

**Panelists**



**Ask Me Anything**  
**Canadian Islamic History Month**  
A Courageous Conversation on Being Who We Are

**Time:** 1:00 pm EST **Date:** October 12, 2022 **Hosts:** Sarah Fath-El-Bab and Bernadeth Betchi

## **Ask Me Anything: Canadian Islamic History Month** **A Courageous Conversation ON Being Who We Are**

**Featuring:** Tabassum Khan, Waheed Khan, Awo Nuuh, and Eric Tibbets

**Co-hosted by:** Sarah Fath-El-Bab and Bernadeth Betchi

**Date and time:** Wednesday, October 12 at 1:00 to 2:30 PM EST

**Audience:** Open to all Government of Canada employees

**Register:** [Online registration form](#)

**Link to join:** [Join the webinar](#)

Ask Me Anything is now on GC Wiki Collab <https://wiki.gccollab.ca/AMA>.

### **Event description**

In 2007 the Government of Canada declared the month of October in each year as Canadian Islamic History Month.

For generations, Muslims have been contributing to all aspects of Canada's prosperity and diverse heritage. Islamic history and culture encompasses a broad range of individual and collective experiences, as well as important contributions to literature, math, science, art and history.

Join us this month as the Ask Me Anything stage welcomes speakers to talk about their experiences and thoughts, to share the ongoing challenges and barriers that Muslim Canadians face in the public service and more. Let's help combat anti-Islamic sentiments and continue working toward a compassionate, inclusive and safer Canada for everyone.

## About the Ask Me Anything Series

This session is part of a series of Ask Me Anything sessions that give us a platform to share stories, listen, ask respectful questions and continue on our journey to have more inclusive organizations.

As individuals, you can't necessarily change where you live. You certainly can't change your past, but you can adjust who influences you—through the authors you read, the music you listen to, movies you watch and interactions with your community. The *Ask Me Anything* series provides you with an opportunity to increase your perspective—to learn from the lived experiences of individuals who are bravely sharing their stories to help educate and move the public service towards a culture where equity is embedded.

The series also provides an opportunity for you to know that you aren't alone. These experiences, especially the negative ones, are systemic and happen all too frequently throughout the public service. The objective by shining this light is to continually increase the network of public servants ready to take action and move forward towards a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

## Meet Our Amazing Panelists



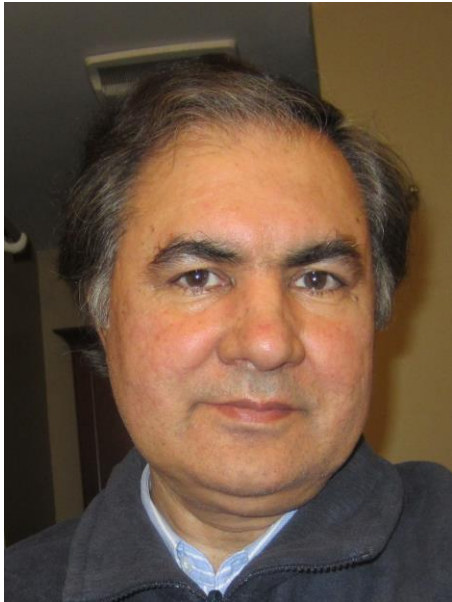
### **Tabassum Khan, a Culture, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisor, Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Canada**

Tabassum is the Outreach and Events Director for the [Muslim Federal Employees Network](#) (MFEN) and a Culture, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisor at the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI). Tabassum lives in Ottawa in the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg people.

Tabassum is a Canadian Muslim woman of South Asian heritage, she has experience leading and implementing various DEI grassroots initiative in her organization as the co-chair of the Multiculturalism Stream and a member of the Inclusion Network. In her work at MFEN she has moderated GC-wide events and publicly spoken on panel discussions related to Muslim Canadians (i.e.

allyship, impacts of Islamophobia, intersectionality, and more). Her layers include woman, mother, partner, daughter, sister, and immigrant. Tabassum is an active mentor in the GC Mentorship Community. Through her Project Management journey, Joint Honours Degree in Criminology and Women's Studies as well as lived-experience, she has always been vocal about social justice, actively partakes in organizing committees

and is involved in various extracurricular initiatives (i.e. President - UNICEF uOttawa). Her passion and dedication to bringing sustainable positive changes has reinforced her commitment to create an inclusive, welcoming, and safe environment for all public servants.



**Waheed Khan, President, Community of Federal Visible Minorities (CFVM), Senior Advisor, Climate Change International, Environment and Climate Change Canada**

Mr. Waheed Khan is the President of the [Community of Federal Visible Minorities \(CFVM\)](#), an independent network that provides a platform to visible minorities in the Federal Public Service to discuss their priorities, share information and advocate on their behalf. He has a passion for public service based on social justice and equity, to serve all Canadians regardless of their ethnic origins, gender, background and any other identities.

In 2018, the Deputy Minister appointed Waheed as the first Co-Champion for Mental Health, representing Bargaining Agents, as recommended by the Second

Report of the Mental Health Joint Task Force. The same year, Waheed was also appointed Co-Champion for Respectful Workplaces, representing the Bargaining Agents, an initiative he had co-launched with the Union of Environment Workers (PSAC) in 2016. Waheed is also the Chair of [ECC's Visible Minorities Network](#).

He was elected to the Board of Directors of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC) in 2018. In 2019, he served as the Chair of the PIPSC Human Rights & Diversity Committee, and introduced the [AGM Code of Respect](#), which was adopted by around 600 delegates at the PIPSC 100<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting. Subsequently, the AGM Code of Respect was also adopted by the Board of Directors.

