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'Why so few Muslims at Gaza pickets?'

Each Friday, Saydoon Nisa Sayed of the South Africa Palestine Movement and partners hold pickets outside certain supermarkets – but one bakery owner Adam Robinson and his family are always at the forefront, despite verbal abuse, writes **Ismail Suder**

For months now, Durban businessman Adam Robinson and his family have picketed and called for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel – and their efforts are gradually paying off.

Robinson, the owner of The Glenwood Bakery, told *Al-Qalam* that his steadfast opposition against the Israeli genocide in Gaza has had some repercussions – Christian Zionists who once patronised his bakery have stopped buying from him, “but, I don’t care,” he said.

What further incensed Zionist supporters was when the bakery started a collection drive to raise R25 000 for Gaza.

Adam Robinson, his wife Carin, a lecturer at UKZN, and his daughter are part of South Africa Palestine

Movement (SAPM) – led by convenor Saydoon Nisa Sayed. The Movement has been successful in exerting pressure on various local businesses to stop selling products that fuels the Israeli genocide. They are calling for the boycott of five items: Coca Cola, and all its products; Clover and all its products; Nestle and all its products, ZZ2 and all its products and Teva medical products.

The activist group also calls for the boycott of Zionist-linked businesses, namely McDonalds, Starbucks, Zara, Dis-Chem, Cape Union Mart and Krispy Crème.

Robinson said because of his family’s Palestine activism, they have had to endure verbal abuse, mainly from Christian Zionists, who labelled them as “supporters of terrorism.” Yet, the family remains undaunted and continues to be present at SAPM’s protest points in the city, come rain or shine. Of the protesters that gather each Friday, only half are Muslims, the rest come from Christian, Hindu and other backgrounds.

In an interview with *Al-Qa-*

lam, Robinson lamented: “but where are the Muslims? ...there are thousands of Muslims in the city, but why aren’t they here to join us – do they even care about the genocide in Gaza?”, he asked.

Al-Qalam pushed Sayed to explain why there was a lack of support from the Muslims community when it came to picketing against injustice. She said perhaps local Muslims feel culturally out of place picketing in the street. “I think they probably believe that as long as they are fulfilling their obligations of the deen – and making duas for Gaza, they’ve done their bit for the cause – we plead with them to play an active role against any form of injustice!”

Sadly, she said, there was another group of Muslims who believe that when they press the LIKE button on Instagram or YouTube, they are helping to push the algorithms and therefore contributing to the Palestinian cause.

For months now, Sayed and her team have been writing letters urging mainly Muslim businesses, mainly in Overport, to stop selling

boycott listed products. Some responded by saying they would try and source alternative products while the others showed they were not interested.

Today (Friday), they will be back at it again.

In a statement released exclusively to *Al-Qalam*, The South Africa Palestine Movement (SAPM) said it proudly acknowledges and commends several ethical local businesses that have taken a firm stand in support of the global call to boycott Israeli products. “These establishments have demonstrated moral courage and solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine by ensuring that their shelves and kitchens are completely free of all Israeli-linked goods.

“By rejecting complicity in Israel’s ongoing genocide and apartheid practices against the Palestinian people, these businesses have chosen justice over profit, humanity over hypocrisy, and ethical integrity over silent indifference.

“The SAPM calls on all South African retailers, restaurants, and suppliers



Owner of the Glenwood Bakery, Adam Robinson, protesting outside a supermarket in Overport recently.

to follow this principled example – to end trade with companies and products that are directly or indirectly linked to the occupation, oppression, and massacre of Palestinians.” “Many Muslims owned stores in Overport are complicit and are posing a challenge to our campaign. We have sent emails, then followed up with hand-delivered hard copies of the letter, and frequently engaged with them

on WhatsApp, with no favourable response.”

Last week, while picketing in Florida Road, Sayed said they were targeted by an angry pro-Israel motorists who hurled abuse and showed them the middle finger. For Sayed, who has spent a lifetime in the fight for justice for all people, nothing can break her spirit. She will stop when Palestine is free, she said.

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Muslim charity, UKZN help rural KZN see a brighter future

By Azra Hoosen

As the world marks World Sight Month, a new R2.1 million Mobile Eye Clinic is setting out to change lives across KwaZulu-Natal.

The fully equipped vehicle, donated by the South African Muslim Charitable Trust (SAMCT) to the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Foundation, will bring essential eye care to rural and underserved communities – while also training the next generation of optometrists.

The project marries healthcare and education, providing both a practical learning platform for students and a lifeline for residents who have never had access to basic eye testing.

SAMCT trustee, Gaff Osman, told *Al-Qalam* that the initiative was inspired by a very real and urgent need – the lack of accessible eye care in rural KwaZulu-Natal. “Many people in remote areas live with undiagnosed

or untreated vision problems simply because they have no access to clinics or optometrists. When UKZN’s Optometry Department approached us with a proposal that addressed this gap while also giving students practical training in rural communities, it immediately resonated with us,” he said.

The mobile clinic will travel to schools and rural communities to conduct eye screenings, full examinations and provide corrective eyewear. It is equipped with advanced diagnostic tools, including an autorefractor, a handheld slit lamp and a portable ocular fundus camera for early detection of eye conditions.

According to Osman, the impact of the mobile clinic would be both immediate and long-lasting. “For many, this will be their first-ever eye examination. We believe it will prevent countless cases of avoidable vision loss and improve people’s ability to study, work and live productive

lives. In a broader sense, it will also build awareness about the importance of eye health and preventive care,” he said.

Osman believes this is a project that beautifully connects faith with action. It is not just about providing medical relief. It is also about empowerment and education. “We don’t just fund projects – we invest in people.”

UKZN’s optometry students will use the mobile clinic as part of their community training, giving them hands-on experience while serving people who would otherwise go untreated. “By supporting the Mobile Eye Clinic, we’re ensuring that future optometrists gain invaluable experience while learning to serve with compassion and social responsibility,” he said.

