

RESOLUTION CONDEMNING FORCED MARRIAGE AS A FUNDAMENTAL  
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

Adopted by the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Board of Governors  
on March 25, 2021.

WHEREAS forced marriage, typically of young women to older men, is a continuing problem in the United States and elsewhere in the world and constitutes a fundamental human rights violation as a form of family violence against women; and

WHEREAS a forced marriage typically involves one or more elements of fraud, force, or coercion and results in the absence of actual consent of one or both of the parties; and

WHEREAS the negative effects of forced marriage are multi-fold, leading to multi-generational cycles of poverty, abuse, and waste of human potential; and

WHEREAS those seeking to continue perpetrating forced marriage often do so under the false rubric of cultural, ethnic or religious values; and

WHEREAS it has been repeatedly proven throughout the world that only strong governmental action can overcome the wishes of those seeking to continue perpetrating forced marriage; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) is an organization of highly regarded domestic relations attorneys, the mission of which is “to provide leadership that promotes the highest degree of professionalism and excellence in the practice of family law,” and consists of highly skilled negotiators and litigators who represent individuals in all facets of family law; and

WHEREAS the AAML provides leadership and guidance in family law policy matters, assisting states in evaluating, passing and enforcing just laws for the preservation of families, the protection of women and children, the right to self-determination in marriage choice, and the prevention of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and exploitation;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers condemns forced marriage as a fundamental violation of human rights and urges all state and local governments to amend existing law, or to enact new laws, to prevent forced marriages in the United States. Further, the AAML urges the federal government to take such actions as may be necessary to protect U.S. citizens from forced marriages abroad.