

A1 - Qalam

Southern Africa's Muslim Newspaper

Volume 51 | No. 9 | September 2025 | Rabi ul Akhir 1447 A.H.

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LOCAL NEWS

No mountain too high for Cape youth in their quest for Palestine activism

By Azra Hoosen

In Cape Town, solidarity with Palestine is being expressed in fresh and inspiring ways, not just through marches or social media campaigns, but on mountain trails, sports fields and at community gatherings. These youth-led initiatives are drawing young South Africans into spaces that are both healthy and purposeful, uniting them around a cause that reaches far beyond their own communities.

At the forefront of this movement is Youth for Al-Quds (Y4AQuds), a youth-led organisation dedicated to raising awareness about the genocide in Palestine and the struggle for a free and liberated Masjidul Aqsa. Their most recent hike, held in partnership with Hikers for Humanity, was more than just a walk in nature, it was a chance for young people to come together, bond and show solidarity.

Maryam Mobarra Rinqest, the organisation’s media and social media coordinator,

told *Al-Qalam* that the hike is a Y4AQuds initiative to bring youth in and around Cape Town closer to the Palestinian cause by partaking in activities which youth enjoy. “When we organise hikes with Hikers for Humanity, we aim to include youth groups and youth with free time to join to show their solidarity while in nature,” she added.

For Maryam, the work is as much about empowering young South Africans as it is about amplifying Palestinian voices. Leading the social media team, she has seen first-hand how youth with little to no prior media experience gain confidence and skills while using their platforms to highlight the plight of Palestine.

What stands out about these initiatives is how they affect young people on a deeper level. Beyond simply learning about the Palestinian struggle, participants are finding purpose and community. “Youth become more aware and feel that they are a part of something bigger.

They feel their participation brings meaning and solidarity to people who are marginalised and oppressed,” she explained.

Maryam noted that the events also nurture connection among the youth themselves. Each activity becomes a chance to work together, learn from one another and live out the values of teamwork, solidarity and humanity.

With the daily news reports from Palestine often heavy and heartbreaking, these events offer something different: a healthy outlet and a hopeful way to engage. “We have seen our active youth more engaged; they want to do more. They are eager to understand the history and how they are able to carry this cause to a free Palestine. Social media campaigns have also become a meaningful tool for youth to use their voice,” said Maryam. According to Shabaana Chowgla, a Y4AQuds member, participating in marches, hikes and pickets for Palestine has been a meaning-



ful experience because it allowed her to stand up for justice while being part of a larger collective voice.

“Through Youth4AQuds, I’ve grown in leadership and teamwork, and it’s reminded me that working for a just cause is not only about supporting others, but also about building my own character and compassion,” said Shabaana.

Parents and communities have also welcomed this involvement, often expressing pride in seeing young people step into solidarity work. From hikes and protests to

nasheed nights and game evenings, these events provide an environment where activism and healthy social engagement go hand in hand. For Y4AQuds, solidarity has also meant connecting with well-known Palestinian activists visiting South Africa, such as Muna El Kurd, Ahmad Ghannam and Hamza Chalan.

According to Maryam, these encounters leave a strong impression on local youth, who are inspired by how international figures use their influence for justice.

Maryam told *Al-Qalam*

that doing this work is highly rewarding, especially as you see the awareness bring change to Palestine and the global community at large. “It is great to work with youth, encouraging and skill-sharing with them to keep them motivated and engaged on a cause this important,” she said.

Each initiative, whether it’s a climb up a mountain or a campaign on social media, is already making a difference. These efforts are giving South African youth not just a role in global solidarity, but also a space to grow, connect and find purpose together.

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'Deep love from tip of Africa to Gulf of victory'

South African Palestine activist Dr Fatima Hendricks shares her thoughts and expectations as her boat sails steadily towards the shores of Gaza. **Ismail Suder** interviewed her.

Cape Town occupational therapist, Dr Fatima Hendricks who is sailing towards Gaza in a "flotilla" convoy with 12 other activists says she dreams of "seeing the shores of Gaza and engaging in a language of tears with my Palestinian comrades."

"It is a language of deep love and affection from the tip of Africa to the Gulf of Victory," she added.

Speaking from the boat, Hendricks, who is a member of Healthcare Workers 4 Palestine South Africa, told *Al-Qalam* that she joined the flotilla to break the siege of Gaza in a direct nonviolent action.

The boats are carrying much-needed food aid and baby formula for the disparate people of the enclave who are systematically be-

ing starved to death. The first boats are expected to reach the shores of Gaza in about a week.

Asked what goes through her mind as her boat steadily sails towards the shores of Gaza, Hendricks said she thinks about Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the eve of Badr where the Muslims were 313 against a mighty army.

"We are 40 little fragile boats against the mightiest occupying power in the world. Yet the people sail. The Palestinian people have stood against the mightiest army in the world with their voices, their slingshots and stones", she said.

Hendricks said her fellow activists on the boat are from South Africa, Algeria and Ireland.

Al-Qalam asked what meals were being served on board, she said everyone had to prepare their own food – just enough to sustain them. "We prep our own meals such as tuna, pasta, and boiled eggs. Simple food and small portions

– Gaza is starving!"

A few nights ago, a storm at sea caused the boat to rock violently, but the captain assured them that it was going to be okay, although a few passengers suffered seasickness.

"Some crew members experienced sea sickness but for most it's settled by now. We have two medical doctors on board, and myself as an occupational therapist, so from a health and well-being perspective we are in good spirits."

Hendricks pointed out that there were now five South Africans sailing across three flotilla boats including Nkosi Mandla Mandela – two other SA activists who recently joined the flotilla are Palestine activists "Zukiswa & Reaaz."

On her Instagram page, Hendricks has posted many videos showcasing everyday life aboard, cleaning, cooking, washing clothes and making wudu with sea water – and giving important messages as to why peaceful resistance to the



occupation was important.

Meanwhile, back home, the Global Movement to Gaza-SA said in a statement that the resistance of Palestinians against Apartheid and settler colonialism resonates with the majority of South Africans "as we hold dear the fight for freedom, human rights and justice."

Feroza Mayet, one of the

spokespersons for the Global Movement to Gaza-SA, said that resistance to the "Zionist Project" was gaining momentum across the globe, adding that millions of people are marching across major cities in the world calling on their governments to end the Genocide. "The resistance of Palestinians against Apartheid and settler colonialism resonates with the

majority of South Africans as we hold dear the fight for freedom, human rights and justice."