Head of the Discipline of Optometry at UKZN, Dr Naimah Ebrahim Khan, told *Al-Qalam* that the donation came at a crucial time and expressed gratitude to the



Trust. “Healthy vision is central to quality of life, education and employment, yet for many in rural areas, access to eye care remains out of reach. This Mobile Eye Clinic will help us close that gap while also ensuring that our students graduate as competent, compassionate practitioners ready to serve society,” she said.

UKZN’s optometry students will use the mobile clinic as part of their community training, giving them hands-on experience while serving people who would otherwise go untreated. “By supporting the Mobile Eye

Clinic, we’re ensuring that future optometrists gain invaluable experience while learning to serve with compassion and social responsibility,” he said.

Khan said that the donation during World Sight Month highlights the need for equitable access to eye care. “Through this initiative, UKZN Optometry reaffirms its commitment to improving public health, advancing clinical education and empowering communities with the gift of sight,” she added. Dean of the School of Health Sciences, Professor Khathutshelo Percy

Mashige, believes this is the beginning of a long-lasting friendship based on mutual objectives between UKZN and the SAMCT.

While the current focus is on KwaZulu-Natal, the trust hopes to expand similar models across the country. This project is simply a start.

“We are already exploring ways to extend similar initiatives into other provinces and areas of healthcare. Our message to other trusts and businesses is simple – give with vision and purpose,” he said.






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Nurain Saloojee: 'Standing with Palestine not just activism, it is worship'

By Neelam Rahim

In a world that often turns away from injustice, Nurain Saloojee stands as a reminder that faith and courage are not distant ideals, they are lived realities. Rooted in the values of Islam and compassion, this young Johannesburg-born audiologist and activist has quietly become one of the steadfast voices for Palestine in South Africa.

Raised in Lenasia in a family where activism and conscience were part of daily life, Nurain's path seemed almost written from the beginning. "My family's history is one of struggle," she told *Al-Qalam*. "From apartheid in South Africa to colonialism in India, we were taught that justice is not a choice - it's an obligation." It was within this environment that she learned that faith (iman) must be lived through action.

After moving to Emmarentia to complete high school,

Nurain went on to study Audiology at the University of the Witwatersrand, a field that deepened her appreciation for dignity and access. Working in the public health sector exposed her to systemic inequality, where even basic healthcare remains out of reach for many. "True healthcare," she said, "is not just about hearing; it's about being heard." That understanding of service soon intertwined with her sense of justice, leading her to extend compassion beyond the clinic into the global fight for humanity.

It was during the Save Sheikh Jarrah movement in 2021 that Nurain officially joined the Palestine Solidarity Alliance (PSA). What began as local activism quickly grew into a deep commitment to international solidarity. Now the Vice-Chairperson of the PSA Youth League, she has organised countless pickets, marches, and educational campaigns - among them, the weekly Rosebank protest, where for an hour

each Friday, ordinary South Africans hold signs, chant prayers, and remind the world that Gaza is not forgotten.

Her defining moment, however, came with a visit to Palestine in January 2023. Walking through the Old City, witnessing the apartheid wall, and meeting families living under occupation changed her permanently. "It was no longer a cause, it became a personal responsibility," Nurain told *Al-Qalam*. "I promised the people I met that I would return home and tell their stories."

That promise led her to join the Global Sumud Flotilla earlier this year - a humanitarian voyage bound for Gaza, carrying activists and aid workers united by one message: solidarity through presence. Though initially meant to manage communications for the flotilla, Nurain stepped forward as a participant when a space opened unexpectedly. "Within 48 hours I packed

my bags and left for Tunis," she said. "It was terrifying, but I knew I had to go. Watching Gaza suffer while doing nothing wasn't an option."

Her decision was as spiritual as it was humanitarian. "When my Creator asks what I did to stop the genocide, I want to have an answer," she said.

But the journey took an unexpected turn when she fell ill and was forced to withdraw early. The experience, she says, taught her one of her greatest lessons. "Our efforts are measured by intention, not by how far we go," she reflected. "That realisation gave me peace. Even when things don't go as planned, Allah knows the sincerity of your heart."

Nurain's activism is inseparable from her Islamic faith. She draws strength from the verse, *Hasbunallahu wa ni'mal wakeel* - Sufficient for us is Allah, and He is the best Disposer of affairs. "That verse grounds me,"



she said. "We act, but Allah determines the outcome."

Today, while completing her community service as an audiologist, Nurain continues her advocacy through the PSA, using her voice to amplify others. She believes activism isn't reserved for those on the frontlines; it begins wherever one stands. "Start small, but start," she often says. "Every act, a

boycott, a conversation, a prayer - contributes to change." In an age where apathy comes easily, Nurain Saloojee embodies what it means to live faith in action. Her story is one of conviction, humility, and unyielding belief that even in the face of injustice, silence is never an option. For her, standing with Palestine is not just activism, it is worship.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Mombasa hosts conference to ‘nurture’ next generation of Memon leaders

By Al-Qalam Reporter

The Memon Leadership Conference (East Africa Chapter) hosted a two-day gathering in Mombasa, Kenya, last week to elect leaders at its AGM – and to celebrate unity and progress of the Memon community worldwide.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM), and elections of the Memon Leadership Forum (MLF) was concluded at the PrideInn Paradise Resort, Mombasa.

The event recorded an exceptional turnout of both local and international delegates, including representatives from various MLF chapters across the globe.

The conference was graced by distinguished dignitaries, including Senators, Members of Parliament, and the President of the Chamber of Commerce.

The keynote speeches focused on MLF’s core mission – to nurture and empower the next generation of Memon leaders.

Outstanding arrangements were made by Rafique Suleman, council member, founder, and chairman of the East Africa Chapter.

Together with his team, he successfully hosted a remarkable event featuring continuous sessions, networking opportunities, and grand hospitality, including luncheons, dinners, and high teas.

