

Sheikh Mbhele:
'A true giant of a
man we have lost'

Page 3



Justice in
Kashmir long
overdue

Page 4



Malek blind but
hasn't lost his touch
in cooking

Page 7



SA group on March to Gaza fear deportation

Egypt is facing immense pressure from Israel not to allow the "Global March to Gaza" to proceed to the Rafah border this weekend, but will Egypt bow to the demands of the Zionist state?"
Ismail Suder reports

A delegation of 53 South African are boarding flights to Cairo to join a global solidarity protest at Egypt's Rafah border to demand an end to Gaza's blockade – but the event is mired in uncertainty as Israel has threatened punitive actions should Egypt allow the march to proceed.

South African delegation Coordinator Basheerah Soomar said the aim of the march – from 15th to 19th June – was to pressure Israel to open the Rafah border so that the convoy of food-laden trucks could enter Gaza to feed its 2.3m starving people.

When approached for comment by *Al-Qalam*, several people who were booked to fly out yesterday were understandably tight-lipped and even refused to speak anonymously for fear they might be blocked at Cairo airport. The expected 3000

protesters aim to march from the town of el-Arish, through the Sinai Desert to Rafah, a distance of 45km with many hoping to camp along the route.

But, according to Israeli media, the Minister of Defense, Israel Katz has warned Egypt not to let the pro-Palestinian activists – whom he labelled as "Jihadists" – to enter the country as they would destabilise Egypt and endanger the stability of other "moderate Arab governments."

Katz said the pro-Palestinian group has ideological overlaps with Hamas and is seeking not just to help with humanitarian aid, but to help Hamas in its struggle to continue as the rulers of Gaza.

Katz threatened that if protesters were to force their way through the Rafah border gates – and should Egypt fail to stop them – Israeli forces will take "necessary measures" to prevent them from entering Gaza.

Already reports are emerging that groups of Arab delegates have been prevented from entering Egypt. Meanwhile, Nkosi Mandela Mandela, the grandson of Nelson

Mandela, told *Al-Qalam* that he was on his way to Cairo to join the Global March to Gaza. In a subsequent international press briefing, Mandela thanked the organising team of the Global March to Gaza for their humanitarian efforts.

He said South Africa's struggle for freedom from Apartheid was tied to the struggle of the Palestinian people, saying that both the South African struggle and the Palestinian struggle was intertwined and "we continue to be a voice of the oppressed throughout the globe."

He said the Global March to Gaza was organised because many governments who were supposed to uphold international law and ensure humanitarian aid gets into Gaza, have failed them.

He called on the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to support the Global March to Gaza, and also called on airlines in the region to bring in tons of aid for distribution to the starving people of Gaza.

Roshan Dadoo, a member of South African Solidarity Campaign said during an interview that the Global



March to Gaza was a people's led movement to try and force humanitarian aid to get through.

"There are reportedly around 9000 trucks waiting to get in...at the same time we see pictures of devastation of the ongoing bombing – and starvation being used as a weapon of war by the Zionist state of Israel. So

that's what people are saying, 'enough is enough', it's up to us, the people, but we don't think that the Governments of the world should be let off the hook either."

She said Western countries are "most complicit" in the Genocide, especially the US and the UK that is funding genocide by sending arms and money to Israel.

She said it was thanks to the global BDS movement that Israel's economy is tanking.

Dadoo (who is Jewish) said South Africa's government, ironically, is selling coal to the Zionist state. "We are calling on our own government to stop selling coal to Israel that fuels the genocide and fuels the occupation," she added.



Yusuf Nanabawa: 082 665 6665
yusuf@fwdtrading.co.za
Imraan Moolla: 081 599 1695
imoola@fwdtrading.co.za
Anwar Moolla: 083 657 8677
anver@fwdtrading.co.za
031 816 5301
40 Ivy Road, Greyville, 4001
FSB: 13991

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

WWW.ANWARMOOLLA.CO.ZA

FOR MORE INFO

LOOKING TO PRESERVE OR GROW YOUR CAPITAL?

Why not consider one of our low risk
Shariah Income Funds?

Higher than market related returns.

Immediate liquidity.

No lock in periods.

CONTACT US NOW!

CALL US FOR A FREE FINANCIAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

ANWAR MOOLLA IS AN AUTHORISED FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDER

Disclaimer: please note that collective investments should be considered medium to long term investments & that the value of units may go up or down & that past performance is not necessarily guide to future performance.

LOCAL NEWS

Newfound computer skills making difference to Phoenix communities

The Phoenix Care Foundation recently hosted a 10-week computer literacy program, empowering students with little to no prior experience to gain valuable skills and confidence in using technology.

This initiative, made possible through the generosity of sponsors, was offered free of charge to deserving students. Under the expert guidance of lecturer NizaMe Bux, students embarked on a transformative journey, acquiring essential computer skills that will undoubtedly enhance their future prospects. The program's success is a testament to the dedication and hard work of both the students and the foundation's team.

"We are deeply grateful to the Phoenix Care Foundation, particularly the staff Zakira Yusuf, NizaMe Bux and Yasmin Khan, its management, Haroon Yousuph and Mr. Muhammed Yusuf, for providing us with this incredible opportunity. Their



vision for empowering communities through education is truly inspiring, and we feel privileged to be part of this initiative," said a participant in the course.

The Phoenix Care Foundation's commitment to bridging the digital divide and fostering socio-economic development in communities is commendable. By invest-

ing in education and skills development, the foundation is empowering individuals to unlock their potential and create a brighter future for themselves and their fam-

ilies. As the students celebrate the completion of this program, they look forward to applying their newfound skills to improve their lives and contribute to their com-

munities. "The Phoenix Care Foundation's efforts serve as a shining example of the positive impact that dedicated organizations can have on society," said a spokesman.

AMA's 'Winter Warmth Drive'

As temperatures begin to drop across the country, Africa Muslims Agency (AMA) has launched its annual Winter Warmth Campaign, aimed at providing critical support to communities most affected by the harsh winter conditions.

Every year, thousands of families across South Africa face winter without the basic essentials to keep warm. Many live in informal settlements or makeshift homes, exposed to the elements and unable to afford heating, warm clothing, or even basic food supplies.

With unemployment and poverty rates still alarmingly high, the winter season places a significant burden on already vulnerable communities. AMA's Winter Warmth Campaign 2025 seeks to bring immediate relief to those most in need by distributing blankets, winter clothing, and essential hampers throughout the country.

