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Millions rely on faith to fulfill Hajj amidst war tensions



By Imam Dr Rashied Omar

As we stand on the threshold of the lunar month of Dhul Qaidah, the second of the three sacred months of Hajj, we enter a season of deep spiritual longing. Following the month of Shawwal, which marks the beginning of the Hajj season, we now move closer to its culmination in the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah, now only a few weeks away.

This sacred season invites us to turn our hearts toward the Sacred House of Allah in Makkah, to form and cultivate the intention for

pilgrimage, and to prepare, spiritually, materially, and morally, for one of the most profound acts of devotion in Islam. As Allah, the Most-High, reminds us in the Qur'an: "The Pilgrimage (Hajj) falls in well-known months" (Q2:197). From the Prophetic traditions (hadith), these "well-known months" are understood to include Shawwal, Dhul Qaidah, and the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah. We are thus already within this sacred window, a time of sacred longing and return. Yet, as we approach this year's Hajj, our anticipation is tempered by concern.

In recent weeks, even the journey of Umrah has been disrupted for many. As a direct consequence of the US- and Israeli-led war on Iran, and its wider regional impact across the Middle East, flights have been cancelled, airspace closed, and thousands of pilgrims left stranded or unable to travel. When these systems are destabilized, the pathways to the Sacred House become fragile.

War Escalation and Its Consequences

It is within this context that the escalating war on Iran, and its wider impact across the Middle East region, demands our urgent attention. Should this deadly conflict intensify, its consequences will extend far beyond the battlefield. Millions of intending pilgrims, many of whom have spent years saving, planning, and preparing, may find their journeys delayed, disrupted, or even rendered impossible. Airspace insecurity, rising travel costs, and heightened geopolitical tensions all threaten to undermine the conditions necessary for safe and equitable access to Hajj. This moment calls for a deeper moral and spiritual reckoning.

A Moral and Spiritual Reckoning

In light of these unfolding realities, the potential disruption of Hajj calls us to a deeper moral consciousness. It reminds us that acts of worship are never isolated

from the conditions of our world. Peace is not only a political aspiration; it is a spiritual necessity. When pathways to worship are obstructed by violence, it is not only physical infrastructure that is damaged, but the very rhythms of sacred life itself.

In this regard, the Prophetic guidance speaks with renewed urgency. Abdullah ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Hasten to perform Hajj, for none of you knows what may arise to prevent him." (Musnad Ahmad; Sunan Ibn Majah). This teaching calls us to recognise both the unpredictability of life and the fragility of opportunity. Its ethical force is profound: it reminds us that spiritual opportunities, especially those connected to great acts of devotion such as Hajj, are never guaranteed. Life's uncertainties, whether of health, wealth, or circumstance, may intervene without warning. The Prophet (pbuh) thus calls us to a posture of readiness: to

respond without delay when the invitation to draw nearer to the Divine is placed before us.

If Hajj embodies unity, peace, and divine hospitality, then we must ask ourselves: are we living these values? Are we striving to remove the injustices and oppression that obstruct not only the pilgrimage itself, but also the dignity and flourishing of human life? As we approach the sacred days ahead, this question becomes a call to action, inviting us to align our lives with the moral vision of Hajj, and to embody, in both spirit and practice, the hope for a more just and peaceful world.

A Call to Prayer

As we stand on the cusp of Dhul Qaidah, only weeks away from the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah, we are called not only to prepare, but to respond with moral clarity. We must raise our voices, through prayer, advocacy, and ethical witness, against the forces that threaten both

human life and the sanctity of our sacred obligations. We turn to Allah in humble supplication: O Allah, bring an end to unjust aggression and protect the sanctity of life. Preserve the pathways to Your Sacred House, grant safety to all who intend the Hajj, and restore peace, dignity, and justice to our world.

For some, the path to Hajj this year may be uncertain or even closed, but the path to Allah remains open. Every act of justice, every gesture of compassion, and every moment of sincere remembrance is a step on that greater journey.

As we prepare for the sacred days ahead, let us hold fast to both hope and responsibility: to pray for peace, to protect the vulnerable, and to embody the ethical vision of Hajj, humility, equality, and surrender before the Divine. May the call of Hajj—Labbayk Allāhumma Labbayk—resound without obstruction, carried by hearts and bodies able to journey in peace.