Following the AGM, Suleman conducted the open elections for the upcoming term ending 31 December 2027, with the following results:

Elected office bearers (2025–2027) were Abdul Rahim Janoo – President (Global); Sir Iqbal Sacranie – Senior Vice President; Dr A V. Mohammed – Vice



President; Hamza Tabani – Honorary Secretary General; Iqbal Khamisani – Joint Secretary; Iqbal Advani – Media Secretary; Rafiq Khanani – Treasurer. All 15 Chapter Chairmen were re-elected, while Imtiaz

Suleman was newly elected as Chairman of the Europe Chapter.

Two new international chapters were also inaugurated: USA chairman to be nominated soon by

SVP MLF Global while Abu Baker Hamdani – was elected as Chairman of the South Africa Chapter.

In closing, Senior Vice President Sir Iqbal Sacranie presented a resolution

that was unanimously adopted by the house. It was resolved that the 60-member Main Council would be finalised within two weeks, following nominations from the respective Chapter Chairmen.

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Minara Chamber honours Muslim entrepreneurs at grand Durban event

The 14th Annual Minara Business Recognition Awards also marked 25 years since its founding, reports **Ismail Suder** who attended.

While guests tucked into sumptuous food at the glittering Minara Chamber of Commerce annual business awards recently, the core message delivered was that growth could only be achieved through entrepreneurship, empowerment of communities, and ethical leadership.

Many of the Who's Who of business, political leaders, diplomats, and members of civil society attended the prestigious 14th Annual Minara Business Recognition Awards, held at the opulent NMJ Hall in Morningside, Durban. The event was to honour excellence in entrepreneurship and reaffirm a shared commitment to South Africa's economic renewal.

The grand event was also special because it marked the 25th anniversary of the Minara Chamber of Commerce,

Delivering the opening address, Ebrahim Patel – who took over the helm from longtime president, Solly Suleman – reaffirmed the organisation's founding mission to promote entrepreneurship, empower communities, and strengthen economic participation through collaboration and ethical leadership.

"From humble beginnings, the Chamber has developed into a respected institution championing entrepreneurship, creating platforms for trade and investment, forging international networks, and recognising excellence through our Business

Awards," said Patel. "Guided by our motto 'Leadership in Business through Empowerment and Collaboration', we remain driven not only by business, but by a profound sense of purpose."

In a powerful message directed at government and industry leaders, Patel underscored the urgent need for industrialisation as the cornerstone of South Africa's economic recovery.

"Industrialisation must be a national priority. It is the foundation for creating sustainable jobs, boosting exports, and strengthening local supply chains. We must move beyond endless analysis and planning towards real implementation. South Africa's growth will not be achieved through speeches or documents, but through tangible deeds," he said.

Referencing the economic successes of countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Türkiye, he called for an ambitious industrial policy anchored on strong public-private partnerships, streamlined bureaucracy, and clear accountability. Patel paid tribute to the Premier of Kwa-Zulu-Natal, Thamsanqa Ntuli, MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs. Rev Musa Zondi, and Cllr Cyril Xaba, Mayor of eThekweni, "whose presence symbolised government's commitment to collaboration with the private sector".

Patel highlighted both the challenges and opportunities facing the nation – from geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty to emerging prospects in the African Continental Free Trade Area, the green economy, and the \$7 trillion global Halal industry "South Afri-



Amina Abraham, Founder of Exotic Taste, was honoured with the Businesswoman of the Year award. Picture (from left to right) are Sumaya Suliman – Director Minara chamber, Amina Abrahams CEO Exotic Taste, Prof. Halima Khunoethe – Director Minara Chamber



Abdool Aziz Tayob, respected South African Architect, was honoured with the Professional Achiever Award. Picture (from left to right) are Zahida Kara – Minara Director, Abdool Aziz Tayob, Zain Mitha – Treasurer- Minara Chamber



Gorimas was awarded The Business Entity award in the large category. Picture (from left to right) are Asgar Mahomed (Vice President Gauteng- Minara Chamber, Arshad Moola, Director Gorimas, Imraan Noorbhai - Provincial Head KZN, Standard Bank)

ca's abundant mineral resources position us to play a significant role in the global semiconductor and electric vehicle supply chains," he noted. "Moreover, the Halal economy presents vast, untapped potential – from food and pharmaceuticals to finance and cosmetics." The evening culminated in the announcement of the 2025 Minara Business Recognition Award winners, honouring outstanding South African entrepreneurs and business leaders who exemplify excellence and integrity:

- Business Entity – Large Category: Gorimas
- Business Entity – Medium

Category: Valternative Energy

- Business Entity – Start-up Category: Racket Rescue

• Businessperson of the Year: Ismail Simjee, CEO of Tropic Plastic

• Businesswoman of the Year: Amina Abraham, Founder of Exotic Taste

• Young Entrepreneur of the Year: Rishaad Joosab, CEO of Plastimed

• Professional Achiever Award: Abdool Aziz Tayob, respected South African Architect

• Community Builder Award

(Joint Winners): Hafsa Carim and Hoosein Saloojee both from the Gauteng Province.

The Minara Chamber congratulated all winners and finalists for their remarkable achievements and for embodying the spirit of innovation and empowerment.

Patel pointed out that as the Chamber enters its next quarter-century, it remains steadfast in its commitment to serving as a bridge – between business and government, South Africa and the world, and commerce and conscience.

"Our legacy will not be defined by what we promised,

but by what we built," Patel added.

"Together, we can build a South Africa defined not by its challenges, but by its opportunities."

As the speeches ended, there was a sudden buzz across the hall when waiters fanned out serving an array of tasty dishes, from steaming hot chicken haleem, special lamb kalia and butter chicken – oh, and that was only the mains! As time inched closer to 11pm, some guests were still tucking into their desert. As people left – with bellies full – you could say that the business of the day was truly done.