The campaign is being rolled out in major cities and remote villages, with special focus on informal settlements, schools, orphanages, and healthcare facilities. AMA has been conducting winter distributions in South Africa for over three decades, form-



ing part of its long-standing commitment to humanitarian aid and community empowerment. The organisation works hand-in-hand with over 250 local partners

and community-based initiatives to ensure maximum reach and impact.

In previous years, AMA's Winter Warmth efforts have

reached communities in Cape Town, Johannesburg, the Eastern Cape, Ennerdale, Ludondolo, and beyond. This year, the campaign will expand to include

even more areas, especially where access to resources is limited.

With the growing demand, AMA is calling on the pub-

lic to contribute to this vital initiative. To donate or find out more about AMA's Winter Warmth Campaign, visit: www.africamuslimsagency.co.za



Sheikh Hamza Mbhele: ‘A true giant of a man we have lost’

Sheikh Hamza Mbhele has passed on, handing his baton to the next generation writes, Nabeelah Shaikh

The South African Muslim community is mourning the loss of Sheikh Hamza Mbhele, a giant Islamic figure who passed away last week. He was not just a man of deep Islamic knowledge but a tireless community leader, a mentor to generations, and a pioneering voice for the empowerment of Black African Muslims.

Revered for his sharp intellect and fearless public da’wah, those who knew him say Sheikh Mbhele was a walking encyclopaedia; his mastery over religious, political, and social discourse made him a magnetic figure in Durban’s streets, masjids, and intellectual circles alike.

“For decades, he stood at the intersection of faith and identity, advocating for a grounded and confident Black Muslim presence in a post-apartheid South Africa. Durban community activist

Milo Muhammed reflected on his early life with the Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI).

“He was a giant figure not just in stature but in his approach to da’wah on the streets of Durban. I recall how he would just pick people off the street and engage them in topics of religion, politics, and community issues. I used to watch him in amazement... he captured people’s hearts. His message was simple: there is only One God, and Muhammad (PBUH) was His final messenger.”

Muhammad added that Mbhele always wanted to break down walls between people.

“Issues of apartheid, youth challenges, and community healing were close to his heart. A true giant of a man we have lost,” Muhammad said. Mbhele’s grassroots engagement wasn’t just theological; it was deeply personal. Apartheid’s lingering scars, family breakdowns, and the erosion of youth morality were central concerns in his outreach. He addressed these with an

unapologetic honesty that drew people in, not pushed them away. Born into a generation of African Muslims who embraced Islam in the 1970s, Sheikh Mbhele helped forge a new path for Black South Africans within the Islamic tradition. His efforts weren’t about assimilation; they were about ownership.

Dr Tahir Sitoto, academic and former Muslim Youth Movement president told *Al-Qalam*: “His passion for Islam and making Islam a reality for African Muslim communities will always be remembered. He didn’t want African Muslims to be seen as charity cases. He wanted them to take leadership. That’s what kept our friendship going as we both shared that passion and desire.”

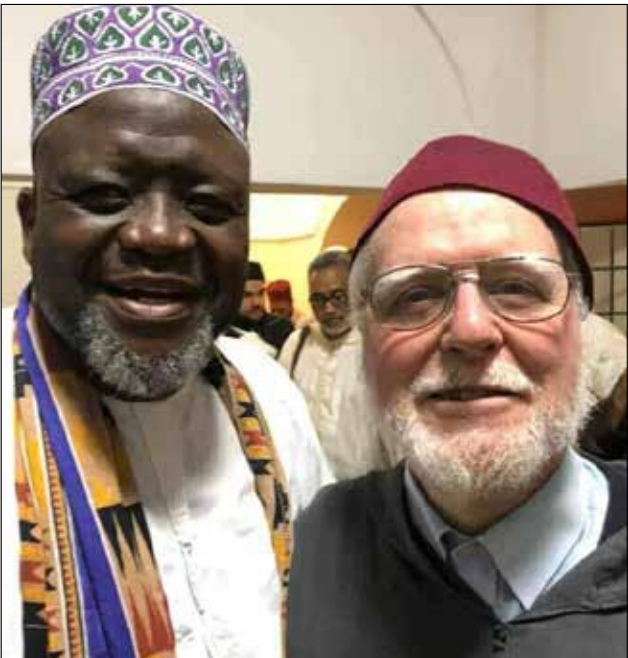
He recalled their relationship from the 1970s, when a small but growing number of indigenous South Africans were embracing Islam. Sheikh Mbhele stood out even then, not for seeking the spotlight, but for his ability to galvanise and mentor. “Perhaps his greatest success is in the

fact that he inspired many young Muslim leaders. At his janazah, I met Moulana Milanzi and many others who testified to how Sheikh Hamza mentored them. He passed the baton to the next generation,” said Sitoto.

He said his leadership extended far beyond any single organisation. He was a central figure in defining what it meant to be a Black African Muslim in South Africa, confident, self-reliant, and rooted in faith.

“His passion for the deen will always be remembered, his passion for Islam, and for making Islam a reality for African Muslim communities. He wanted it to be not just an occasional thing but a reality. I remember him being driven by his passion and quest to let African Muslims own Islam. He wanted them to take leadership and ownership, and not be seen as an extension of historical Muslim communities. That’s what kept our friendship going,” said Sitoto.

Sitoto pointed out that perhaps his success was attributed to the fact that he



had inspired many young Muslim leaders. “He was someone who took it upon himself to mentor the up-and-coming Muslims of the African community. He has inspired and mentored the second-tier leadership that has taken over leadership of various organisations.

Sitoto said those who knew him referred to him as a voracious leader, “Not just religiously, but also socially and politically. Sheikh Hamza was a natural leader, and many bestowed upon

him many accolades. Many were attracted to his leadership,” said Sitoto.

Among his peers and students, he was known simply as Ameer, a natural leader who held a quiet authority that demanded respect. Those who knew him say Sheikh Hamza Mbhele’s legacy will live on in the communities he served, in the leaders he mentored, and in the generations of Muslims he inspired to live Islam with dignity, purpose, and pride.

How well do you know your heart?

> Your heart is one of a kind

Whether you've had stents, a valve replacement or a Pacemaker...
Been diagnosed with a heart murmur or a mild heart attack,
Or simply just want peace of mind because you have a family history...
Having an indication of how your heart is functioning,
will allow you to give it the attention and care it needs!
Before it's too late.

