

United Copts of Great Britain

Madame Chair and the respected Board. Across the Middle East, powerful media voices often shine a light on the struggles of veiled women in Europe. Yet, a deeper, quieter tragedy remains overshadowed. The daily humiliation, fear, and discrimination endured unveiled women, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, in their own communities. These women face hostility no human being should ever face. Extremist preachers openly incite hatred against them. Online accounts use online harassment as discipline. Public voices question their dignity, their morality, and even their right to walk safely in the streets. All because of a personal choice about appearance. The story of [inaudible] makes this painfully clear. On 22 June, this student was brutally murdered by a colleague. Vicious online campaigns arose not to defend her, but to smear her. The message was unmistakable: to many her death was acceptable, because according to them, she was unveiled and therefore immodest. Across the region, unveiled women are pressured in classrooms, sidelined in workplaces, treated as less respectful, or viewed as automatically consenting to advances made by men. Many Christian women face another silent injustice during oral exams, where sectarian teachers and professors discriminate against them simply because they don't have Muslim names or are not veiled. And school principals are honoring veiled girls, regardless of their academic achievements, a stark indication that the girl's appearance is being elevated above her academic and scientific accomplishments. This toxic view fuels honor killings, emboldens relatives and online mobs, and crushes the mental wellbeing of women, whose only offense is choosing not to veil. This is not a marginal issue, it is a sweeping human rights crisis affecting millions. A woman's decision not to wear the veil should never cost her her dignity, her freedom, or her right to live without fear. Thank you.