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OPINION

Revolutionary' Yvonne Ridley: 'Samud flotilla rattled Zionists'

Famous UK journalist, author and activist Dr Yvonne Ridley who was captured by Israeli forces while sailing on the Samud Flotilla to Gaza, visited Durban as part of her SA tour. Zaynab Khan caught up with her.

What inspired your activism?

The start of the genocide in Gaza made me realise that despite years of activism, things had gotten worse. People worldwide felt the same, which is why so many demonstrated. World leaders may have thought we'd tire, but the demonstrations have grown bigger and louder, and that momentum continues.

How did you first connect with the Palestinian cause?

At 13, a Palestinian woman asked me to sign a petition. I thought, these people hijack planes—why support them? She asked, 'Do you know our story?' She told me about the Nakba, and I

was shocked. Reading more, I realised Palestinians needed help. Initially, I thought it was like apartheid South Africa – winnable—but over 50 years later, it's become a genocide.

How does apartheid in Palestine differ from South Africa?

South Africans weren't facing Apache helicopters or tank shells. It was bad, but not as concentrated or vicious as in Palestine.

What did "Sumud" mean to you during the voyage?

I identified with Sumud – steadfastness – but even more with the boat's name, Omar al-Mukhtar. He was a revolutionary, everything I aspire to be as a human being.

Is the Israel-Palestine conflict religious in nature?

No! It's about land. Zionism isn't a religion; it's a political ideology. Most Palestin-

ians are Muslim, but many are Christian. Interestingly, some evangelical Christians, especially within the MAGA movement, are reassessing support for Israel.

They're witnessing Jewish people spitting at Christians in Jerusalem and churches being bombed in Gaza. Meanwhile, figures like Donald Trump and Mike Huckabee rush for photo ops at the Western Wall, ignoring the nearby Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a site central to Christianity. It shows Zionism has no room for Christians or Muslims.

How has your Islamic faith influenced your activism?

Justice is a core theme in the Quran. What led to my conversion was the principle that justice must be delivered to everyone—not just family and friends, but also enemies – and in equal measure. Belief in God gives me strength; I know I am not on the wrong side of history, and He will support me.



How did the Israeli response to the flotilla impact you?

They feared the flotilla because it united people against Zionism. Normally, they ignore groups like the ISM, but the flotilla rattled them, as seen in Ben Gvir's statements. These are emotionally damaged people – something is missing in their humanity.

How did your detention compare to being captured by the Taliban in 2001?

The Israelis denied us access to lawyers and doctors, and we were sleep-deprived. I've never experienced any-

thing like that with the Taliban. Israeli prisons are brutal, illegal, and torturous. Hundreds of children are held in "administrative detention," without trial or charge.

Have you set limits as an activist?

Eleanor Roosevelt said: 'Women are like tea bags; we never know how strong we are until we are in hot water.' I don't know my limits, but I was so angry when challenged, that at one stage, I could have killed them.

How is the Palestinian struggle connected to global freedom movements?

It's linked with any fight for freedom. Coming from Scotland, we understand oppression. The Scots have been colonised and persecuted, and we still see Scotland as occupied. This shapes our unconditional support for Palestine.

What advice do you have for young activists?

Take things in bite-sized steps. Don't get overwhelmed. With the BDS movement, start small – boycott five things, then ten. Don't pressure yourself; be comfortable with your actions. Most importantly, stay informed about what is happening.

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Inheritance isn't only what the lawyer reads

By Inspired Tales

It's the old, dented pot that still carries the taste of your mother's biryani. It's the ice cream tub in the freezer, never holding ice cream, but always boiled masoor or chopped coriander.

And it's the family WhatsApp group, where every Ramadhaan and every Eid we ask the same questions: "Who's making what?" as if we don't already know that Fupi will bring her famous trifle, that Chichi will arrive with just her samosas, that Mum will do the biryani, and that someone will forget the salad until the last minute.

Year after year, the menu is written in our blood, yet we still ask to clarify, because the asking is part of the inheritance too... the comfort of knowing that some things never change.

It's also in the way your dad clears his throat before speaking, and sud-

denly your grandfather is in the room again. It's your grandmother's headscarf... soft from years of washing, its edges thinning where time had rubbed them bare. It smelt of oud not because she sprayed it on, but because the bakhoor smoke of Thursday night's dhikr wove itself into the fibres as she moved through the house; and when she hugged you, the scent pressed itself into your hair, your jersey, even the pages of your school-books. The next morning, you'd unzip your bag in class and there it was again... not just a smell, but her presence, folded into your day.

It's the laughter as kids when we prayed salaah together and burst into hysterics, trying to hold our giggles in sujood; and Mum, after the salaam, sometimes laughed with us, and other times reprimanded us, reminding us with a firm voice that Allah SWT's anger is no small thing when we treat salaah lightly. Both the laughter and the les-



son became part of what we carry. Inheritance is not just fixed assets or liquidity. It's the meals, the habits, the laughter, the grief. It's the way we carry both the gold bangles and the unspoken wounds. And when you

realise that, you stop asking only what did they leave me; and start asking what am I leaving behind?

Am I leaving behind recipes that feed, or silences that starve?

Am I leaving behind tenderness, or tempers? Am I leaving behind debts, or dua?

Am I leaving behind the smell of bread baking, or the smell of bridges burning?

Am I leaving behind a home that gathers, or a house that scatters?

