

INEQUALITY IS

Linda Sarsour on inequality and race and religion

Linda Sarsour discusses the issues American Muslims face and how equality is a place where every person can be proud of and celebrated for the complexities of their background.

A conversation about inequality in all its forms.

Transcript begins.

LINDA SARSOOR: When people see a woman like me walking down the street, they immediately assume many things about me. That I'm not born in this country, that I don't speak English, that I am probably oppressed, that my husband or father or brother have forced me to look the way that I look. I'm a born and raised Brooklynite, very proud of who I am and where I'm from. I speak fluent English. I speak multiple languages. I am confident in who I am. I am strong willed, and I think that people don't expect someone like me to be that way. And that's all it takes. It takes one person, and it takes a relationship, it takes a conversation for you to be able to delete or eradicate every stereotype that someone has of you.

[Inequality is logo. A graphic black equal sign with an orange slash through it. #InequalityIs. Linda Sarsour. Racial justice and civil rights activist. A Muslim-American woman wearing a bright blue hijab and a leopard-print scarf.]

Inequality is when a community is targeted based on their race, religion, or national origin. When it's normal for people to tell you to go back to your country, that you don't belong here, that people who look like you don't belong here. For American-Muslim youth, they think this is the norm. They think that being targeted, that the surveillance of our communities, the mistrust of our communities, the discrimination—that this is maybe just how it is. And I think what's important for us as organizers and leaders in the community is to say, “no, this is not how it's going to be, and we're going to fight back.”

[Images of Linda speaking into a microphone at a protest. An activist holds a sign that reads “Respect Human Rights”.]

It's hard to have this kind of questioning of your identity, you know, “can you be an American and a Muslim at the same time?” We absolutely believe that you can be an American and a Muslim at the same time; that being Muslim doesn't cancel out your Americanness.

[A sign in a window reads “No One is Free until All of Us are Free”.]

I'm a hopeful activist. I want my children to grow up in a country where they can stand on top of the highest building and say, I am an American, I'm a Muslim, I'm Palestinian, and be so proud;

and then for everyone else to celebrate them and to embrace them and all the complexities that they bring.

[Inequality Is Logo. Join the conversation. #InequalityIs.]

End of transcript.