> Our Service to you

Echocardiograms
Pacemaker and ICD Device Checks
24/48hr Holter ECGs

> We can help

Quick appointment times
Convenient Location
Affordable Rates

> Be Proactive. Be informed

Your heart works tirelessly for you - show it the same care.
You only get one heart.
Let's keep it beating strong!

☎ 0790576841
☎ 0671516946
✉ sahmed.cardio@gmail.com
📍 Chelmsford Medical Centre 3
St Augustines Hospital

Have medical Aid?
Ask your Dr for a referral!

Contact us

Female Echocardiographer

WHAT IS AN ECHOCARDIOGRAM?

An Echocardiogram or "Echo" is a safe, non invasive procedure that usually takes about 30min.
A probe is placed on the chest and sound waves are transmitted to generate moving images of the heart.

HOW DOES AN ECHO HELP?

An Echo helps your Doctor find out:

- How your heart and it's valves are functioning
- The size and shape of your heart
- Your heart's pumping strength
- If the heart valves are working correctly
- Presence of any scar tissue or blood clots



WHO SHOULD HAVE AN ECHO?

People with:

Known or suspected heart problems

Pre / Post Chemotherapy

Heart murmurs

Hypertension

Diabetes

Medical Aids Accepted

For more Information

Safeera Ahmed
Cardiac Physiologist
0790576841

OPINION

Justice in Kashmir long overdue



By Imraan Buccus

Tensions between India and Pakistan soared following an attack On 22 April 2025, after militants opened fire on a group of mostly Hindu tourists in the Baisaran Valley near Pahalgam, killing 26 civilians. The Indian government swiftly alleged Pakistani involvement—a claim for which no evidence has been provided.

The Indian media followed suit, stoking nationalist fervour. In the days that followed, both sides engaged in military posturing and cross-border exchanges of fire. Now that the immediate crisis has passed, it is time to take a deeper look at the unresolved tragedy

of Kashmir—one of the longest-running and most dangerous conflicts in modern history. What makes the current moment especially dangerous is the ideological nature of the regime in New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP first came to power in 2014. Modi built his national standing with the far right following the anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat, where he was chief minister, in 2002.

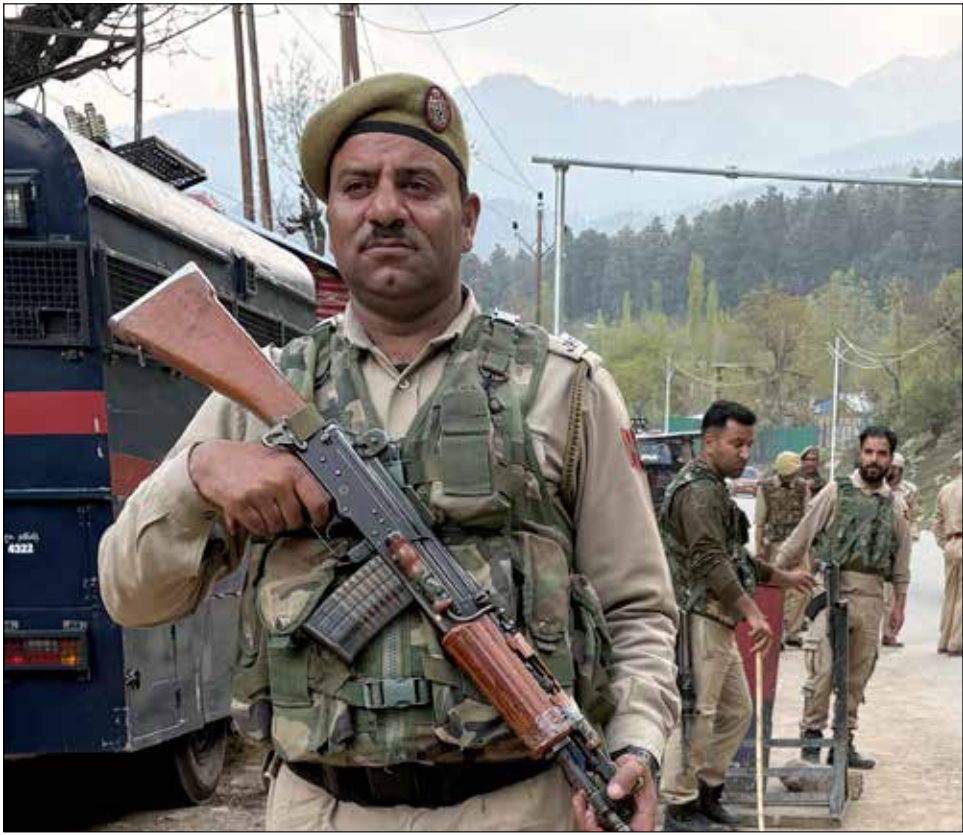
Under Modi’s rule India has taken an openly authoritarian turn, built on a toxic cocktail of neoliberal economic policies and Hindu nationalism. The annexation of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019—stripping the region of its autonomy, dissolving its legislature, and imposing a sweeping military clamp-down—was a key moment in the BJP’s consolidation of power. It sent a clear message: for this government, Kashmiris are not equal participants in a democratic polity but a population to be subdued and ruled.

The parallels with the occupation of Palestine are impossible to ignore. Like

Israel, India seeks to dominate a territory whose people overwhelmingly reject its rule. It floods the area with soldiers and surveillance. It shuts down internet access. It detains thousands without trial. It promotes demographic change through settler policies, hoping to shift the region’s character. And it silences dissent by branding it terrorism. This is not a project of democracy. It is a project of colonialism.

One of the most searing literary accounts of Kashmir’s anguish comes from Indian novelist and essayist Arundhati Roy, whose 2017 novel, The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, is partly set in the valley. Through the voice of a Kashmiri militant, she captures both the trauma of military repression and the clarity of defiance. Reflecting on the use of pellet guns—non-lethal weapons deployed by Indian forces that have blinded hundreds of young Kashmiris—Roy writes:

“One day Kashmir will make India self-destruct in the same way. You may have blinded all of us, every one



of us, with your pellet guns by then. But you will still have eyes to see what you have done to us... You’re not destroying us. You are constructing us. It’s yourselves that you are destroy-

ing.”This haunting passage speaks not only to the physical brutality visited upon the Kashmiri people, but also to the long-term moral corrosion inflicted on the Indian state. The attempt to crush

dissent with overwhelming force is, as Roy suggests, a form of slow national suicide—one that eats away at democracy from within.