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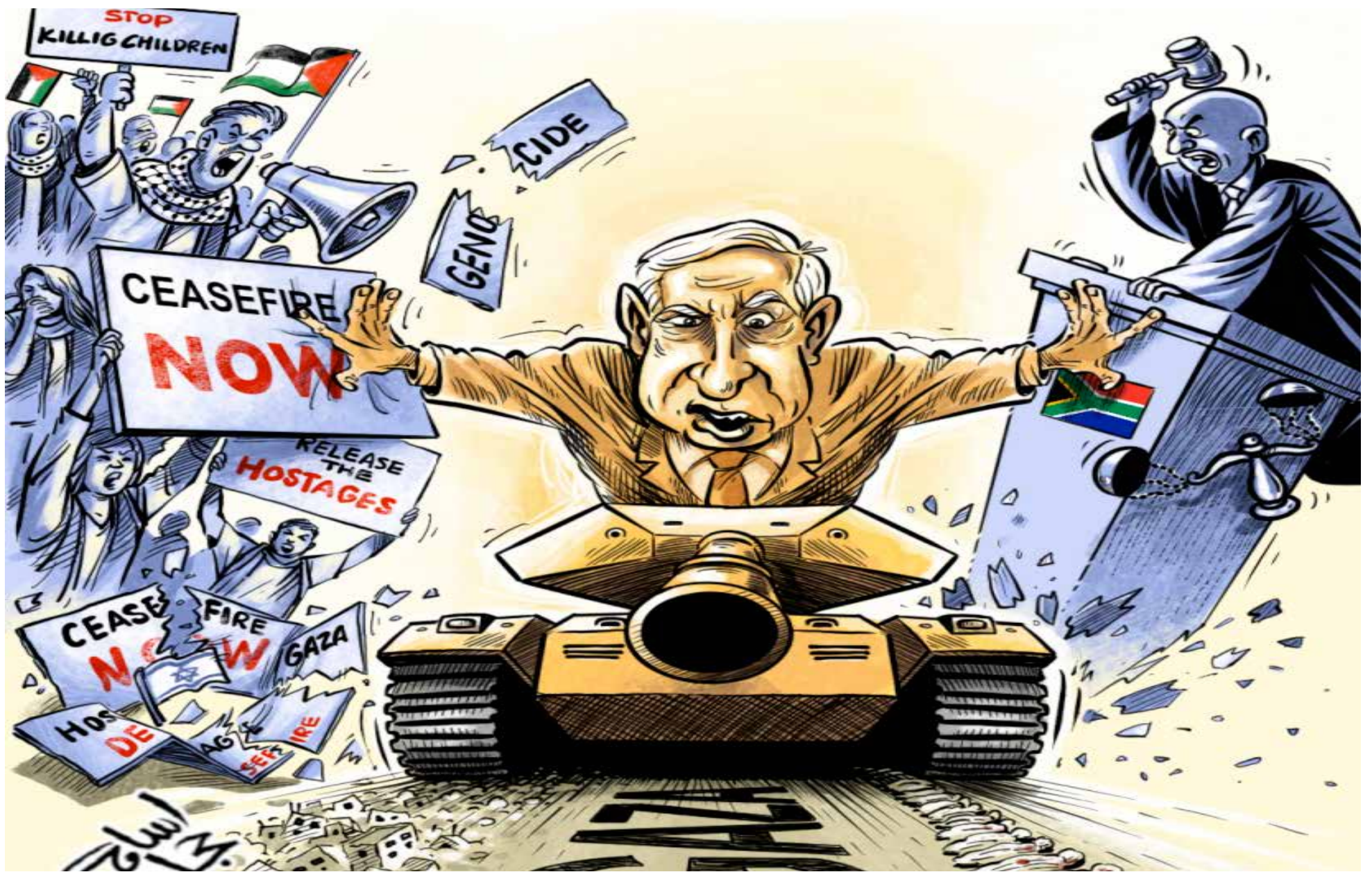
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EDITORIAL



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

Franchesca Albanese hasn't buckled under pressure like ICC prosecutor Kareem Khan

In the adapted words of Ben Okri, one of Africa's foremost poets and novelist: 'It seems to be that our days are poisoned with too many words. Words said not meant. Words said and meant. Words divorced from feeling. Wounding words. Words that conceal. Words that reduce. Dead words'

How accurate he can be especially in what seems to be during this ongoing dialogue of the deaf regarding the 23rd annual Nelson Mandela Lecture by Franchesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Gaza Genocide.

Her lecture went beyond words that were spoken to a like-minded audience. I need not repeat them here lest I be accused of misrepresentation as sides across

the fissures launch side-winders against each other but targeting Ms Albanese specifically and in the process diluting the impact of her message. What she said wasn't new. That's a plus. Most of what she said is in the public domain through records and rulings of the ICJ and other international organisations.

Timing is everything, I always say and what follows is equally critical and controversial as the genocide case which the USA wants SA to scupper ostensibly now that there's a ceasefire in place. Haven't we learnt from history? There is no end to hostilities and the ongoing scaled down genocide. There can be no peace without justice and no justice without peace, something that flowed from the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals. I won't go into details, unless invited to do so

for the thrust of this letter is the attempt to discourage Franchesca Albanese from peeling more off the onion of deceit that envelops the genocide. Enough said for now, I think.

Let me take the discussion to another level that flows from the foregoing. That's about the intrigue surrounding attempts to embarrass Ms Albanese by serving her with papers for alleged defamation. A raft of pro-Israeli Christian groups, there I said it, instituted an action against her for defamation. The devil is in the details but that must not distract us from who she is and what she has achieved. Unlike Kareem Khan, the ICC prosecutor, who buckled under pressure, Albanese hasn't backed down yet.

This begs the question on every person's lips. It is this: Why was the attempt-

ed service of a summons upon Franchesca Albanese 'irregular' and therefore unlawful. Allow me space in your minds through the hallowed pages of *Al-Qalam*.

SA is premised on the constitutional principle of the 'rule of law. Period. In other words – on the principle of legality. Cast aside our personal demons that are gnawing at our entrails.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, an overseeing body established that the service of process was affected without the knowledge or approval of either the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development or the Director-General, who serves as the Head of the Central Authority, as is required by Section 40(2) of the Superior Courts Act, 2013 (Act 10 of 2013). Section 40(2) re-

quires that a request for the service of any civil process on a person in the Republic received from any state or territory is transmitted to the Registrar of a Division by the Director-General of the Department, with an intimation that the Minister considers it desirable that effect should be given to such service.