In Gaza, videos after videos show children singing praises for the 40-boat flotilla heading to their shores. In one video, a child, when asked what she would like from the boats, she replied excitedly: "I want chocolates and toys".



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LOCAL NEWS

Minara Chamber announces finalists for Business Recognition Awards

The Chamber will present a Lifetime Achiever Award to Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, founder of Gift of the Givers, in recognition of his exceptional humanitarian work, writes an *Al-Qalam* Reporter.

The Minara Chamber of Commerce has announced the finalists for the Minara Business Recognition Awards 2025, marking a special 25th anniversary milestone of the Chamber, celebrating business and community excellence.

The finalists represent South Africa's diverse talent, innovation, and leadership across multiple industries. Winners will be announced at the main Gala Dinner event taking place on Friday, October 24, 2025 at the NMJ Conference Centre, Durban.

Chamber spokesperson Amina Haniff said: "This prestigious event will bring together the nation's leading business minds, entrepreneurs, professionals, and community champions for an unforgettable evening of recognition, inspiration, and celebration.

"Marking its 25th milestone year, the Minara Chamber continues its tradition of recognising individuals and organisations who exemplify entrepreneurial spirit, resilience, and meaningful contributions to both economic development and societal well-being," Haniff said.

She added that the 2025 finalists "represent a dynamic cross-section of industries, reflecting the breadth of talent and enterprise within our community."

Finalists have been named in the following categories:

Business Entity of the Year – Large: Gorimas, HBZ Bank, Farm Fresh Chickens

Business Entity of the Year – Medium: Valternative Energy, Africa Flavours Distributors (Pty) Ltd, Iqlaas Foods

Business Entity of the Year – Start-up: Racket Rescue, Plastimed, Krypton Web

Businessperson of the Year: Fathima Gany, Ismail Simjee, Abdul Gani Rahman

Businesswoman of the Year: Amina Abrahams, Salma Mahomed

Young Achiever of the Year: Rishaad Joosab, Zaid Paruk;

Community Builder of the Year: Hafsa Carrim, Hoosein Saloojee, Shamsudeen Moola

Professional Achiever of the Year: Aziz Tayob, Ebrahim Asmal, Mumtaz Peerbhay

The Chamber said it was especially honoured to present the 2025 Lifetime Achiever Award to Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, founder of Gift of the Givers, in recognition of his exceptional hu-

manitarian work and visionary leadership that continues to inspire South Africans and global citizens alike.

According to the Chamber, this year's awards received a record number of high-calibre nominations, a testament to the enduring strength, talent, and innovation within South Africa's business and professional communities."

Following a rigorous adjudication process, winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner where the keynote speaker will be business leader and renowned CEO, Lincoln Mali.

The Minara Chamber has also extended its sincere gratitude to its Platinum sponsor, Standard Bank, and supporting partners Adams & Adams, Bryte Takaful, IBV Group, and AMKA Group.

The prestigious event will bring together the nation's leading business minds, entrepreneurs, professionals, and community champions for an unforgettable evening of recognition, inspiration, and celebration, Haniff said.



Aman School Lebanon is changing lives – thanks to AMA



In 2021, as Africa Muslims Agency (AMA) worked in refugee camps across Lebanon, one reality became painfully clear: thousands of children were being denied access to education simply because of their refugee status.

Many tried to study in tents with no materials, no teachers, and no hope of ever stepping into a real classroom. That year, with the support of South African donors across the globe, AMA opened Aman School Lebanon – a dedicated space where refugee children could learn, feel safe, and rebuild their futures.

Since its establishment, the school has welcomed more than 1,400 children through its doors. In the 2024–2025 academic year,

around 400 students are enrolled, guided by 26 teachers and supported by a staff of 42. For children who once faced a future without opportunity, the school has become both a sanctuary and a springboard.

The impact is best described by the students themselves. "At Aman, I found the confidence to speak up and share my ideas," reflects young Hayat Alo. Raghad Haj Hashem, adds, "This school feels like a second home where my teachers truly care." For Mohammad Al-Yousef, the transformation is clear: "Aman gave me the chance to dream bigger and believe I can achieve it."

Jana Fares, one of the dedicated educators at Aman, explains: "My dream for Aman is for every student to feel

seen, safe, and intelligent." Lebanon remains home to nearly 400,000 registered Syrian refugee children, more than half of whom are still out of school.

Against this backdrop, Aman School stands as a beacon of what is possible when children are given access to quality education. It has restored dignity, inspired hope, and given hundreds of children the tools to shape their own futures.

An AMA spokesperson said: "As the new school year begins in September, AMA calls on donors to continue supporting Aman School. With your help, even more children will be able to step into classrooms, open their books, and dream of the brighter tomorrow they deserve."

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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

20 years of Qur’anic recitation celebrated

By Azra Hoosen

From nine-year-old beginners to seasoned champions, voices of every age and background filled Masjidul Mubarak in Belhar during the 20th International Qur’aan Recital Awards (IQRA) recently.

The event, now a fixture on the South African Islamic calendar, once again reminded audiences that Qur’aanic recitation is as much about nurturing hearts as it is about ranking winners.

This year’s finals brought together nearly 50 contestants, representing provinces such as Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape, alongside international entrants from Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Zambia, Tanzania, Zanzibar and the USA.

Organised by the South African Qur’aan Union, Madrasah Tarteelul Qur’aan, Awqaf SA and Masjidul Mubarak, the annual competition has grown from its modest beginnings in 2005 as a Cape Town provin-

cial contest into one of the country’s premier Qur’aan platforms, drawing reciters from across South Africa and abroad.

Founder, Chairperson of the South African Qur’aan Union and coordinator of IQRA, Sheikh Muntahaa Kenny told *Al-Qalam* about the competition’s evolution: “Today, we not only have categories for different age groups but also a female division, which has broadened beyond Cape Town to include contestants from other provinces, and the standard is higher than before.”

This year also highlighted the role of families in nurturing reciters. Multiple siblings from both the Allie and De Vries households secured top positions. “Families play a crucial role in developing young reciters. It cannot stop at memorisation alone.

Parents need to continuously encourage their children, whether through deeper Qur’aanic sciences or by nurturing proficiency in public recitation,” he said. The youngest participant this year was just nine years

old, which Sheikh Muntahaa recognises as a sign of the competition’s bright future.

