be the true and just Legislator. Human beings, by contrast, are inherently limited, prone to desire, pressure, inconsistency, and injustice, rendering their claim to lawmaking authority fundamentally flawed.

Despite this principle, Muslim politicians have repeatedly sworn oaths to uphold secular man-made constitutions that contradict Allah’s (swt) legislation. Zohran Mamdani’s oath of office on the Qur’an does not render this act symbolic or ceremonial. Rather, it is a declaration of political allegiance. It is an oath to confine Islam to personal belief and worship, while affirming governance, law, and public life remain under man-made legislative authority. Allah (swt) issues a clear and grave warning regarding such matters: ﴿وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾ **“And those who do not rule by what Allah has revealed are truly the disbelievers”** [TMQ Al-Maidah: 44] ﴿فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ **“...are truly the wrongdoers”** [TMQ Al-Maidah: 45] ﴿فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾ **“...are truly the rebellious”** [TMQ Al-Maidah: 47].

These verses underscore that ruling by other than what Allah has revealed is neither a peripheral nor secondary issue, nor one excused by good intentions, political necessity, or minority status. Rather, it is a fundamental matter of belief in Allah (swt) and submission to Him (saw).

Proponents of political participation often argue that engagement within secular democratic systems allows Muslims to “change the system from within.” However, decades of Muslim political participation in the West have proven otherwise. Despite increased representation, the massacres of our brothers and sisters in Gaza, Sudan, Syria, East Turkestan, Kashmir, and elsewhere continues unabated. This reality exposes the true function of democratic inclusion - not empowerment, but containment. By integrating Muslims into its machinery, the system neutralizes opposition while preserving its ideological foundations.

Islam does not advocate for symbolic representation and compromise in order to assimilate into secular governance. Rather, it calls for leadership grounded in revelation. The Messenger of Allah (saw) did not seek a seat in Qurayshi councils, nor did he attempt to reform pre-Islamic law (Jahiliyyah) from within. Instead, he (saw) worked to establish authority upon Islam itself.

The Ummah does not suffer from a lack of symbolic Muslim figures in office. Rather, it suffers from the absence of an Islamic authority. Until Muslims reject the false promise of secular political participation and commit themselves to restoring governance by Islam, representation will remain a distraction and political allegiance will remain fundamentally misplaced.

### Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir in America