Service of process is the formal, legal procedure of delivering court documents, such as a summons to a person, based on a request from another country.

I hope that I've simplified and contextualised what transpired in case that our printed and electronic media spins otherwise with chaff to hide the kernel of facts inside.

Permit me to conclude with the words of Ben Okra. He says to you that one of the

greatest enigmas at its crest lies these questions: 'out of the terrible silence and the art of what-about-ery, is why are we here? What is the point of it all? How can we know peace and live joy? Why be born in order to die?'

Here's the kicker: 'out of the wonder and agony of being, comes these cries and questions and the endless streams of words with which to order human life and quieten the human heart in the midst of our living and our distress'.

I applaud the Nelson Mandela and Ahmed Kathrada Foundations for preferring dialogue to silence, and so should you be reading this.

Saber Ahmed Jazbhay
Legal Practitioner 18
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 Castlehill,
 Newlands West

Muhammad (S) Blueprint for a Fractured World

On the Occasion of the 1500th Birth Anniversary of Muhammad (SAW), let's remember that the Prophet of Islam preached justice, dignity, and mercy, writes Muhammad Sahhaf Kashani

Our world today suffers from a profound moral and social malady—political fragmentation, widening economic inequalities, and persistent identity-based conflicts. Shared values appear to be eroding, and humanity is in search of remedies. One unexpectedly relevant source of guidance is the life of a seventh-century Arabian merchant whose mission produced not only a global faith but a model for societal reconstruction. Muhammad (s) emerges not as a distant saint but as a “social architect” who confronted a fractured society and proposed a framework still instructive for our age.

A Reflection of a Fractured World

Seventh-century Arabia was marked by decentralization and tribal power. Its governing principle was *aṣabiyyah*—unquestioned loyalty to kin—fueling endless cycles of vengeance. Justice was exclusive, women were marginalized, slaves were commodities, and female infanticide represented the era's deepest cruelty. This world reflected an intensified version of the divisions we experience today. Understanding it allows us to appreciate why Muhammad's (s) reformist model retains such resonance.

A Framework for Social Restoration

Muhammad (s) approached his mission as a project of rebuilding human society. His vision rested on several pillars.

1. Breaking the Cycle of Vengeance with Strategic Mercy

In a culture where violence demanded retaliation, Muhammad (s) introduced mercy as a tool

of transformation. When he returned to Mecca after years of persecution, many expected revenge. Instead, he proclaimed a general amnesty and even declared the home of his fiercest opponent, Abū Sufyān, a sanctuary. He demonstrated that genuine power lies not in revenge but in forgiveness that dissolves enmity at its root.

2. A Blueprint for a Pluralistic Society

In Medina, Muhammad (s) encountered a multi-religious society of Muslims, Jews, and polytheistic tribes. His response was the “Covenant of Medina,” regarded as one of the earliest written constitutions. It unified the community for mutual defense while explicitly safeguarding religious freedom: “The Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs.” He further warned that harming a protected non-Muslim would make him the offender's adversary on the Day of Judgment. Co-existence, not uniformity, was his foundation for

civic stability.

3. Dismantling the Idols of Ethnicity and Gender

No account better illustrates the profundity of his campaign against discrimination than that of Bilāl, an Abyssinian slave of African descent. Upon being manumitted, Muhammad (s) appointed him to an unprecedented position: the first *muadhhdhin* (caller to prayer) of Islam.

The zenith of this humanistic revolution occurred on the day of the conquest of Mecca. Muhammad (s) commanded Bilāl to ascend to the roof of the Kabah—the most sacred site in Arabia and the symbolic heart of its aristocracy—to proclaim the *adhān*. A formerly enslaved black man, standing atop the epicenter of tribal power, proclaiming the equality of all humanity. This message was later codified in his final public address, the Farewell Sermon (*Khutbat al-Widā*): “O people! ... Know that no Arab has superiority

over a non-Arab... except through piety (*taqwā*)” (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 38, p. 474).

This revolution extended into the domestic sphere. In a culture where the birth of a daughter was a source of shame, he would rise in honor of his daughter Fāṭimah and seat her in his own place (Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 5217). He assisted with household chores, thereby redefining masculinity not through domination but through partnership and service, leaving as his testament the principle: “The best of you is the one who is best to his family” (al-Āmilī, *Wasāil al-Shīḥah*, vol. 20, p. 171).