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Sigh of relief after first Jumuah in weeks to be performed in Al-Aqsa

Sheikh Rafeek Hassen says Muslims welcome opening of Al-Aqsa but few Muslim leaders said anything, writes Ismail Suder

The Muslim Ummah from around the world breathed a sigh of relief when the Zionist entity eventually opened the gates of Al-Aqsa Mosque for Fajr salaah on Thursday morning after a painful 40-day closure.

This will be the first Jumuah after six weeks that thousands of Muslims will be allowed through the gates to pray, although for how long will it remain open is anyone's guess, in view of the fragile ceasefire agreement between the US and Iran. Durban Islamic scholar Sheikh Rafeek Hassen told *Al-Qalam* Muslims welcomed the opening of the Al-Aqsa Masjid after 40 days of oppressive closure by the Zionist regime.



“The Zionists and their surrogate supporters USA and the rest, keep reminding us about October 7th, 2023, but Muslims forget that October 7th started off as “Al-Aqsa Flood” Arabic: Tufan Al-Aqsa which was the name given by Hamas to their October 7, 2023, attack against Israel. It refers to protecting the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem from alleged Israeli aggression and occupation, aiming to reverse the status quo, end the Gaza

blockade, and boost Palestinian liberation efforts.

“When Al-Aqsa Masjid – the third holiest place of worship in the Muslim world was closed even for the blessed Month of Ramadan – NOT A SINGLE Muslim country battered even an eyelid. Jordan which was mandated by the UN to oversee the administering of Al-Aqsa – just looked on. One of the conditions in that agreement, was that

ONLY Muslims are allowed to worship on the temple mount call Haram al Sharieff by the Muslims.

This has been repeatedly violated by the Zionist regime that forcefully allowed right wing Jewish zealots under protection of the army to come and offer prayers.

“One will argue that most of the Muslim countries in the region are

“sell outs” and lackeys of the illegal Zionist entity. However, the Palestinians are very aware of this fact and perhaps one of the motivations for giving the October 7th resistance the name “Al-Aqsa flood” was to draw the attention of the GLOBAL Muslim Ummah to get active and involved. Alas, apart from a few Muslim groups and activists who are not Muslims – this call fell on “deaf ears” A sign of an Ummah that yes felt

the pain but did nothing. There is a Hadith of the Prophet to the effect that if we see a wrong we must stop with our hands [physically] if we not strong enough to do that, then at least speak out against the wrong, and if we not able to do that as well, then at least feel the pain of the wrong in your heart “BUT THAT IS THE WEAKEST FORM OF IMAAN”

“I think the Muslim

ummah need to critically look at themselves in the light of this Hadith and make an honest assessment of ourselves. Allah says in the Quran in Chapter 11 Ayah 13 “Allah will not change the condition of a people, unless they first change themselves”. May Allah transform us from just “Feeling Muslims” to “Doing Muslims.”

Sheikh Rafeek Hassen 09-04-2026



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MYM workshop helps youth tackle life's challenges

By Azra Hoosen

The Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa (MYMSA) hosted its Ambassadors for Change training programme in Port Shepstone, equipping youth with both the understanding and the tools to engage meaningfully with the challenges they face.

The workshop covered a wide range of themes, including self-reflection, the root causes of conflict in Africa and globally, racism and discrimination, gender sensitisation, gender-based violence, human rights, as well as facilitation and organisational skills.

The programme was conducted at Port Shepstone Islamic School, delivered in three segments over the course of six days, concluding on April 1, 2026. It brought together a team of facilitators who guided participants through both theoretical and practical components of the training.

The session on human rights and responsibilities was facilitated by Advocate Neliswa Nota and the team

from the Isibani Law and Therapy Centre, adding legal and social insight to the discussions.

One of the Facilitators, Arun Naicker, told *Al-Qalam* that at first, participants were very quiet and reserved. However, once they understood the participatory approach, they became fully engaged in the sessions.

This shift was intentional. "Young people often feel they are not listened to or are given roles that cannot be challenged. This programme creates a space for them to express their views and engage with issues they face daily," said Naicker. The programme sought to challenge that dynamic by placing participants at the centre of the learning process.

"Most of the group shared the need to become more confident public speakers. Each learner was given the opportunity to lead and present, and that made a significant difference," she added.