In 2021, Waheed was re-elected to the PIPSC Board for another three-year term, and is serving as Chair, Communications, National Capital Region and Chair, [Science Advisory Committee](#). The Committee has launched a **Public Science for Public Good campaign**, to highlight the importance of the work that public sector scientists do to protect the health of Canadians and their environment.

In 2009-2011, Waheed was deployed at Canada's Mission to Afghanistan where he led a joint Canadian and US team working with military officers to rebuild public sector capacity in Kandahar and to promote Good Governance and the Rule of Law.

Waheed is the recipient of the **Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal**, **Canadian Forces General Service Medal** and the **Minister of International Trade Citation of Excellence**.



**Awo Nuuh, Senior Policy Analyst, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada**

Awo Nuuh is a proud Muslimah, a member of the local Somali community, and a federal public servant of 14 years. She is an economist by training and has a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Administration. Awo has nearly 20 years of volunteer experience with the Somali youth in the areas of education, leadership and culture and identity. She is passionate about supporting Somali youth to reach their full potential and to help them navigate the challenges that come with experiencing anti-Black racism and Islamophobia.

She also recently became a Board member for the Black Canadian Scholarship Fund. As a volunteer and a public servant, Awo has worked on diversity, equity and inclusion issues in a number of organizations.



**Eric Tibbetts, student, Carleton University**

Eric Tibbetts converted to Islam in 2010 after moving to Niagara Region from rural Nova Scotia and has identified as Muslim for over ten years. Over the years, Eric has volunteered throughout the local Ottawa Muslim community as an executive with the Carleton University Muslim Students' Association and volunteer with the National Council of Canadian Muslims. As a non-racialized and non-visible member of the Muslim community, Eric had a non-traditional journey in navigating his Muslim identity, both inside and outside of Muslim circles.

Eric currently resides in Ottawa where he studies Psychology and Neuroscience at Carleton University. Outside of academics, Eric has worked in the Federal Public Service as a student at Employment and Social Development Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and most recently, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

**Meet Our Co-Hosts**



**Sarah Fath-EI-Bab, Senior Policy Analyst,  
Pest Management Regulatory Agency, Health  
Canada.**

Sarah Fath-EI-Bab began her public service career at the House of Commons. Since then, she has occupied a number of policy positions in different departments, including Employment and Social Development Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada. Sarah is currently working as a Senior Policy Analyst in the Pest Management Regulatory Agency at Health Canada.

She holds a License in Law from the University of Ottawa (2015). She was called to the Quebec bar in 2016. Prior to joining the public service, Sarah practiced as a civil litigation lawyer in Montreal.

Sarah has always been active in promoting the development of Muslims, especially women and youth. Sarah was recently appointed as the Career Development & Mentorship Director for the [Muslim Federal Employees Network](#).

When not immersed in legislative research and policy analysis, Sarah enjoys hiking and trying new restaurants in the GTA.



**Bernadeth Betchi, Acting Section Head, Lead  
Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion, Materiel  
Group, National Defense**

Bernadeth has a Bachelor of Communication, a Masters of Women and Gender Studies and is a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa.

She has worked at the Prime Minister of Canada's office, at the Canadian Human Rights Commission and as a professor of Communications and Human Rights at Algonquin College.

As a Black woman living in Canada, she is constantly reminded that she could be an outsider. Having always been intrigued by the experiences of other marginalized groups, Bernadeth has always been drawn towards their narratives, recognizing that their similarities and differences brought them together as they strive to construct or deconstruct their cultural identity.

Bernadeth is the mother of three humans. She is also a sister, a daughter, an aunt, and a friend.

### **Mission - Ask Me Anything Series**

We recognize that individuals are composed of a multitude of layers that make us who we are. We do not fit easily in one box or another and we can't be neatly counted. We represent the mosaic of Canada.

It is important that we find value in each other's experiences, differences and unique characteristics. When we build our cultural competencies, we are able to work better together in our teams and respond to each other with relevance, empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain greater appreciation of each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

We know through diversity, that workplaces and communities are stronger, more successful and resilient. And most important, it creates spaces of inclusion and fosters a workplace of belonging where people feel valued.

### **[#AMACHallenge](#)**

We encourage others to have courageous conversations with their peers. Use the monthly Ask Me Anything sessions as an opportunity to have brave conversations in your workplaces with your teams.

Here's what you need to do:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organization to an Ask Me Anything watch party, tune in live and watch the session together. Make sure it's in their calendars.
- Before the watch party, book an "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60 minutes. Share the resource guide and have these questions for discussion.

### **After the AMA – Team Session Discussion Questions**

1. What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment
2. What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?
3. What is an example of systemic discrimination that I am aware of in my life?
4. What am I not going to do anymore?

5. How can I use my voice/ influence? – both overtly/covertly
6. Where am I going to dig in and learn more?
7. How will I continue this conversation?

It is important that we find value in the experiences, the unique characteristics of each other. When we develop our cultural competence, we are able to work better together within our teams and respond to each other with relevant empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain a greater appreciation for each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

### **Thank you to our contributors**

Thank you to our contributors from across the Public Service of Canada – Canadian Coast Guard, National Defence, Health Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Carleton University.

MCs: Sarah Fath-El-Bab and Bernadeth Betchi

Panelists: Tabassum Khan, Waheed Khan, Awo Nuuh, and Eric Tibbets

AMA Team: Terri-Ann Hurst, Tara Lockhart, Natasha Lim, Jasmine Cousineau, Shelby Racine, Danielle MacKinlay, Michel Mainville, Melissa Michaud, Lamare Robinson, Bernadeth Betchi, Liliya Ishkaeva, Lyrique Richards