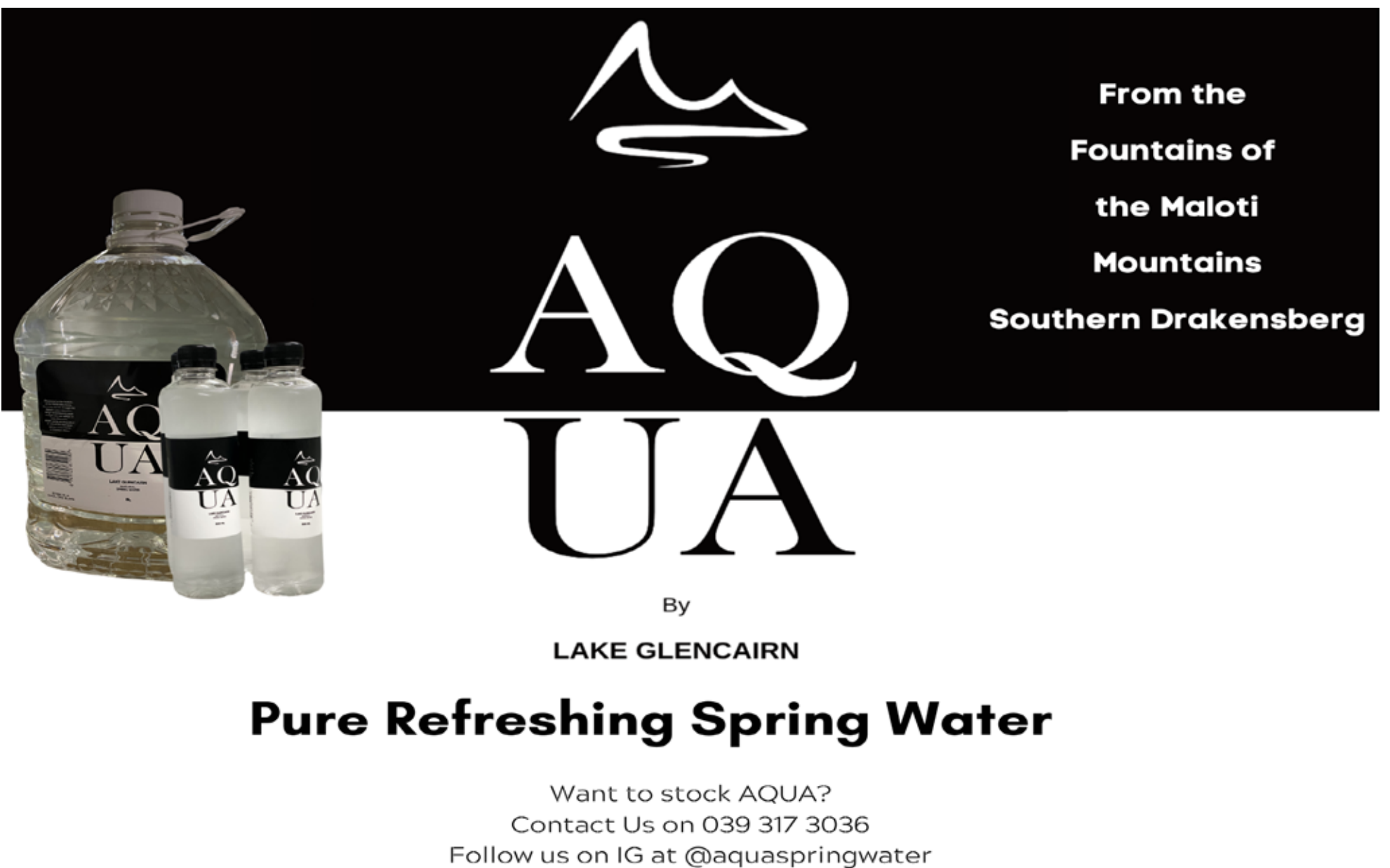
4. Leadership as Service, Not Wealth Accumulation

At the apex of his political authority, while holding sway over most of the Arabian Peninsula, his residence consisted of nothing more than a few modest adobe dwellings. He deliberately adopted an ascetic lifestyle in or-

der to redefine leadership as a station founded not on ostentatious wealth but on moral authority. The most poignant illustration of this is the circumstance of his death. The man who founded a civilization died while his coat of mail was held in pledge by a Jewish merchant in Medina in exchange for barley for his family (Bukhārī, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, 2916). This choice stripped his detractors of any pretext for criticism, demonstrating that his objective was solely societal reformation.

Conclusion: A Remedy for an Age of Discontent

Muhammad's (s) life offers a therapeutic model for an age marked by conflict, distrust, and inequity. His covenantal approach counters political tribalism; his strategic mercy disrupts destructive cycles of violence; and his ethic of service challenges modern crises of leadership. His example shows that transformative social change can arise from universal principles: justice, dignity, and mercy.



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OPINION

Sudan crisis not accidental: - Rogue regimes UAE, Israel complicit in genocide



By Iqbal Jassat

engulfed in one of Africa's bloodiest conflicts since April 2023, much of the world including African countries had opted to remain unmoved.

This allowed the painful suffering of millions to endure while the battle waged by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), has turned the country into a hell hole of death and destruction.

Reports indicate that as of late 2025, the war in Sudan has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced over 12.6 million Sudanese, making it the world's largest displacement crisis today.

Tragically also the health and economic systems have completely collapsed, and the capital, Khartoum, remains divided between rival forces. Militias dominate Darfur and Kordofan, while the army struggles to maintain control in the east and the Red Sea ports.

However if the layers of

convoluted information is stripped of propaganda, we find that underpinning this grim scenario, are regional and international actors reshaping the architecture of governance and control.

It extends to reshaping the balance of power in the Horn of Africa and not surprisingly involves Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Haaretz noted in August 2025 that Israel was exploiting Sudan's war to justify military expansion in the Red Sea under the banner of "protecting global shipping lanes from Houthi threats."

Haaretz also reported that Israel has leveraged the crisis to deepen its political footprint in Ethiopia and Eritrea, as part of its broader plan to contain Iranian influence extending from Tehran to Sana'a and Khartoum.

According to a study in Tehran Times, Tel Aviv's growing engagement in Sudan cannot be separated from its mounting anxiety over Ye-

men. Since the Ansarallah movement seized control of Yemen's western coast, the balance of deterrence in the Red Sea has shifted decisively.

It cites a report by Israel's Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), which claims that Houthi control of the Bab al-Mandeb Strait since 2021 has "redefined the Israeli maritime threat," as Yemeni missiles and drones struck Eilat and disrupted Suez Canal shipping routes.

Israel has begun treating the Red Sea as a primary national security arena, second only to the Mediterranean. Within this evolving strategy, Sudan functions as a forward buffer zone.

"With the U.S. and UAE active in East Africa, Tel Aviv has found a convenient pretext for expansion, cloaking its military buildup in the rhetoric of international maritime security. The chaos in Sudan has become both a justification and a cover for Israel's growing Red Sea

presence". Against this background the latest massacres by the RSF coincides with the revelation that documents seen by the UN show that UK military equipment exported to the UAE has been found in the hands of the RSF.

Reports by Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) confirm that there has been overwhelming evidence over the past two years of UAE arms supplies to the RSF, but this is the first time UK equipment has been found in Sudan via the UAE.

The findings have again prompted scrutiny over Britain's export of arms to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which has been repeatedly accused of supplying weapons to the paramilitary RSF in Sudan, as per The Guardian.