The finals reminded audiences that recitation competitions are never predictable. “We’ve seen contestants who topped the preliminaries not feature at all in the finals, and others who placed third in the prelims emerge as clear winners,” he said.

Sheikh Muntahaa noted that at the end of the day, it comes down to who performs best on that particular day.

The “Champs of Champs” category, which brings together past winners with international guests, was won by Ahmad Saalim of Tanzania. Cape Town’s Abdurahmaan de Vries and Zanzibar’s Mi’raaj Khamis took second and third place respectively.

Over the years, IQRA has served as a launchpad for South African reciters on the global stage, with participants excelling in competitions abroad. “As a country, we’ve gained confidence in public recitation. Our name

is recognised internationally. Practice and experience have been key ingredients in that success,” Sheikh Muntahaa explained.

Still, challenges remain: “Many of our reciters come from non-Arabic backgrounds. They can recite beautifully but sometimes lack understanding of the meanings. This affects how they stop or continue verses. We need to develop that aspect if we want to keep raising our international standing.”

To bridge the gap, IQRA has invested in developmental programs between prelims and finals, with senior teachers mentoring contestants in Cape Town, Benoni and Pietermaritzburg. “KwaZulu-Natal, in particular, has steadily produced a growing number of talented reciters,” Sheikh Muntahaa noted.

For Sheikh Muntahaa, the essence of IQRA has never been about trophies or monetary rewards. “We deliberately don’t publicise prize amounts. We don’t want material gain to be the motivation. What inspires us are



moments of sincerity, like when contestants help one another, even while competing against each other. That spirit of Qur’aan is what we want to nurture,” he said.

As IQRA turns 20, its ambitions are widening. “We want to see this model replicated in Southern Africa. Countries like Tanzania and Zanzibar already send contestants. Our hope is that other neighbours will also adopt this initiative to train and showcase reciters,” Sheikh Muntahaa said.

Sustaining such growth, however, depends on continued community and in-

stitutional support. Organisers expressed gratitude to sponsors and partners, while urging greater involvement from businesses and individuals.

“At its heart, IQRA is not just a competition. It is about honouring the Qur’aan, raising the standard of recitation, and preparing young South Africans to carry the beauty of the Qur’aan to the world,” Sheikh Muntahaa said.

Visual recordings of the event are available on the South African Qur’aan Union’s Facebook and YouTube platforms.



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EDITORIAL



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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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.

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‘Pro-Israel supporter Charlie Kirk had blood plastered on his soul’

Help me understand this: Why is there this fixation over the assassination of Charlie Kirk in Utah, dubbed the red-neck part of the USA?

This guy is made out to be a hero. He was a pro Trumpeter-Vancer. Charlie Kirk was indeed a strong supporter of Israel and Zionism. He was licensed by Netanyahu.

So why is he plugged as a hero-saint when, like his captains, he has blood plastered on his soul? I have spent much time trying to fathom this person. The on-

line media is doing a Goebels justifying Naziism as part of the final solution.

He consistently defended Israel’s genocidal actions and countered what he saw as anti-Israel narratives on US campuses. Kirk’s pro-Israel stance was evident in his social media posts. Go look him up before it’s too late.

*He Defended Israeli actions in Gaza: Kirk blamed Hamas for civilian casualties and compared the situation to World War II Japan, stating that Israel wasn’t starving Palestinians in Gaza, despite reports of blocked aid and violence

against aid seekers.

*He spoke out against anti-Israel rhetoric: He actively challenged lies about Israel and stood with Jewish students facing hostility, earning him recognition from Israeli leaders like Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who called him a “friend of Israel” and “lion-hearted”. The sheer toxicity underlying his persona is masked by a pro-Zionist captured media.

Those criminals who sacrificed him to appease the Gods of ignorance have won, but let the fruits of their victory become ashes in their mouths. The alleged

assassin of Charlie Kirk is a 22-year-old Tyler Robinson who is a male Cacaussian – translated a white man. Try imagining if he happened to be Black or of Middle Eastern origin.

By now we’d be flooded with plants alluding to his radicalisation and possible indoctrination-association by virtue of his skin colour and religious affinity with the maligned Muslim groups. Awkward questions and investigations need to be asked and conducted.

At 22 what led to his alleged radicalisation? His sniper skills? His arms training? If he was a black



or of Middle Eastern origin, we would’ve been flooded with manufactured aka fabricated facts by now.

Did the media in their manufactured redemption of Charlie Kirk allude to like a Saul of Tarsus type experiencing a damascene

moment and doing a 360 degree turn against Zionism?

I don’t buy it, and neither should you.

Saber Jhazbhay
Attorney
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A headshot of Dr. David A. Clark, a middle-aged man with grey hair, a beard, and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt.

The tide is turning, citizens are rising, governments are responding, and popular media is shifting at the behest of a manifest reality. Against this, Israel increases its bellicosity, its allies are splintering, and its citizens fragment. All the while Palestinians are growing in faith and resilience, knowing that in their suffering they have gifted the world more than they have lost: humanity and conscience, the ingredients of a renewed civilization.





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OPINION

After Doha attack, Middle-East could look to Türkiye for security interests

By Mariam Jooma Carikci

News of the September 9 Israeli attack on Qatar’s capital Doha left even the most seasoned analysts in shock. Two years of daily bombings in Gaza and repeated strikes on Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon showed Israel flouts international law. But striking Qatar—a hub for backchannel diplomacy and key to hostage negotiations—was a shock, least of all to the Qataris.

Since 1996, Doha has hosted the largest US base in the Middle East, built with \$1 billion of its own funds. But the events of September 9 have crystallised a pre-existing shift: the region no longer assumes U.S. security guarantees will always buffer allies – and is increasingly proving to be a liability against Israeli aggression.

With the special ‘non-NATO’ ally’s status offering little more than the patronizing ‘wanna be’ status, the one country that offers the potential to reshape the region is

ironically a NATO member. As the only Muslim-majority NATO power with sovereign airspace control and a growing defense base, Türkiye is positioning itself as a linchpin for Muslim security.

When Türkiye joined NATO in 1952 it did so during the cold war under a government that believed the security of the country lay with the West. This despite the Allied war against the Ottomans that broke up the region and created modern Türkiye.

