



AUSTRALIAN
FEDERATION
OF ISLAMIC
COUNCILS INC

MUSLIMS AUSTRALIA (AFIC) PRESS RELEASE

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MEMBER STATE COUNCILS

Muslim Council of NSW
Islamic Council of VIC
Islamic Council of QLD
Islamic Council of WA
Islamic Council of SA
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Islamic Council of TAS
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MEMBER SOCIETIES

Over 100

**46 Years of Community
Services**

7 April 2010

FOUL FIFA – No goal!

Mr Ikebal Patel, President of Muslims Australia – AFIC was surprised at the decision by FIFA to disallow the Iran girls' football team to compete in the Youth Olympic Games because FIFA ruled that wearing a hijab was not in accordance with laws of the game relating to on-field equipment.

Mr Patel said, FIFA's decision amounts to blatant discrimination and cannot understand the justification for such an unfair outcome. This is a blow to all Muslim girls who want to be active in sporting activities, especially in soccer.

As with some of the Sydney based clubs who have a few Muslim girls gearing up for elite level soccer hoping to represent Australia international, this decision may have their dreams shattered if Australian soccer Federation and local clubs follow suit.

Mr Patel appeals to fair thinking sports managers and FIFA in particular to overturn their unreasonable ban on the hijab and allow those who wish to be part of a sporting family and experience the joys of sporting achievement to be free to pursue their dreams without unjustly impeding their goals. This is a decision that calls for the red card to be issued immediately by the umpire, and the umpire is the world opinion.

If this decision is not overturned by FIFA, then Muslims Australia will be starting a campaign with our other peak national Islamic bodies around the globe to shun soccer and all the commercial promotions that go with it. And Muslims Australia will certainly be engaging with Football Federation of Australia to ensure that this regressive decision is not embraced in this free country. Muslims are stereotyped as not encouraging our females into sports and other mainstream activities but this decision by FIFA presents another difficulty in our path of excellence in sports for Muslim women.

For further information, please contact:

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CHAIRMAN – MALEK FAHD ISLAMIC SCHOOL