Continued on page 5



PBO Number: 93001 8636



EMPOWERING THE YOUTH TO SECURE THE FUTURE

The Muslim Youth Movement aims to inspire, equip, and nurture young leaders with strong Islamic values, fostering growth through education, social development, and leadership initiatives. By building a foundation of faith, integrity, and resilience, we prepare the youth to navigate modern challenges while upholding the principles of Islam, ensuring a dynamic and prosperous future for all.



DONATE TODAY

LILLAHA
Muslim Youth Movement
General Account
First National Bank - Durban
Branch Code: 220926
Account No.: 5083 1855 033

ZAKAAT
Muslim Youth Movement
No. 2 Account
First National Bank - Durban
Branch Code: 220926
Account No.: 5083 1855 695



KEBABISH

TIKKA WITH A DIFFERENCE



NORTH BEACH
SUMMER SQUARE
031 - 368 1844 066 229 7886

MORNINGSIDE
49 FLORIDA ROAD
031-303 3156/7806 071 410 3208

OVERPORT
308 RABOOBEES CORNER
031 - 207 2685 072 604 1337

www.kebabish.co.za
info@kebabish.co.za



Continued from page 4

South African journalist Azad Essa, whose excellent book *Hostile Homelands: The New Alliance Between India and Israel* was published in 2023, maps the deepening strategic ties between the two states—from arms deals to surveillance systems and demographic policies. In an October 2024 interview, Essa observed:

“For example, in 2019, India essentially annexes Kashmir... Later, the Indian ambassador to the US makes a statement saying that they’re going to build settlements in the territory, just as Israel has built settlements in Palestine.”

Essa’s book explores how converging ethno-nationalist logics—Hindutva in India and Zionism in Israel—are driving policies in both regions, from annexation and surveillance to demographic engineering. In both cases, the occupying power claims that it is the victim.

And in both cases, any call for justice—any demand that the people of the land be given their basic political and human rights—is dismissed as extremism. When a Kashmiri teenager throws a stone, or a Palestinian farmer defends his land, it is

cast as an existential threat to a nuclear state. This absurd logic holds because it is backed by power: military, economic, and increasingly, diplomatic.

India’s international image has shifted dramatically in the last two decades. Once a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, it now seeks to be a junior partner to Western powers in the emerging strategic contest with China. As such, it benefits from the same impunity that shields Israeli aggression.

While Pakistan grapples with significant internal challenges across the economic, political, security and terrorism sectors, the oppression of Kashmir by India remains a paramount concern.

India’s refusal to recognise the political aspirations of the Kashmiri people is rooted in a narrow, majoritarian nationalism that sees Indian Muslims in general—and Kashmiris in particular—as suspect, as not fully Indian, as a fifth column. The rise of Hindutva, or Hindu nationalist ideology, has made it almost impossible for even liberal voices inside India to advocate for justice in Kashmir without being labelled as traitors.

Hindu nationalism is not



merely a cultural or religious identity. It is a form of fascism that seeks to define the Indian state in terms of an exclusionary ethno-religious ideal. It treats secularism and pluralism as threats. It rewrites history to suit its mythologies. It demonises minorities, especially Muslims, and it weaponises the media, the courts, and the police. In this context, Kashmir becomes both a

real place and a symbol—a place to be crushed to prove the supremacy of what is now understood as a Hindu nation.

In South Africa, we have learned that peace cannot be built on injustice. The apartheid regime tried for decades to impose peace without justice. It failed. Our transition, for all its compromises, was grounded in the recognition

that a lasting future required recognition, inclusion, and dignity for the oppressed. In Kashmir, as in Palestine, peace will only come when justice is done.

This means supporting the demand for self-determination. It means ending military occupation. It means releasing political prisoners, restoring civil liberties, and ending the project of demo-

graphic change. South Africa has an important role to play here. Our history gives us a particular moral voice in the international arena. We have used it in relation to Palestine—and rightly so. We should do the same for Kashmir, the Congo and other countries suffering oppression.

Dr Buccus is the editor of Al-Qalam

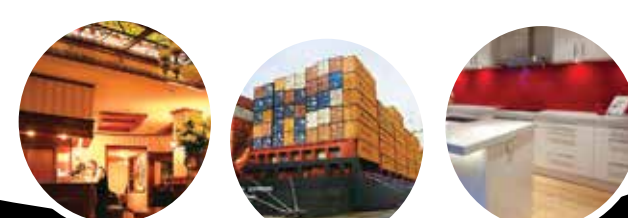




TERMITE PROOFING SPECIALIST
COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL & DOMESTIC PEST CONTROL



Don't Share Your Home With Unwanted Guests *pests*



ALL AREAS

Call Munier or Yumna for an Appoitment
Tel: 031 467 3333 • Cell: 082 876 4786 • Email: moona@mweb.co.za





- Specialists In The Repair, Maintenance, Reconditioning And Rebuilding Of Gearboxes And Differentials For All Makes Of Domestic And Commercial Vehicles.
- Authorised Agents For All Mechanical Warranties
- Importers & Wholesalers of Gearboxes & Engines

☎ 031 579 1440 ☎ 076 950 0623 ☎ 031 579 2315

🌐 www.gearboxcentre.net ✉ info@gearboxcentre.net

📍 15 TEAKFIELD RD, SPRINGFIELD PARK, DURBAN



GEARBOX CENTRE
DIRECT IMPORTERS & WHOLESALERS OF ENGINES, GEARBOXES & MOTOR SPARES **IMPORTS**



37 Ebonyfield,
Springfield Park, Durban
P.O Box 687, Rochdale Park, 4034
e-mail: gbcimports@iafrica.com

Tel: 031 579 5071
031 579 5036
Fax: 031 579 5072

EDITORIAL



LETTERS
TO THE
EDITOR

NB. All letters MUST be accompanied by the writer's correct name and contact details, or it will not be published. A nom-de-plume will be accepted only for publication purposes.
NB. All views reflected in this column are the opinion of the writer and do NOT necessarily reflect the views of the Editor.

We would like to thank all our respected readers for sending in your comments, views and opinions to our 'Letters to the Editor' column. We value your thoughts on the various aspects affecting the Muslim community. Keep them rolling in.

P.O. Box 48112, Qualbert, 4078 | (031) 306 0615 | admin@alqalam.co.za

Freedom Flotilla activists did it for publicity – for once I agree!