Speaking in Ottawa after the ratification of Turkish ascension into NATO, PM Adnan Menderes said Türkiye enters as “...as an equal member... the Atlantic Pact... a new and important step for the security of the democratic world...” Seventy three years later, as that “democratic world” remains paralyzed against Israeli impunity, Türkiye is leveraging its NATO membership to reconstruct the meaning of collective security in the Middle East, forcing capitals to reassess reliance on Washington. But Türkiye’s value lies not only in NATO membership but also in its rapidly expanding

defense industry. The latest evidence of its substantial military footprint is the recent agreement between Turkish Aerospace Industries (TUSAS) and Airbus on the delivery of an estimated 30 Turkish Hurjet Trainers to Spain. Delivery of the jets is planned for 2028 and at present comes with a price tag of around \$1.6 billion.

The July agreement signals EU confidence and could challenge Washington’s EU ties. Importantly, the Turkish system doesn’t just offer an alternative to Western security systems, but NATO standards combine with local kit to create a credible, interoperable but independent – Middle East security core.

The plan to create a Turkish manufactured heavy industry precedes President Erdogan’s tenure and was initiated by his political mentor, Necmettin Erbakan. Erbakan had plans to implement a vision of a home-grown military industry that would not only see Turkish manufacturing but also export its knowledge to the Muslim world. But his plan was blocked by the dominant secular estab-

lishment. Under Erdogan, policies improving access to water, health and housing mainstreamed Islamist politics and reinforced the idea of a self-sufficient Türkiye.

Türkiye’s export credibility is evident in its revenue figures.

According to the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) and the Turkish Exporters’ Assembly (TTİM) as of May 2025, Turkey’s defense exports totalled \$2.98 billion, a 28.9% increase from the same period in 2024. Earlier, 2025 data showed \$2.2 billion, up 67% year-on-year. Exports now reach 185 countries, with over 230 product types, and the sector accounts for about 3% of Turkey’s total exports. Notably, NATO allies make up over 50% of its consumer base.

With Spains’ selection of HURJET trainers, Pakistan’s induction of Turkish UCAV’s, frequent joint air and naval drills in an exercise-tested partnership and Somalia’s hosting of Türkiye’s largest overseas training base that now includes a 10-year maritime defense pact Turkish



defense capabilities could span from the Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea. Yet military capability only deters when paired with collective political will.

Herein lies the greatest test for the new Middle eastern security framework. The Doha attacks galvanized rare OIC unity on September 15, but statements mean little without concrete measures. There are two levers of influence that can be applied on Israel, only one of which is the military coalition of Arab-Muslim states under a NATO-standard hub. The other is the crucial pressure that the Gulf states can apply using their energy, LNG, finance and trade networks to pressure Israel and its supply chains. As Türkiye and

Qatar both have access and goodwill from the Hamas leadership, it will be necessary for them to formalize their security pact with early warning and air-defense layers. Türkiye could also invite the GCC to participate in the Türkiye-Pakistan exercises to give substantive weight to a regional military force. With Iran’s influence significantly curtailed after the fall of Bashar al-Assad it has no choice but to choose cooperation with its Arab neighbors. Proxy actors cannot replace coordinated state policy among Arab and Muslim nations.

By leading, Türkiye and Qatar can show that pro-sovereignty offers a better path to stability than foreign interests.

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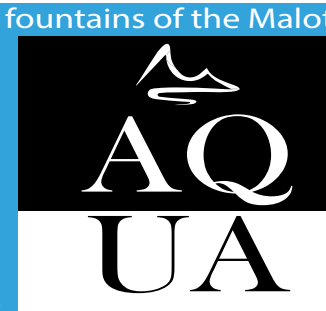
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Enriching Mawlid al-Nabi celebrations through the Sirah



By Imam A. Rashied Omar

As we bid farewell to the blessed month of Rabi al-Awwal, the month in which Muslims across the globe commemorate the birth of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it is fitting to reflect on the ways we celebrate his life. Our communities have long upheld beautiful traditions during this month: gatherings of remembrance (dhikr), the recitation of devotional poetry (qasa'id), and the singing of melodious mawlud verses that nurture love for the Prophet (pbuh). These practices are

treasures handed down to us by our elders, and they continue to nourish our hearts and souls.

Yet, as with all cultural traditions, there is always space for renewal and enrichment. For several years I have advocated for a simple addition to our Mawlid al-Nabi celebrations: that each year alongside our devotional gatherings, we commit to reading a book on the Sirah, biography and life-journey of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This is not to replace our cherished traditions but to complement them with deeper knowledge. By engaging the Sirah annually, we ensure that our love for the Prophet (pbuh) is joined with an ever-growing understanding of his mission, character, and teachings.

Reading the Sirah: A Living Tradition

To illustrate the value of this practice, I wish to reflect on one of the most significant modern works

on the Prophet's life in English: Muhammad: Man and Prophet by Adil Salahi. Published in 2008, this extensive biography of more than 800 pages offers not just a detailed narrative of the Prophet's life but also thoughtful analysis. It shows how the Prophet's example can continue to guide Muslims in today's world. Two contributions in Salahi's work stand out.

The first concerns the oft-recited account of the judgement on the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayzah following the Battle of Khandaq.

Classical Sirah sources, most notably Ibn Ishaq (d. 767), report that Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, acting as arbitrator, decreed that Qurayzah men be executed and their women and children enslaved for treason. Later scholars sought to justify this verdict by noting that collective punishment for treason was common in wartime, even in modern history. Adil Salahi, however, reviews this account carefully and

finds it inconsistent with Islamic principles of justice. Drawing on the research of Professor W. N. Arafat, published in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1976, he notes that the narrative of mass execution appears only in Ibn Ishaq's version and not in other early Sirah works. Arafat, furthermore, carefully examined isnad (chains of transmission) and textual evidence, concluding that the account was likely exaggerated or fabricated, and that early Muslim jurists did not rely on it as a legal precedent.

The prominent Muslim jurist, Imam al-Awza'i (d. 789) explicitly condemned punishing the many for the sins of the few. This interpretation restores the Prophet's image as the embodiment of justice and mercy, while also protecting Muslims from internalizing harmful attitudes, such as anti-Semitism, that have no place in Islam. This lesson is especially relevant in our time, as we bear witness to the unfolding genocide

in Gaza, reminding us that standing for justice must never descend into hatred of entire peoples.

The second major contribution of Salahi's book concerns the age of Sayyidah A'ishah at the time of her marriage to the Prophet (pbuh). The commonly circulated claim is that she was nine years old. After carefully re-examining the evidence, Salahi concludes that she was likely closer to twenty. He is not alone in this view; other Muslim scholars have advanced similar arguments.