Through debates, group work and structured discussions, participants were encouraged to grapple with

difficult topics, not as distant concepts, but as lived realities.

For 16-year-old participant Sana Mulla, the experience was both confronting and empowering. "As a Matric student, I realised I have a very short window left to make a real impact at my school. I wanted to move away from just identifying problems and actually learn how to solve them," said Mulla.

A session on human trafficking proved particularly impactful. Sana told *Al-Qalam* that it completely stripped away the idea that these things only happen somewhere else. "It made me realise that our own communities and peers are vulnerable. It shifted my perspective from being a student to being a protector," she said.

The teenager described this as a turning point in how she understands leadership: "Before the workshop, I thought being a leader meant carrying everything on your own shoulders. But I learned that leadership is about facilitation – creating a space where everyone feels they have a stake in the



outcome." Beyond awareness, the programme placed a strong emphasis on leadership development. Participants were required to lead activities and present lesson plans, many for the first time, building both confidence and practical skills.

"Most of the group shared the need to become more confident public speakers. Each learner was given the opportunity to lead and present, and that made a significant difference," said Naicker.

All participants commended the supportive environment created by facilitators. "They were kind-hearted,

patient and understanding. They empowered us to be the best versions of ourselves and made us feel like a unified family," said one participant.

By the end of the programme, the transformation was visible. The same participants who began the training reserved and uncertain were now leading discussions, engaging confidently and taking ownership of their ideas.

The programme concluded with lesson plan presentations, debates and a closing ceremony organised by the participants themselves, which was a reflection of

both their growth and their ability to take initiative.

The training also extended beyond the classroom. As part of the programme's communication component, two participants took part in a radio interview on Radio Al-Ansaar. The experience reinforced the programme's focus on building not only awareness, but the confidence to communicate and advocate on social issues.

As these young ambassadors return to their schools and communities, the focus will shift from training to action, applying what they learned to the realities they are already facing.

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LOCAL NEWS

Blind chef Nazir Malek's 'The Spice Genie' concept hits the spot

Well-known Durban personality Nazir Malek has devised a "curry in a hurry" idea that has become a hot topic in many homes, writes, **Ismail Suder**

When Durban entrepreneur and community leader and chef extraordinaire Nazir Malek gradually lost his sight in both eyes two years ago, he didn't sit back - he was determined to live life as normally as possible.

He devised a culinary concept where anybody could enjoy a curry in a box. The product known as "The Spice Genie" has every spice ingredient, right down to the oil, onions and tomato paste to make mutton/chicken curry, karahi, kalya, fish curry, and many more - all within 30 minutes. All you have to do, he says, is to drop the oil in the pot, add the meat of your choice, empty the spices provided, add water and it's done after a few stirs of the pot.

The concept has taken off with distributors selling the products in major centres across the country.

Malek, a well-known community leader, chef and travel agent, recently lost his sight in both eyes caused by retinal detachment which led to partial blindness. He underwent 12 procedures to save his sight, but unfortunately none were successful. In January last year, he went completely blind, however this has not deterred him from pursuing his business, and at the same time his community projects and charitable work.

During an interview at his home in Durban North, *Al-Qalam* asked him how he came up with the innovative concept. Malek, who operated a travel business specialising in haj and umrah travel - and was also a chef for 40 years cooking for mass events - said he had always provided meals for the hajejes.

"So, cooking has always

been a passion. I love cooking, I love feeding, so one night by the Grace of Allah, the thought just came in, 'why don't create something like The Spice Genie which makes life easy for everyone, where you don't have to be an expert in cooking. It is a perfect solution for the man or woman who wants to cook a tasty meal in no time. With this product you'll be able to feed between five and seven people. All you have to do is add 1kg of fish, mutton, beef, chicken, then add the spices and tomato paste and let it cook on slow heat for about 30 minutes and you will have the perfect Durban-style meal for your family or guests. The recipe has been perfected so there is no margin for error.

He said the motivation behind the idea was also meant to sustain his family.

"If you have The Spice Genie in your cupboard, you don't need anything else, just add the contents and, and you will have the best original Durban style curry



Nazir Malek with some of the curries in a box that he devised

in a matter of less than 30 minutes", he said. Malek says there are 21 dishes that are available on the market. He is now working to produce sweet dishes that would take 15 minutes to

prepare.