Of course the Madleen would be intercepted. And it was. There was no way it would have been permitted to break the Israeli-imposed siege on Gaza. For those of you who are living beneath a rock, buried 10 feet under Zionist propaganda, the Madleen is a boat, named after the first female fisherman in Gaza, that set sail from Italy with the intent to breach the siege on Gaza, deliver humanitarian aid to the starving and war-battered population, and to put pressure on the governments of the world to put an end to the genocide in Gaza.

The Madleen is part of the Freedom Flotilla. It is the second vessel to attempt to set sail to Gaza. The first attempt was aborted after the Israelis bombed the flotilla in international waters.

The Madleen seemed to be making great progress until it was intercepted roughly 185 kms away from the coastline of Gaza in the early hours of Monday morning.

The crew was kidnapped by the IDF and, according to the Israelis, they will be deported to their countries of origin.

The Israelis were quick to undermine the efforts of the activists on board, the most famous face being that of Greta Thunberg, Swedish climate change activist, tweeting that the show on the 'selfie yacht' was now over. Greta, once the darling of the activism world, has now been labelled an anti-Semite for her views and actions on Palestine.

The Israeli media has scoffed at the mission of the flotilla and her crew as nothing more than a PR campaign headed by attention-seeking climate whiner, Greta Thunberg.

The aid on the Madleen did not even amount to a truckful of aid. What help could it possibly offer to nearly two million starving people, they sniggered.

Besides, they continued, there were other channels that aid could be sent via.

This attempt was nothing more than attention-seeking. These 11 activists, who could have ostensibly lost their lives, were just in it for the likes, the tweets, and the fame. It was all for publicity. And I must say that for once, I agree.

The crew of the Madleen are not stupid.

They knew the risks involved in such a dangerous mission. They knew their ship would be intercepted. They knew they would either be arrested or killed. They knew all of this before they made the choice to commit to the mission. They knew that this mission would not succeed, yet they embarked upon it anyway. Why?

Of course this was for publicity! And what a lot of publicity it got! And that was the point! The point was to show world leaders that if they weren't going to do anything about the genocide, then the youth would have to take matters into their own hands. The point was to dominate headlines with the fantastic



story of eleven young activists putting their lives on the line for an oppressed people. The point of the entire exercise was to show the world how paranoid and threatened Israel is—and was—to intercept a small ship with baby formula, of all things.

The point of the Madleen

was to be a thorn in the side of the 'most powerful army' in the world.

Small in size, but large in rebellious spirit, the Madleen was the biggest flip-off to Israel and its allies.

The point of the mission was to rouse the world into

action, and to fill the hearts of the Gazans with the sweet taste of hope and the message: 'you are not alone'. The smiles of the activists during their arrest were telling. Why? Because—mission accomplished.

Z. Khan
Durban

Malek blind but hasn't lost his touch when it comes to cooking

This Eid, public figure Nazir Malek cooked for 600 people, and the spices that went into large pots were purely from memory – and touch. Is-mail Suder reports

Durban humanitarian Nazir Malek (66) recently lost his sight in both eyes but this has not stopped him from continuing his daily activities and charitable work as normal.

Apart from his long history as a travel agent and personally leading thousands of people on Hajj and Umrah tours, he is an accomplished chef, specializing in cooking for mass gatherings.

During this Eid-ul-Adha, he cooked several “deghs” of lamb biryani and akni, purely in the yard of his Durban North home – purely from memory and touch.

How does he manage to cook for hundreds while being completely blind? *Al-Qalam* asked. Malek explained that his two assistants help him to set up all the ingredients on the table beside him – he then coordinates on the different stages of the cooking processes, and timings.

“I sit in front of the pot and direct my assistants to start by putting the basic ingredients such as oil and onions into the pot at various timings. I then throw in the spices with my own hands. I know the measurements from memory. Alhumdulillah, the food tastes just as delicious as when I was sighted,” he said.

This Eid he cooked for approximately 600 people, including an akni dish for the local Malawian community, and they all loved the food. “For me, going completely blind has its challenges, but it is not a serious impediment,” he said.

“We also cooked beef akni and distributed it to 400 people at the local masjid. I also cooked lamb biryani, chicken kalya and lamb stew for my friends and family. Fortunately for me.

“If I know how many people I am cooking for,



Nazir Malek adds spices to lamb breyani that he is cooking from memory He is helped by his two assistants

I can tell you the quantity of ingredients that I require. I add the spices myself as long as my assistants tell me what spice I have in my hand.

“I cook for orders and for charity every month. Alhumdulillah, with the Grace of Allah, it comes out perfect every time.”

His once thriving business, Malek's Travel, was a household name for decades which sent thousands of people for Hajj and Umrah, but when Covid hit in 2020, the business collapsed and it was forced to close down. Malek still operates a travel agency though, but from his home and on a much smaller scale. His best memory is when he took a group of teenagers and young adults on an umrah pilgrimage in the early 90's. The cost? Just R1 999!

“Alhumdulillah, in March 2022, after the pandemic and the riots, we had an opportunity to lead a group of people for Umrah once again. But tragedy struck him two weeks after returning from Umrah.

“I was sitting in the kitchen having tea and suddenly darkness came over my left eye. I later found out that it was due to a retinal detachment. The retina is a layer of cells at the back of your eyeball that converts light



Nazir Malek lost his eyesight due to retinal detachment but he leads a full life

into nerve signals. It then sends those signals along your optic nerve to your brain. Your brain processes those signals into your sense of vision.

“The retinal detachment led to partial blindness, and after a month, the right retina detached requiring another surgery, once again leading to partial blindness in the right eye.

And like that I had 12 procedures and by January 2024 I was left com-

pletely blind. “I had then taken two more opinions from other eye specialists after which I accepted my blindness as part of my fate.

Having always been a positive person in life I exercised this as my greatest test of life and displayed my true sense of being positive. “Despite my impediment I rise every morning to take on the challenges of the day with respect to my business in travel, my social responsibili-

ties and my passion for cooking. “I conduct radio programmes encouraging people to have a positive attitude in spite of the listeners' disability or impediments,” Malek said.

His other passion is helping to renovate the historic Queensbridge Masjid in Durban's Chris Hani Rd (previously North Coast Rd) that was established in 1900. “Alhumdulillah today with the efforts of the trustees and the Musalee Committee, the Queensbridge Masjid has increased its

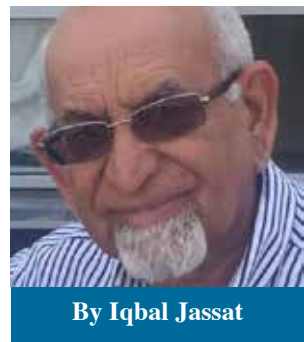
footprints of worshippers after its renovation and facilitation of many,” he added.