This re-evaluation is significant, for it underscores the need to revisit inherited reports in the light of Qur'anic principles, sound hadith, and historical context. It reminds us that the Muslim intellectual tradition is dynamic, not static, and that fidelity to the Prophet's example includes exercising critical reason alongside reverence. Many of us also cherish the memory of being lulled to sleep as children by the sweet melodies

of Mawlid al-Nabi. That tradition of love should continue. Yet alongside it, let us nurture another tradition: gifting our children books on the life of the Prophet (pbuh). In this way, we pass on not only devotion but also the knowledge that shapes character and faith.

As we close this year's Rabi al-Awwal, let us embrace this simple but transformative practice: making the reading of the Sirah part of our Mawlid al-Nabi celebrations. The best tribute we can offer the Prophet (pbuh) is not only to sing his praises but to live by his example with knowledge, love, and understanding.

"Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings upon the Prophet. Believers, send blessings and salutations upon him with all respect." (Qur'an 33:56).

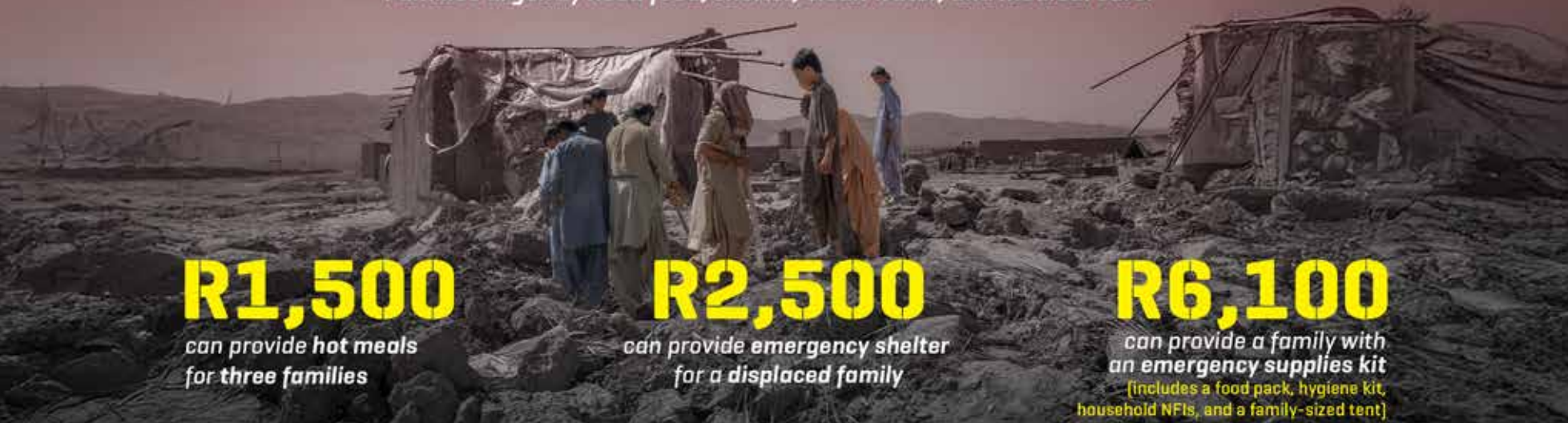
May our Mawlid al-Nabi celebrations always be filled with devotion, reflection, and the resolve to embody the Prophetic way in our lives.



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- ½ a teaspoon turmeric powder
- 3 cups Adhil Basmati rice
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 2 elachi pods
- 2 cloves
- 7 medium potatoes
- Pinch of egg yellow powder mixed with 1 tablespoon water
- Oil for deep frying potatoes
- 3 tablespoon ghee
- ½ cup oil
- ½ cup water
- 4 boiled eggs

Method:

- Step 1**
1. Marinade chicken or lamb with Gorimas Mrs M Kashmiri Masala and 3 tablespoons ghee for at least 2 hours or overnight
- Step 2**
2. Wash and boil masoor dhal with the turmeric for approximately 20 minutes until half done. Strain and keep aside.
- Step 3**
1. Boil rice with cinnamon sticks, elachi & cloves to rice packet instructions. Strain and keep aside.
- Step 4**
1. Colour potatoes with egg yellow mixture and fry till done. Keep aside
- Step 5**
1. To a 30cm flat bottomed, add oil. Add marinated chicken or meat. Layer lentils evenly over chicken or meat. Place potatoes over lentils. Finally add rice. Dot the rice with the 3 tablespoons ghee. Pour half a cup of water over the rice.
- Step 6**
1. For chicken biryani, cook on stove top for approximately 20 minutes, then transfer to preheated 180 degrees celcius for 45 minutes.
For lamb biryani, cook on stove top for 30 minutes, then transfer to a preheated 180 degree celcius oven for 1 hour.
- Step 7**
1. In the last 5 minutes add the boiled eggs
Serve hot with raita, salad and papadums

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‘How I got my fix of dragon eye, and snake fruit from Indonesia’

Journalist Ismail Suder loves tasting exotic fruit from different countries, so when a relative was visiting Indonesia, he begged him to bring him some.

I’m going to Jakarta, what can I get you? my nephew Ahmed asked nonchalantly.

Bring me exotic Indonesian fruit, like rambutan, I exclaimed. He scratched his head, and said, “all right, I will see what I can do.”

I love fruit, especially exotic ones. In the dozens of countries that I had travelled to, the first thing I would do is head to the bustling markets to hunt for exotic fruits unavailable in South Africa.

In the 90’s, during a wild expedition to the Amazon Jungle, I was curious about the fruits that grew in the jungle. My tribal Indian guide directed me to a tree full of guarana berries – of course I didn’t know what

it was at the time, but it was delicious.

In a fruit market on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, I gorged on cherimoya or custard apples right there and then like there was no one watching. Oh, and not to forget the sweetest baby papayas – bright orange inside – a rare variety in this country. But back to Ahmed in Indonesia. Needless to say, I kept pestering Ahmed for days asking whether he’d seen any rambutans in the street markets – a bright red fruit with a hairy outer skin, similar to a lychee.

“Out of season”, he snapped.

Well, what’s available out there, I asked in anticipation.