Malek told *Al-Qalam* a full gift pack would make a perfect wedding gift for the new bride who is just starting off - it was bound to also make

her mother-in-law proud. It could also work well for the bachelor who needed to make a delicious curry - even though his culinary expertise is boiling an egg, he said with a smile.

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'Ahmed Al-Kadi Hospital's new cardiac theatre felt like being in a space lab'

By Ismail Suder

Taking a tour of the new space-age Cardiac and Endo-Vascular Cath Lab and Theatre that officially opened at Durban's Ahmed Al-Kadi Private Hospital recently felt like being at the command centre of a rocket launch.

The glitzy state-of-the-art equipment lined with a bank of sophisticated computers and monitors makes the Ahmed Al-Kadi Private Hospital rank amongst the best in the world in terms of heart care.

Invited guests attended the launch of the new Cardiac and Endo-Vascular Cath Lab and Theatre, including the dedicated Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU).

Invited guests, largely from the medical fraternity – and *Al-Qalam* – joined a guided tour of the new facilities which was described as “a landmark development in our journey of clinical excellence”.

Suraiya Vaizie, the hospitals' public relations management spokesperson, said the advanced unit represents ‘more than state-of-the-art technology’. “It reflects our unwavering commitment to Patient Obsession Service Excellence, where every innovation is driven by better outcomes, safer care, and a deeply human approach to healing”.

Ebrahim Asmal, CEO of Ahmed Al-Kadi Private Hospital, said: “This new Cardiac and Endo-Vascular Cath Lab, Theatre, and CICU marks a defining moment for AAK. It is an investment not only in advanced medical capability,

but in our promise to our patients — that they will receive world-class cardiac care, delivered with compassion, dignity, and excellence. Everything we do is guided by our belief that patient comfort and outcomes come first.”

Guest speaker, Dr Ahmed Vachiat, a prominent specialist physician and cardiologist from Gauteng, said the opening of this cardiac Cath lab will change peoples' lives.

“This hospital — and this Cath lab — came into existence because of visionaries pausing to reflect. Dr Ahmed Al Kadi, a cardiothoracic surgeon asked himself a question that most people in his position never bother to ask: ‘What am I doing with what I have been given?’ That is the essence of reflection.

“I invite each of us, on this day, to reflect. Not on our achievements — those are real, and they are worth acknowledging, but on the gap. On the distance between the full weight of what we know and can do, and what we are currently deploying in service of others...this gap is an invitation.

“We use the word ‘philanthropy’ often, and sometimes carelessly. It can conjure images of gala dinners and naming rights. But authentic philanthropy — the kind that actually changes the lives of strangers — looks very different.

“It's like a Cardiothoracic Surgeon, who could have spent his retirement in comfort, choosing instead to pour his energy, his resources, and his reputation into something that would outlive him — in a country he did not have to care about,



Well known medic and community leader, Dr Ebrahim Khan, examines some of the surgeon's tools in the new Cardiac and Endo-Vascular Cath Lab and Theatre



A proud step forward in delivering excellence, innovation, and compassionate healthcare. From left AAK CEO Mr Ebrahim Asmal, Dr Ayoob Bux Chairman, Solly Suleman, Director



for people who could not reciprocate the favour. Dr Ahmed Al Kadi is the inspiration behind this hospital. And yet the place his heart kept returning to was South Africa, this community.

“There is a concept in Islamic tradition — Amal

Jariyah — a continuous, flowing charity. It describes an act whose benefit does not end when the giver stops giving, but continues to flow outward, long after the initial act. A well dug. A school was built. A child educated. A hospital opened. The reward for such an act is said

to continue for as long as the act continues to benefit others. Dr Al Kadi has dug a well. And today we opened the channel through which its water will flow to people who are thirsty. “That is Dr Al Kadi. And this hospital — this Cath lab— is the evidence. We do not simply

honour him with words today.

We honour him by committing to carry this work forward with the same spirit. By asking ourselves: ‘what we are building with the expertise and influence we have been given.’



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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



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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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The reality behind the reopening of Masjid Al-Aqsa

The occupation authorities have opened the gates of Masjid al-Aqsa and the surrounding sacred sites after 40 days of closure.

At the same time, so-called "Temple groups" have already begun calling their supporters to take part in incursions into Masjid al-Aqsa, alongside announcing extended incursion hours.

