

**From 9 to 11 November 2001 the ISIM will hold a workshop on 'Islam, Women's Rights and Islamic Feminism: Making Connections between Different Perspectives'. Some consider 'Islamic' and 'feminist' perspectives as mutually exclusive or deny the need for an Islamic feminism with the argument that Islam as it is has already given women all their rights. An investigation of women's activism in Muslim societies through the prism of 'Islamic feminism' takes a different point of departure.**

Rather than contrasting these terms, it points to the possibility of connecting perspectives grounded in feminism and Islam. Yet, simultaneously, it also brings to the fore that such a linkage does not come about automatically. Being involved in politics, Islamist women need to take a position *vis-à-vis* state policy and oppositional movements. Arguing in terms of Islamic concepts, they engage in debates with those claiming

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positions of religious authority. Debating gender, Islamist women activists relate to women's daily-lived realities.

For this workshop a number of women scholars and activists have been invited who may describe themselves as Islamic feminists, as Islamic scholars adopting a women's perspective, or as women's rights activists in Muslim societies. Three sets of questions have been proposed as topics for debate. First, how does Islamic feminism relate to women's daily lives? What has been the impact of changes in women's position, such as women's growing access to education and formal employment, for the development of Islamic feminism? How do Islamic feminists deal with the possible tensions between *fiqh*

and family law on the one hand and women's changed lifestyles and realities on the other? Secondly, what is the impact of specific relations between Islam and the state on women's activism? What are the effects of the fact that Iran has had an Islamic revolution in terms of enabling or disabling particular forms of women's activism, and what has been the impact of the shift from revolutionary fervour to reformism for developments in Islamic feminism? Similarly, what are the effects of Islamism being an oppositional movement in most other Muslim countries (and its transformations through time) for Islamic women's activism? In what ways may Islamic feminism be considered a transformative force that impacts political

movements and structures of religious authority? Thirdly, how has globalization, both in the form of movements of people and images, impacted Islamic women's activism? Have international links of Islamic movements also created a particular space for women activists, and if so what have been the effects? How have Islamist women engaged with possibilities for international networking and in which ways have they dealt with the proliferation of means of communication and the development of new media?

*For more information, please contact the ISIM secretariat.  
<http://isim.nl/isim/activities/seminarsconf.html>*