He then went to describe the fruits, the names of which he didn’t know. He sent me photos of the fruit, and thanks to the marvel

of internet, I was able to identify the fruits that were piled high on tables in the market. The first was a kiwi-like tropical fruit called “chikoo” commonly known as sapodilla or sawo. The fruit has a sweet, malty taste with a bit of caramel and brown sugar.

“Buy it!”, I barked like a sergeant major.

Now, Ahmed, is not a fruit lover so asking him to wander through a busy Jakarta market to fruit hunt for me, was not exactly his cup of tea, so to speak.

In another market that he visited, I shopped for exotic fruit remotely, via a video call.

As he ambled through the throngs of people in the municipal market, I spotted something that looked like a bunch of lychee. Wait! what’s that you just passed. He backtracked and spoke to the seller. “He says it’s

Longan...very sweet.” Get a bunch, I boomed on the phone.

“But...but, customs may confiscate it,” he protested. Just stash it in your bag and hope for the best!, I said. For a moment I felt as though I was doing something illegal, but the thought soon passed.

Minutes after his plane landed at King Shaka Airport this week, I was there, eagerly waiting to take possession of it.

I saw Ahmed’s portly figure exit from the arrivals hall, and rushed towards him. Do you have it, I asked, almost breathlessly.

“Yes, Alhamdulillah, he said with a smile. When we got to the undercover airport parking, I demanded to see the stash, er, exotic fruit and my happiness knew no bounds. In the packet, there was one dragon giant fruit weighing over a kilo - and



Exotic fruits from Indonesia survived the plane ride to Durban, displayed here with the backdrop of the harbour.



Snake fruit has a scaly outer skin resembling that of a snake

the largest I’ve ever seen. There was a small bunch of longans (also known as dragon’s eye), which I tasted immediately – it has a sweet musky flavour and tastes something between a grape and a lychee with a chocolaty aftertaste.

But the surprise in the pack was three “snake fruit”, a strange scaly fruit that genuinely has a texture of snake skin, SubahanAllah! The unusual fruit, native to Java

in Indonesia, has a crunchy taste with faint hints of apple, banana and pineapple. Although snake fruit is not my thing, I relished the experience of tasting fruit from this far off Muslim land.

Where are you going next, I cheekily asked Ahmed.

“I know what you’re thinking...forget it, it’s not going to happen”, he said with a snigger.

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MOTORING

No choice but to take the Haval H6 seriously

By Imraan Buccus

There’s something incredibly satisfying about watching a brand grow into its own. When the Haval H6 first arrived in South Africa few years back, it was a quiet contender. Not many knew or had confidence in the brand.

Fast forward to 2025, and the conversation feels different. GWM is no longer “trying to make it” – it has made it. Sitting comfortably in the local top 10, the Chinese manufacturer is no longer the underdog. And with the latest update to the H6, Haval is clearly here to prove that it intends to stay.

The H6 has been a big part of this success story, offering buyers an affordable, well-specced family SUV at a time when the market was crying out for exactly that. This new model isn’t a ground-up redesign, but rather a careful and confident evolution of a proven formula. The test drive was rewarding. One soon realises that this isn’t just a facelift but a refinement that shows Haval is listening.

What’s the inside like?

Inside, the H6 makes an excellent first impression. The cabin is draped in black trim that feels both smart and practical, particularly for families. The first thing you notice is the new 14.6-inch

infotainment screen dominating the dashboard. It’s large and crisp, and wireless smartphone connectivity now comes standard, this is a welcome addition. The screen is centrally positioned, which might bother some drivers used to a more cockpit-like setup, but it actually makes sense if you think of the H6 as a car designed for family use. Everyone gets an equal share of the experience.

Storage is generous, with plenty of nooks and spaces for the inevitable odds and ends that come with everyday life. The 560-litre boot is one of the largest in its class, making it perfect for road trips or school runs with sports gear in tow.

Good looks

The H6 has always been a good-looking SUV, but the tweaks here make it feel sharper and more assertive. Up front, the new grille immediately grabs your attention, flanked by fresh LED headlights with a teardrop signature that gives the car a touch of elegance. The bumper has been reworked, too, adding a hint of aggression without losing the family-friendly appeal. The 19-inch black alloys – now standard across the range – give it a more premium stance. I suspect South Africans will love that detail. At the rear, the full-width light bar is gone, replaced with more conventional split tail lamps and a bold “GWM” badge across the tailgate. It’s

a small but telling move, a sign that the brand is aligning its visual identity across all its sub-brands.

On the Road

The launch route gave us a good mix of city streets, open highways and a bit of rougher road surface, and the H6 handled it all with confidence. The 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine now produces 170kW and 380Nm, jump from the outgoing model. The result is a car that feels punchier and more willing, whether you’re overtaking on the highway or pulling away from a robot. Turbo lag is there, but only just, and the dual-clutch gearbox shifts smoothly under normal driving. It can hunt for gears if you push it hard, but this isn’t a performance SUV – it’s built for comfort and daily usability, and in that department, it excels.

It comes with a 7Yr/200 000km Warranty and a 7Yr/75 000km Service Plan. On the hybrid models, you are rewarded with a 8Yr/150 000km warranty on the battery components. All of these warranties are transferable from first owner to the next owners.

Ride quality is impressively supple, soaking up bumps and imperfections without feeling floaty. Road and wind noise are kept to a minimum, which makes long drives less tiring. This is no doubt an important factor for family buyers.



Safety matters

Safety remains a strong point for Haval. The H6 keeps its five-star NCAP rating and comes loaded with tech like Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Keep Assist, Forward Collision Warning and a whole suite of driver aids. It’s the kind of safety net that gives you extra peace of mind, whether you’re driving through Joburg traffic or heading down to the coast.

Pricing is still one of the H6’s biggest selling points. The range kicks off at R495 500 and tops out at R686

500 for the hybrid flagship – remarkable value considering the level of kit you get. The seven-year warranty and service plan add even more reassurance, and hybrid buyers get extra coverage for the battery components.

What’s the verdict ?

What stands out most about this updated H6 is how mature it feels. The styling tweaks are tasteful, the cabin is a genuinely nice place to spend time, and the drive strikes the right balance between comfort and performance. Yes, the user interface could still be more

intuitive, and run-flat tyres remain a divisive choice in a market like ours where replacements can be tricky to source outside major cities.

But these are small complaints in what is otherwise a very convincing package.

Haval has clearly been paying attention to its customers and refining what was already a winning recipe. The result is an SUV that feels more confident, more premium and more aligned with what South African buyers want. If you weren’t taking the H6 seriously before, now is the time to start.