Malek said he says he has no dull days. There is so much to do. If it's not attending to his business, then he focuses on his charitable and humanitarian work.

“To tell you the truth, I never think about my blindness when I get up each morning. For me life goes on as normal, Alhumdulillah,” he said.

OPINION

Iranophobia and Islamophobia used to justify genocide in Gaza and unprovoked war on Iran



By Iqbal Jassat

As is the case in Israel's horrendous holocaust in Gaza, where the Zionist regime led by an indicted war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu has desperately attempted to influence public opinion to support the genocide, so too is he at wits end to garner global support for his unjustified war on Iran.

That he is perplexed and deeply anxious about how the world has reacted to his aggressive unprovoked military action in Iran, is evident in his sharp rebuke of critics who dared to question his justification for attacking Iran.

The line he uses is all too familiar and reflective of his deep-seated hatred of Islam and Muslims, especially and particularly those who refuse to bow to Zionism.

Indeed, Netanyahu's bloody history is steeped in vile Islamophobia. As a delusional self-declared "authority" on the extremely provocative term "Islamic Terrorism", he has authored a few books on the same contentious theme.

For instance during the

mid-1980s, his book "Terrorism: How the West Can Win", despite its sloppy propaganda disguised as "research", Netanyahu used his poison pen to attack Islam and Muslims in the most undignified racist terms. His objective was to propagate the idea "that terrorism and violence is congenital to Islam and Muslims", as one reviewer wrote.

Just over a decade ago, we are reminded by the United Nations that from the podium of the General Assembly, Netanyahu "warned the world of the grave threat he said it faced from militant Islam's desire to dominate the planet, be they Sunni extremists or Iran..."

VOA reports, at the time, spelled out that Netanyahu tied the "Jewish state's fight against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip to the larger global fight against Islamic State militants".

His Islamophobic rhetoric was matched by an equally virulent Iranophobia, a position he has held over the decades until now.

In his later book "Fighting Terrorism: How Democracies Can Defeat Domestic and International Terrorists" published in 2001, Netanyahu once again resorted to highly provocative anti-Muslim rhetoric while battling to counter a public profile of himself as the high-priest of Zionist terrorism.

In it he blamed "Islamic militants" as the architects of "international terrorism" and that they draw "inspiration and directives" from



Iran. His outrageous claims are presented as "facts", whereas the truth is that none of his allegations have been proven, as is the case today with the war launched on Iran on the back of manufactured lies.

As head of an illegitimate settler-colonial apartheid regime, Netanyahu had the audacity to dub the United Nations Human Rights Council as a "terrorist rights council", in his attempt to defend the atrocities in Gaza as a "moral imperative".

Paul Racco, writing in Mondoweiss captured Israel's tactic brilliantly as a "... mutual relationship between

Zionism and its crutch: Islamophobia".

In other words if Netanyahu is to be believed, his settler colony and Western allies share liberal, rational and philanthropic values not the medievalism of Islam and Iran.

It is thus encouraging to note that unlike the shrills of support for Netanyahu's killing spree by local Zionist organisations, the South African government has expressed strong views against Israel's attack on Iran.

Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola did not

mince his words when he said that the attack on Iran raised serious concerns about international law, including principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the protection of civilians enshrined in the UN Charter and international humanitarian law.

These concerns go to the heart of the debate over Iran's sovereign rights to pursue nuclear energy as a signatory of the NPT which Israel is not despite possessing untold number of atomic bombs.

The implication for nuclear safety and security arising from Israel's attacks on fa-

cilities known and verified as peaceful by the IAEA, lie in Netanyahu's lap. Lamola's warning that IAEA resolutions against armed attacks on peaceful nuclear installations as violations of the UN Charter and international law - which Israel has defied - is a timely reminder. Apart from Netanyahu's manufactured lies and prejudice against Iran and Islam, the Zionist apartheid regime has yet again failed the test of Article 51 of the UN Charter which requires clear evidence of an imminent armed attack.

**Iqbal Jassat is an Executive Member of the MEDIA REVIEW NETWORK*

Sales Reps

JOB

Vacancy

iApply NOW!

SEND YOUR CV

Al - Qalam

Applicants must possess excellent communication skills. Must be self motivated, hardworking and have a positive work attitude. If this is you, please submit your CV to **admin@alqalam.co.za** or call **031 306 0615**

The Iraq playbook is back for Israel's attack on Iran - but it fools no one

People in the West are waking up to the double standards the United States and its allies claim to hold, writes Imam Dr. Omar Suleiman

We cannot let the world be dragged into another war, propped up by false pretenses and selective enforcement the world has seen this playbook before.

A narrative of existential threat. A media chorus that refuses to question. Politicians beating the drums of war, invoking security to justify aggression. It was Iraq then. It's Iran now.

And yet, in the background, one glaring fact goes unspoken: Israel already has nuclear weapons, and no one is holding it accountable.

Let us lay out the facts.

Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and allows international inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is under constant surveillance and has faced crushing sanctions for even the possibility of nuclear capability.

Israel, on the other hand, is not a signatory to the NPT. It has never permitted IAEA inspections of its nuclear facilities. And yet, it is widely believed to possess approximately 90 nuclear warheads.

It is also the only nuclear-armed power in the Middle East, and has consistently behaved in opposition to international law with its

lethal tactics targeting civilians.

Staggering hypocrisy

At this very moment, Israel's leaders are under investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for genocide. This is not theory or speculation – it is unfolding in real time.

Gaza lies in ruins. Tens of thousands have been killed. Children dismembered. Families buried alive. Entire neighbourhoods turned into ash. And the state responsible for this is the same one armed with nuclear weapons and entirely exempt from the very scrutiny it demands for others. What does this tell us about the so-called rules-based international order?

It tells us that the rules only apply to those without power. It tells us that some nations are permitted to act outside international law, shielded by geopolitical alliances and the silence of their enablers.

It tells us that the same media and political institutions that claimed Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, only to be proven catastrophically wrong, are again failing to ask the most obvious questions.

Why is Israel not held to the same standard as Iran? Or any other nation?

Why is a nuclear power that is actively on trial for genocide not the focus of urgent global concern?

