

Anila Ali is a retired public school teacher, a women's rights advocate, philanthropist, foreign affairs analyst, and Muslim faith leader. Her work with interfaith communities stemmed from her work as a teacher in a post 9/11 classroom. Anila saw the need to ensure that Americans know who their Muslim neighbors are. And that Americans see them not as "the other" but as one of them.

As she led her advocacy to the government level working on policy-making surrounding extremism, she realized that the participation of women in the peace process was crucial to ensure success.

Through her work, Ali aims to show that religion does not equal gender inequality. On the contrary, it's a platform women can use to seek empowerment. In the same way, she believes religion can be used as a positive force to bring people together. A lot of change can take place within this social religious construct. Consistent intercultural and interreligious dialogue is important to break down barriers and build peace in the world. It has the potential to build a tolerant and respectful world. "Cultural peace begins with every one of us."

For Ali, interfaith dialogue meant creating lasting relationships with communities of different faiths, law enforcement, and the public. She spent more than a decade fostering an understanding of religious freedom starting in Orange County and expanding around the US. The personal religious freedom she enjoys as a minority in America inspires her to advocate for religious freedom in the Muslim world.

Feminism Empowers Muslim Women: While Anila Ali has experienced misogyny and bigotry firsthand, she categorically rejects victimhood and instead promotes empowerment for Muslim women. Inspired by her family's legacy of service, Ali understands that leaders need to uplift others. Her experience as a teacher has reinforced the importance of addressing challenges – both inside the Muslim community and in broader American society – with honesty and accountability.

Post-September 11 Profiling: To address the border profiling many Muslim-Americans experienced after 9-11, Ali worked with NYU Law School to produce a documentary titled "Americans on Hold: Profiling, Prejudice, and National Security." In addition, she co-authored a children's book promoting tolerance (titled "Mommy, Am I...?") that tells the story of a third-grader named Aisha who experiences derogatory comments at school.

Empowering the Disadvantaged: Ali co-founded CalPak, a non-profit promoting education for at-risk girls in Pakistan. Ali co-founded the American Muslim & Multifaith Women's Empowerment Council (AMMWEC), which holds an annual women's leadership conference featuring keynote women leaders. Ali and her board guide AMMWEC's unique initiatives to uplift Muslim-American women, including a career internship partnership with local and national law enforcement agencies and a helpline for women in need. AMMWEC represented the Muslim community at the White House Summit for Countering extremism 2015 under the Obama admin. Ali was chosen to speak for Muslims in America as she epitomized the perfectly

integrated empowered Muslim American woman and faith leader. Her organization continued to flourish and has been given numerous congressional, law enforcement, and volunteerism awards. When faced with challenges, Ali and her organization's leadership took on hate, extremism, and confronted it head-on.

AMMWEC Leadership: By countering bigotry within and outside her community she has openly stood by other religious communities. Whether it is countering Islamophobia, antisemitism, or prosecution of Christians, AMMWEC leads the way forward to making a lasting impact. AMMWEC has the privilege of being held in high esteem by federal government agencies and all three executive branches of the US government as they represent women peacemakers and changemakers. Recently, AMMWEC was given a letter of recognition by President Biden for getting Muslim communities vaccinated through various campaigns and events. AMMWEC also has been given notable mentions by the White House covid response team such as the US Surgeon General.

AMMWEC's work in the world of religious freedom came from Ali's belief that freedom of belief should be a fundamental human right. Having grown up in a Muslim country, Pakistan in the 1970s, and then moved to the UK, Anila believes religious freedom is a concept that needs to be understood by all Muslims. Under her leadership, AMMWEC joined the International Religious Freedom (IRF) secretariat and partnered to put together the IRF Summit 2021. Ali believes that as a woman a changemaker and a devout Sunni Muslim, her voice is unique in the Muslim world. Her passion for fraternity will pave the way for religious freedom to become a priority in the Muslim world. On November 22, 2021, AMMWEC partnered with IRF Roundtable to hold the first woman-led IRF Roundtable in Pakistan.

Philanthropic Leadership: Ali has chaired the International Leadership Foundation, which promotes internship opportunities for Asian American youth. Ali has served on the city of Irvine public school foundation board and through example role modeled how Muslims can give back to America. As a board member of the Youth and Families Commission in the city of Irvine for 3 years, she represented ethnic communities and multiculturalism to unite the people of Irvine who were facing challenges due to the Middle East Conflict. She was awarded the Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History Award for being the first Muslim woman Democrat to run for office in CA and for being the first Muslim woman delegate for the Democratic Party. In 2018, she also received Cal Southern University's Hecht Philanthropy and Service Award.