"They also raise questions for the UK government and its potential role in fuelling the conflict".

During April 2025, Sudan held hope that The Interna-

tional Court of Justice (ICJ) would make a finding against the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which it accused of being complicit in acts of genocide by arming and aiding the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The case, formally titled Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in Sudan (Sudan v. United Arab Emirates), was initiated when Sudan filed an application instituting proceedings against the UAE. Regrettably the ICJ rejected the application saying it "manifestly lacked" jurisdiction to rule on the case and threw it out.

Failure by Africa's leaders and institutions as well as impotency by international forums such as the UN and the ICJ has resulted in the killings of at least 150,000 people, forced more than 12 million to flee their homes and left nearly 25 million facing acute hunger.

**Iqbal Jassat, Executive Member, MEDIA REVIEW NETWORK*

Shocking images of brutal killings and massacres of thousands of civilians in El Fasher, western Sudan, during the end of October, appears to have awoken the world to a largely under-reported genocide ongoing for more than two years.

The horrific reality of an escalation in the gruesome war became evident as satellite images revealed the scale of the atrocities. Victims included women, children, and the elderly.

Though Sudan has been

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Cape Town recalls NY mayor Mamdani's madrasa education at local mosque

The Claremont Main Road Masjid community of Cape Town is proud to celebrate the remarkable achievement of Zohran Kwame Mamdani, whose formative years were shaped, in small part, within our congregation.

Zohran began his Islamic education at the CMRM Saturday morning madrasa in the early 1990s while living in Cape Town with his family and attending St. George's Grammar School in Mowbray. His father, Professor Mahmood Mamdani, then held the Chair of African Studies at the University of Cape Town and once delivered a memorable pre-khutbah address at our masjid. It is inspiring to see how Zohran's early South African experiences, though modest, made a lasting impression on his political consciousness and helped shape his creative, community-based approach to politics.

His historic victory in the



New York City mayoral election stands as a testament to his commitment to social justice and grassroots organizing. As South African social justice activists,

we can now learn from Zohran's example, how to practice progressive politics that resonates with new generations and builds bridges across race, class, and faith.

His campaign, grounded in policies such as universal childcare, rent freezes, and city-run grocery stores, reflects a deep concern for the wellbeing of working-class

families. Zohran's victory brings renewed hope to marginalized communities worldwide striving for a more just, equitable and compassionate society.

We pray that his leadership continue to embody the values of compassion, justice, and service that lie at the heart of our shared faith and humanity.

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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*

SPORT

Orient girls walk away as champions in international volleyball tournament

By Azra Hoosen

The under-16 girls of Orient Islamic School (OIS) made history in Johannesburg, not just by taking part in their first-ever American International School of Johannesburg (AISJ) Volleyball Tournament, but by winning every single match and walking away as champions.

OIS Coach, Aneesah Loonat, told *Al-Qalam* that preparation for the big weekend began months in advance. “We had an intensive training schedule that focused not just on skill and strategy but also on mental and physical conditioning. Every session had a purpose, from refining serves to building chemistry and communication on court,” she said.

The AISJ tournament brought together top teams from KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Tanzania and Egypt, offering a platform for both competition and cultural exchange. Day One featured round-robin match-

es while Day Two saw the intensity ramp up with quarterfinals, semi-finals and the finals running from morning to evening.

Despite the packed schedule, the Orient girls rose to every challenge. Loonat expressed that her biggest expectation was for the girls to play with heart and passion.

Calm and focused and relentless in her energy, captain – Zahraa Seedat – led the team from the front. Alongside her, Sanaa Nakooda showed composure under pressure, Maaida Gadit was a fearless attacker at the net and Asmaa Jadwat kept the rallies alive with sharp defensive play.

For many of the girls, it was their first major international outing. Azkaa Mominaa Ahmed described the moment vividly: “I remember having butterflies in my stomach before the game, but once I stepped on the court, it was so exciting. Even the small mistakes made it all feel real and special.” Zahraa Seedat re-

flected on their hard-fought journey: “We fought for every point, every set, every moment. Today, we stand as international champions, the first Muslim school to ever do it. My team made the impossible look easy.”

Loonat attributes the win to discipline, teamwork and mental strength. “These girls showed up for every session, pushed each other to improve and trusted one another on court. What stood out most wasn’t an individual; it was how they celebrated every point together,” she said.

The semi-final against Michaelmount Waldorf, the defending champions, proved to be their toughest match. “When we finally won that match, it felt like a final in itself,” said Loonat.

Parents and supporters echoed that pride. Munirah Docrat, mother of player Atiyyah Amojee, said that watching from the sidelines was both thrilling and emotional. “It felt surreal... and definitely a strain on my ageing heart,” she joked. Then

came the big moment – the championship victory.

Loonat recalled when the final whistle blew, there was this split second of silence before it all erupted into cheers, hugs and tears. “The crowd, the joy, the disbelief – It was magical. The girls huddled together and it truly felt like we’d made history,” she said.

Balancing sport, academics and faith is no small feat, yet several players shared that their success stems from careful time management and commitment. “I plan my days, stay organised and make time to rest so I can give my best in both sports and academics,” said Jadwat.

For Amojee, learning to juggle responsibilities has been part of the journey. “I try not to leave things for the last minute and focus on what’s most important. What keeps me going is that I enjoy being involved, I love seeing the results of the effort I put in,” she said. Beyond the medals, this win carries deep meaning for the school. Ac-



According to Loonat, this victory is a historic milestone: “It shows that with dedication and belief, our learners can compete and win at the highest level. It has inspired other learners to take up volleyball and believe in their potential.”

From various sponsors to parents, teachers and students cheering from home, it was a team effort beyond

the court. The Orient girls have set the bar high, not just for themselves, but for school sport in Durban. As coach Loonat proudly put it: “This win belongs to everyone who believed in these girls from day one.” Looking ahead, Loonat said the goal is to maintain this momentum and prepare the next generation to carry the torch forward.

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