Why are we more afraid of a hypothetical Iranian bomb



than an actual Israeli arsenal?

The hypocrisy is staggering. And it is not lost on the rest of the world.

Iraq playbook

The Global South sees it. Muslims see it. The people of Palestine unfortunately have to live it.

And increasingly, people in the West are waking up to the double standards that erode whatever moral authority the United States and its allies claim to hold. This is not about defending Iran or its record. This

is about the consistent and dangerous erosion of international norms. If the international community truly cares about non-proliferation, then all nuclear states must be held accountable - especially those who refuse transparency, commit war crimes, and stoke regional instability.

If Israel continues to receive a blank check for both its violence and its weapons stockpile, then the NPT becomes meaningless. The IAEA becomes toothless. And every future "red line" becomes just another shade of hypocrisy. So with moral clarity on this issue for

any moral human being, it should be easy to say: Israel must be held accountable not only for its actions in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank but also for its nuclear arsenal.

We cannot let the world be dragged into another war, propped up by false pretences and selective enforcement. The Iraq play book should have been retired long ago. But if it's coming off the shelf once more, then so must our collective resistance to it.

To question this double standard shouldn't be radical. To ignore it shouldn't

be so typical.- Middle East Eye,

**Imam Dr. Omar Suleiman is a world renowned scholar and theologically driven activist for human rights. He is the Founder and President of the Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research, and an adjunct professor of Islamic Studies in the Graduate Liberal Studies program at Southern Methodist University as well as member of the Ethics Center Advisory Board. He's also the resident scholar of the Valley Ranch Islamic Center and Co-Chair Emeritus of Faith Forward Dallas at Thanks-Giving Square.*



Party Themes

- Candles
- Tooth pick
- Tulle (Netting)
- Table Confetti
- Plates - Cups
- Coils
- Oasis / Styrafoam
- Tape / Wire
- Flower colour spray
- Baskets
- Polystyrene cut- outs

- Floral & Plain Serviette
- Wet wipes
- Souvenirs
- Thank You Cards
- Disposable overlays
- Bowls - Spoons
- Compotes
- Floral arranegments
- Horns of plenty
- Vine Baskets
- Florist



25 Peter Road, Springfield Park (off Inanda Rd.)
Tel: 031 577 0202/6



Quality & Style

Our customers whether big or small are given the best attention and service at all times.

8 Bauhinia Road, Ind.Township, Stanger
P. O. Box 4701, Stanger 4450
•Tel: 032 551 1113 • Fax: 032 551 4531
Email: yusuf@cantonilounge.co.za

Ibn Umar (r.a.) narrates the Nabi (SAW) said: "The place of prayer (salah) in religion is like the place of the head in the body."
Tabarani

Unrwa chief slams US-Israeli aid distribution system in Gaza as ‘war crime’

MEE’s Gaza-based correspondent says Israeli fire killed 420 Palestinians and wounded 3,000 since aid delivery began three weeks ago, writes *Mera Aladam*

The commissioner-general of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (Unrwa), Philippe Lazzarini, has condemned the “lethal” US-Israeli relief delivery mechanism in Gaza, as over two million are left starving across the besieged enclave.

In a post on X, Lazzarini indicated that Palestinian lives “have been so devalued”, as hundreds have been killed at aid distribution checkpoints.

“It is now the routine to shoot & kill desperate & starving people while they try to collect little food from a company made of mercenaries,” he said.

The UN and aid organisations have accused the US and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), which employs private American security and logistics workers, of militarising humanitarian aid.

“A lame, medievale [sic] and lethal system that is deliber-

ately harming people under the camouflage of ‘humanitarian aid’ with Lies, Deceit, Cruelty,” the Unrwa chief further expressed.

“Inviting starving people to their death is a war crime. Those responsible of this system must be held accountable. This is a disgrace & a stain on our collective consciousness.” Lazzarini urged that humanitarian principles “must be reinstated”, adding that experts must be allowed into the Gaza Strip to provide assistance.

The Israeli government has been accused by rights groups of using starvation as a weapon of war, as Palestinians - including children - have been dying from starvation-related complications.

Aid distribution sites have however become a greater danger than famine according to the people in Gaza.

At least 47 Palestinians were killed since the early hours of Wednesday, including 14 aid workers, Al Jazeera reported. Since GHF launched its operations three weeks ago, MEE’s Gaza-based correspondent has reported that at least 420 Palestinians

have been killed and more than 3,000 others wounded by Israeli fire near three aid distribution sites in central and southern Gaza.

“You go there to get food, but you never know if you’ll make it back,” one Palestinian in Gaza told MEE this week, describing the GHF hubs as “an execution site”. The Palestinian health ministry in Gaza noted that in just the past 24 hours, over 140 people were killed - many of them at the aid site - bringing the death toll to more than 55,630 since 7 October 2023.

Shortage

As the death toll of aid-seekers rise, the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has only deepened.

The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned Israel’s ongoing “unacceptable” killing of relief-seekers in the Gaza Strip, warning that the needs of Palestinians in the besieged enclave “remains unmet”.

UN spokesperson Farhan Haq said at a news conference on Tuesday that the UN chief “continues to call for an immediate and inde-

pendent investigation into all such reports and for accountability to be established”.

Haq stressed that Israel has “clear obligations under international humanitarian law” to facilitate adequate humanitarian relief.

According to Unrwa, the health sector in the blockaded Strip is in a “critical situation”, with 45 percent of essential supplies out of stock.

“Nearly a quarter more could run out within six weeks,” the agency warned, adding that vital medicine and blood products are almost entirely depleted.

Meanwhile, the health ministry in Gaza has indicated that the Israeli army has been prohibiting international organisations from providing fuel aid to hospitals, arguing that the areas experiencing shortages are located in Israeli-designated red zones.

The Israeli military has ordered forcible expulsions across the Gaza Strip, designating red zones as “dangerous combat zones”.

The ministry warned that



the obstruction of fuel aid “threatens to stop operations” in healthcare centres, which are dependent on electrical generators.

“The amount of fuel in the hospitals is enough for three days only,” it further noted.

In a post earlier in the week, director-general of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said that for over a hundred days, no fuel has entered the Gaza

Strip, with attempts to retrieve stocks from red zones denied.

“This is pushing the health system closer to the brink of collapse,” he warned.

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority said the recent blackout was caused by a new outage along one of the main routes, the result of ongoing Israeli attacks on internet and land-line infrastructure.