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Despite heavy rain Palestine group protest end to coal shipments to Israel

By Al-Qalam Reporter

Braving cold and heavy rain, members of the South African Palestine Movement (SAPM) travelled to the Richards Bay Coal Terminal - on Heritage Day - to protest against South Africa's coal shipments to Israel.

Young and old joined the picket. The protesters' message to the government was clear: "stop selling coal to Israel and being complicit in the Israel genocide in Gaza."

"Coal embargo now," they shouted amidst the pouring rain.

One cargo ship, the Navious Felix, had docked to load coal for the Zionist regime.

The South Africa Palestine

Movement (SAPM) "expose and condemn" South Africa's complicity in the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people.

RBCT is a central hub in the export of South African coal to Israel.

The Movement said in a statement that by continuing to profit from this trade, RBCT and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition are directly enabling the machinery of occupation, apartheid, and genocide.

"South Africa cannot speak of solidarity with Palestine on the one hand while fueling Israel's economy and war crimes on the other.

"The protest highlighted the urgent need for a complete end to all trade, diplomatic, and military ties with Apartheid Israel. We demand: An immediate halt to coal exports to Israel; Full divestment from companies



complicit in the genocide of Gaza; Government accountability to ensure that South Africa's economic activities are aligned with its constitutional and moral obligations to support justice, freedom, and human rights. It added: "As the world witnesses

the daily massacres and destruction in Gaza, we affirm that silence and complicity are crimes.

Richards Bay Coal Terminal stands as a symbol of betrayal against the Palestinian people. Our action

today is part of the global movement for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) until Israel ends its occupation, apartheid, and genocide.

"The South Africa Palestine Movement will con-

tinue to mobilize across workplaces, harbors, universities, and communities until South Africa fully severs all ties with Israel and takes a principled stand for liberation and justice. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free."

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Colonial Denial and the Mask of Efficiency



By Aslam Fataar and Imraan Buccus

Helen Zille's recent appearance on Newsroom Africa drew attention for her casual dismissal of Israel's genocidal violence in Palestine. This was not just a passing remark. It revealed an attitude that goes beyond one politician. It captured a way of thinking that prizes order and efficiency while pushing aside questions of justice. This way of thinking has a long history. It comes from the colonial playbook, and today it sits comfortably in neoliberal politics.

Colonial powers justified their rule through denial. They portrayed indigenous peoples as inferior and depicted conquest as the prog-

ress of civilisation, development, and law. Beneath this rhetoric of progress, there were forced removals, violent massacres, and, most starkly, the genocide committed in Namibia in the early 1900s against the Herero and Nama peoples.

This mindset reframed atrocities as accidents. It turned destruction into something regrettable but inevitable. Responsibility was shifted onto the colonised. The same logic operates in Palestine today. Bombed hospitals, starved families, and destroyed universities are not recognised as evidence of genocide. They are written off as collateral damage. This denial strips Palestinians of their humanity and makes their suffering invisible.

In today's politics, denial is often dressed up in the language of efficiency. Competence and delivery are presented as neutral virtues. But in practice, they protect privilege. They keep us from facing inequality. They reduce justice to order and cast transformation as disruption.

The Democratic Alliance has made this its brand. It tells voters that managerial skill and technical competence are the highest political virtues. Within this frame, restitution and re-

dress fall away. Zille's dismissal of genocide flows directly from this outlook. It shows how the language of efficiency can be used to excuse denial.

She has now declared her candidacy for Johannesburg mayor in next year's local elections. The city faces crises such as inequality, exclusion, widespread corruption, and failing services, calling for bold reforms. However, Zille offers efficiency—highlighting competence and management—where profound transformation is needed.

The city is in crisis. It has been badly mismanaged for years. Corruption, incompetence, and blatant disregard for ordinary residents persist across many political parties in Johannesburg. People are exhausted by endless promises while traffic lights fail, potholes grow, water outages continue, and power failures become a daily occurrence.

It is also true that Cape Town, governed by the DA, runs more efficiently and has less corruption than Johannesburg. It's easy to see that a DA-led city would ensure functioning streetlights, working traffic signals, cleaner streets, and reliable services in the suburbs. This outlook naturally appeals to

middle-class residents of all backgrounds, who are weary of decline and inadequate services.

But if the price of that efficiency is the normalisation of genocidal violence in Gaza, the price is too high. A city cannot be rebuilt on moral bankruptcy. What South Africa needs is a new form of politics—one that combines efficiency with ethical seriousness. We need leaders who can run cities competently, without corruption, while also standing clearly for justice. At present, that option is not on the ballot paper.

The Palestinian struggle cannot be understood in isolation. Its people are subjected to forced removals, restrictions on movement, and denial of political rights. We know these realities. We recall pass laws, Bantustans, and racial segregation.

To disregard these parallels is to deny the shared history of colonised peoples. It breaks the chain of solidarity that links struggles for dignity across continents. It treats Palestine as an exception when it is part of a wider pattern of oppression.

The language of efficiency is rarely neutral. It secures privilege by narrowing politics to administration. It

reassures the powerful that nothing fundamental will change. Applied to Palestine, this perspective diminishes genocide to a matter of governance. Mass death is recast as a security issue. Structural violence is regarded as a technical issue. Neutrality becomes complicity when violence is left unnamed.

A politics of restitution begins with recognition of harm. It accepts responsibility and affirms that justice requires structural change.

In South Africa, this means tackling the legacies of apartheid: land inequality, economic exclusion, and segregated living spaces. These cannot be resolved through efficiency alone. They require redistribution and restructuring.

In Palestine, restitution means ending the occupation, dismantling apartheid structures, and affirming the right of return and self-determination. It requires recognising Palestinians as fully human.

Efficiency and accountability matter, but they only have value when connected to justice. Efficiency must serve redistribution. Anti-corruption efforts must bolster fairness. Without this broader vision, efficiency is

an empty slogan.

Our transition shows what happens when efficiency is separated from justice. The end of apartheid left entrenched privilege largely intact. Service delivery has often been prioritised above restitution. Redistribution is framed as impractical or destabilising.

Zille's denial of genocide on Newsroom Africa fits neatly into this pattern. It is the same politics that manages inequality rather than transforms it. Her mayoral campaign will bring this approach to Johannesburg. The city needs justice-driven change, not managerial containment.