LAKE GLENCAIRN

The perfect escape

50 Hectare lake with great bass and trout fishing
Stunning chalets with morden finishes
Alpacas, Horses, zebras and more wild game

EXPERIENCE THIS STUNNING PRIVATE GAME FARM IN THE HEART OF UNDERBERG

Imam Gassan Solomon – Moral Revolutionary of the Mimbar

By Faseeg Manie

It is with deep humility, gratitude, and a profound sense of responsibility that I introduce my recently completed book, Imam Gassan Solomon – Moral Revolutionary of the Mimbar.

This is not simply a biography. It is a tribute. A remembrance. A resistance against forgetting. A small act of fidelity to the truth and legacy of a man whose life continues to echo in our hearts, our mosques, and our movements. The decision to write this book grew from an urgent feeling: that too many of our stories, especially those of Black South Africans who stood at the forefront of justice, are being erased or sidelined. In our national consciousness, the contributions of giants like Imam Gassan Solomon are not always given the honour they deserve. Their courage is often flattened, their spiritual leadership reduced, their resistance too easily forgotten.

This book is my humble offering to correct that. Imam Gassan Solomon was a towering figure, not only in the history of South African Islam but in the broader struggle for justice, freedom, and dignity. From the Claremont Main Road Mosque pulpit, where he denounced apartheid with fearless conviction. As a political leader, he became a principled member of Parliament representing the African National Congress. As

a mentor, and senior member of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa, he inspired generations of youth to connect their faith to action. And as a human being, he radiated love, joy, and humility.

But before he was any of these things, he was a young boy raised by devout and principled parents. His father taught him the value of groundedness, of knowing the land, working with one's hands, and practicing the ethics of halal living. His mother ignited his love of books and independent thought. Both of them planted in him the seeds of adl (justice) and ihsan (compassionate excellence), qualities that came to define his leadership.

His upbringing in the Constantia Village of Cape Town, where his grandfather's farm welcomed people of all races and religions, offered a lived lesson in inclusion. Long before the phrase "interfaith solidarity" became common, Imam Gassan was embodying it. These experiences instilled in him an Islam that was not afraid of the world, but engaged with it, transformed it, and loved it.

Imam Gassan loved learning. He completed his studies under immense pressure, even while living in safe houses during apartheid. He read widely, engaging deeply with the writings of al-Ghazali, Sayyid Qutb, Shariati, as well as Sartre and Marx. He was one of the first South African

Imams to draw meaningful connections between Islamic spirituality and historical materialism. But his intellect never made him inaccessible. He was a man of the people, who could speak to a worker, a child, or a parliamentarian with equal warmth. And he lived fully. He enjoyed jazz music, spicy food, soccer, fishing, and kite-making with his grandchildren. He showed us that joy and resistance are not contradictory. That a life of faith is also a life of beauty.

His political awakening was not sudden, but the result of painful encounters with injustice: the 1959 Extension of University Education Act, the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, his family's 1966 forced removal from Constantia, and the 1969 death of his mentor, Imam Abdullah Haron. These moments etched upon his soul the urgent truth that silence in the face of injustice is not an option.

Throughout the 1980s, Imam Gassan became a major target of the apartheid regime. He evaded capture multiple times, disguised in a janazah bier, hiding in an ambulance, outwitting police even at this very mosque. Eventually, he went into exile. But his voice, his moral clarity, never left. If I had to describe him in one phrase, it would be this: a moral revolutionary.

Not just a scholar or political figure. He was a bridge between the sacred and the secular, the mimbar and the

movement, the Qur'an and the streets. He did not see Islam as a private refuge but as a public responsibility. He believed that prayer, fasting, and spiritual devotion must be linked to social justice, political integrity, and the defense of the voiceless. He insisted that Islam must never be reduced to identity or ritual.

It must be lived, as a force of liberation. His work with the United Democratic Front, the Call of Islam, and his fearless khutbahs were all part of a single, coherent message: faith without justice is hypocrisy. He stood in solidarity with Christians, Jews, and secular activists, not despite his Islam, but because of it. This book also explores his mentoring of youth.

He did not raise followers, he nurtured thinkers. He wanted young Muslims to ask: What does Allah require of us in the face of oppression? He helped a generation to connect the Qur'an to protest, and the Sunnah to sacrifice. In our current moment of global disorder, from apartheid in Palestine to spiritual decay in our own communities, Imam Gassan's legacy could not be more relevant. He reminds us that Islam is not about isolation. It is about courageous engagement. He calls us to ask: What does it mean to be Muslim when bombs fall, when hunger spreads, when truth is silenced? I wrote this book because I believe his legacy is not over. His work is not finished. His memory is not



a relic of the past it is a summons to the present. This masjid, this city, this country still needs his voice. My hope is that readers, young and old, will come to see in Imam Gassan a mirror and a map. A mirror that reflects what faith should look like when rooted in truth. And a map for how we must live, lead, and love in a broken world. I offer this book not as a final word, but as an invitation. Let us not just admire Imam Gassan's life. Let us live it. May we be the echoes of his freedom.

**About the Author: Faseeg Manie is a retired educational leader with over 40 years of experience transforming underperforming schools in economically disadvantaged areas of the Western Cape.*

His career began in the 1980s at Westridge High School in Mitchells Plain, where he implemented creative and innovative methods for teaching English, effectively addressing the challenges of under-resourced environments.



From the
Fountains of
the Maloti
Mountains
Southern Drakensberg



By
LAKE GLENCAIRN

Pure Refreshing Spring Water

Want to stock AQUA?
Contact Us on 039 317 3036
Follow us on IG at @aquaspringwater

LOCAL NEWS

Protesters along Comrades route tell Israeli runners they not welcome



Palestine solidarity groups, including members of the Economic Freedom Front (EFF), lined parts of the Comrades Marathon route from Pietermaritzburg to Durban to protest against the participation of Israeli runners. The protesters held up banners that read: “Stop the Genocide” - “Phansi Apartheid Israel!” and “Stand on the right side of history – end the genocide NOW.” A huge banner was placed across a bridge along the route that read “Comrades vs Apartheid.” Mongezi Twala , the chairperson of EFF in KZN condemned the organisers for allowing Israelis to take part in the Marathon.

Al-Qalam

Southern Africa’s Muslim Newspaper

Your Window to
the Most Trusted
News Source.



 @Al-Qalam

 @Al-Qalam_newspaper

 @Al-Qalam20

FIND US ONLINE @ www.alqalam.co.za