Johannesburg needs functioning traffic lights, fewer potholes, and dependable services. However, it also requires leadership guided by a moral compass. A city cannot be repaired solely through efficiency; it also needs ethics. Until we find a politics that incorporates both, we will remain caught between misrule and moral failure.

Prof Aslam Fataar is based in the Department of Education Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University, and Dr Imraan Buccus is a senior research Fellow at UFS and editor of Al-Qalam

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Recognition of Palestine: What the UK, Canada, and Australia’s move really means

Western recognition of Palestine signals a shift in rhetoric, shaped by Palestinian steadfastness and global solidarity, but remains contested in meaning, writes Ramzy Baroud

On Sunday, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia recognized the State of Palestine, a step many perceive as a reversal of a historical injustice that lasted decades. Other countries are expected to follow, including France and Portugal, among others.

Much can be read into these decisions, especially if we examine the official reaction of Israel. “Calls for a Palestinian state, threaten our existence and constitute an illogical reward for terrorism,” said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Among the supporters of Palestine, however, these recognitions are understood

in different ways. Some believe that the steps have arrived too little, too late, suggesting that symbolic recognitions are meant to distract from the utter failure of these traditional supporters of Israel to stop the genocide in Gaza or to hold Israeli leaders accountable for the extermination of the Palestinian people.

This claim is supported by facts. For example, the insistence by the leaders of these governments that Israel has a “right to defend itself,” faulting Palestinians for the resistance, and imposing conditions on their acceptance of the two-state solution.

Others, especially those who support the one-state solution, argue that the two-state solution is not possible to begin with, and that breathing life into it would do nothing but give Israel the time it needs to complete its extermination of Gaza and annexation of the West Bank.

A third group is keen on

seeing the silver lining, arguing that such recognitions are still vital, for they represent an acknowledgment of the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination and a defeat to Israel’s attempt to marginalize Palestine and the Palestinians from the global agenda.

All of these claims have a great deal of legitimacy and must be acknowledged as proper analyses and valid concerns.

Here are some points that must be taken into account as we reflect on the broader meaning of these recognitions:

One, the recognition of a Palestinian state is a complete breakaway from the notion that an independent Palestine can only happen through negotiations between the Israeli occupation and the occupied Palestinians. This oft-repeated line has defined Western foreign policy on the subject. Though no negotiations have taken place for decades and Israel has

been given the green light from the US to annex what remains of occupied Palestine, Western countries repeated the same line time and again. Thus, these recognitions are a clear departure from past foreign policies, as envisioned by Washington and Israel.

Two, the UK’s recognition of Palestine, although it came after long diatribes of conditions and often demeaning language, is particularly significant.

It was the UK’s Balfour Declaration of 1917 that planted the seeds, which, three decades later, led to the establishment of Israel on the ruins of the ethnically cleansed Palestinian homeland. This historical context is particularly critical as well.

Three, the recognitions of Palestine underway were not charitable acts by Western governments: they were the culmination of events that started on October 7, the genocide in Gaza, and the legendary Palestinian

steadfastness. While many are busy thanking governments for their seemingly kinder approach to the Palestinian struggle, they are forgetting that these steps would have been virtually impossible if it were not for the Palestinian people themselves.

Four, even then, these recognitions would still be difficult to obtain if it were not for the popular mobilization in Western countries that carried and amplified the voice of Palestinians in Gaza and beyond. Note how the early recognition of Palestine in Spain, Norway, Ireland and Slovenia in May 2024 took place in societies where popular mobilizations and solidarity are historically rooted. The same logic applies to all the new recognitions as well. This is proof that civil society is a political actor able to bring about change when it is needed most.

Five, a clear distinction has to be made between calls for mere “solutions” and the broader meaning of recog-

nition. Israel has made the two-state solution impossible anyway, but what truly matters here is that, after years of marginalizing the Palestinian cause and years of Arab normalization with Israel at the expense of the Palestinians, Palestine is now back on the agenda as a main item for the international community.

Instead of engaging in side conversations about solutions and the like, it is incumbent upon us to utilize these movements to hold these governments even more accountable to international law and to the collective wishes of their people, so that they may impose sanctions and even sever relations with Israel, a pariah state that is on a relentless quest to destroy the Palestinian people in whole or in part — the very definition of genocide. - *The Palestine Chronicle*

Dr. Ramzy Baroud is a journalist, author and the Editor of *The Palestine Chronicle*. He is the author of six books.



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SPORT

Spanish PM calls for Israel's ban from sporting events over Gaza genocide

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez says Israel must face the same sporting sanctions as Russia did after the Ukraine war, writes Elis Gjevori.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has urged international sporting bodies to ban Israel from competitions, saying its treatment should mirror Russia's exclusion after the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Speaking to his Socialist Party on Monday, Sanchez said Israel's participation in global events was incompatible with its assault on Gaza.

"The sports organisations should consider whether it's ethical for Israel to keep participating in international competitions. Why expel Russia after the invasion of Ukraine and not expel Israel after the invasion of Gaza?" he asked. "Until the barbarity ends, neither Russia nor Israel should be in any inter-

national competition." His remarks came a day after pro-Palestinian activists disrupted the closing stage of the Vuelta a Espana cycling race in Madrid, throwing barriers onto the course in protest at the participation of the Israeli team Israel-Premier Tech. Police clashed with demonstrators near the finish line, leaving 22 people injured and arresting two.

Last week, Spanish Sports Minister Pilar Alegria said Israeli teams should be banned from sport in the same way that Russian sides broadly were in 2022 after the country invaded Ukraine, highlighting a "double standard".

Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar lashed out at Sanchez, calling him an "anti-Semite and a liar", without elaborating on why the criticism of Israel's genocidal war in Gaza was anti-Semitic.

Israel has been accused of weaponising anti-Semitism to target criticism of Isra-



el's policies against Palestinians. Last year, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the International Criminal Court anti-Semitic after the Hague-based court issued an arrest warrant against the Israeli

prime minister and his former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes. Tensions between Madrid and Tel Aviv have sharpened in recent months, with Spain's left-leaning coalition openly backing activists who staged



demonstrations during several stages of the Vuelta against the Israeli team's presence.

Spain is also reportedly planning to scrap a major weapons deal with an Is-

raeli defence manufacturer. According to official documents seen by AFP, Madrid cancelled a contract worth nearly 700 million euros (\$824m) for rocket systems designed by Israeli firm Elbit Systems.- Al Jazeera



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