This announcement needs to be understood clearly: The Masjid is being opened to both Muslims and settlers alike. It was not opened on Wednesday evening, despite the ceasefire announcement so that Muslims do not experience an exclusive return to Masjid al-Aqsa. The timing coincides with the final day of the Hebrew Passover, which will be used to stage scenes presented as "victory" and to escalate viola-

tions. Heavy restrictions on worshippers are expected.

Incursion hours have now been extended to 6:30am – 11:30am.

1:30pm – 3:00pm - This marks their longest duration yet, increasing from three hours in 2008 to six and a half hours today in 2026.

This is part of a long-term trajectory. Settler incursions into Masjid al-Aqsa began in 2003, with fixed timings introduced in 2008. Since then, these hours have steadily expanded. The stated aim is clear: to enforce a "time division" where access to Masjid al-Aqsa is split equally between Muslim worshippers and settler incursions.

The threat of sacrificial offerings has not gone away.

In fact, today (Friday) carries an even greater risk,

with likely renewed attempts to bring offerings into the Masjid or as close to it as possible. A new reality is being reinforced. Even before Ramadan, incursions would begin at 7:00am.

During Ramadan, this was pushed earlier to 6:30am. Indications now suggest this earlier timing will now be fixed and continued. The Israeli "Home Front Command" has declared that activities will resume from 6:00am, reinforcing a shift where authority over opening and closing Masjid al-Aqsa is being removed from the Islamic Waqf, despite it being the sole legitimate authority responsible for *Masjid al-Aqsa.*

There will likely be intensified filming and documentation of the incursions, used as propaganda to project "control" and to normalise a dominant settler presence within *Masjid al-Aqsa*.



So this is an opening designed to expand incursions, and impose a new reality on Masjid al-Aqsa. This is a new phase of escalation and violation.

"And who are more unjust than those who prevent the Name of Allah from being mentioned in His *Masjids* and strive towards their ruin - *al-Baqarah*

Guard and preserve what is sacred to Allah, and He will guard and preserve you. *Sunan at-Tirmidhi*

Palestine Activist

Iran's Victory affirms Islamic Revolution as bulwark against injustice



By Iqbal Jassat

Media Review Network welcomes Iran's incredible resilience in defending the country and its revolution that has led to an amazing military victory.

While analysts and strategists within the military industrial complex across the US, NATO and the Zionist-apartheid regime will be staring at their drawing boards to make sense of their humiliation, Iran's steadfastness will ensure that its fingers remain on the trigger.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been bitten more than once since its brave people overthrew the corrupt

Pahlavi dynasty during the Islamic Revolution of 1979, led by Ruhollah Khomeini.

The pattern of deception engraved in Western duplicity is a badge of dishonour which Iran is fully aware of and will be on guard against.

It knows that the defeat inflicted on Israel has left the settler colonial regime in disarray, angry and extremely bitter.

Zionist leaders such as Yair Lapid have sharply criticized the ceasefire. He lashed out against it by blaming Netanyahu and described it as a failure of political and strategic leadership, warning of long-term consequences for Israel's security.

"There has never been such a political disaster in all of our history," Lapid said, arguing that "Israel wasn't even at the table when decisions were made concerning the core of our national security."

That Netanyahu has been opposed to Trump's inclination to seek an exit strategy by maliciously sabotaging

offramps, is well known. And that he apparently was sidelined and forced to eat humble pie, has left him to account for the devastation caused by Iran's missiles, without him achieving any of his military or political goals.

Indeed, the irony of Netanyahu's messianic zeal to obliterate Iran, confronts him in the ashes of a synagogue in central Tehran, destroyed by him in a missile strike. Jewish representatives condemned the attack saying Torah scrolls remained buried under the rubble.

"The Zionist regime showed no mercy towards this community during the Jewish holidays and attacked one of our ancient and holy synagogues," Homayoun Sameh, Jewish representative in the Iranian parliament was quoted as saying. "Unfortunately, during this attack, the synagogue building was completely destroyed".

Netanyahu's failure to obliterate Iran stares him in the face as he grapples with the reality of defeat.

It was after all his pressure on Trump based on a presentation designed to persuade the US that Iran's regime could be toppled within 48 hours.

He outlined a scenario in which the country's "ballistic missile program could be destroyed in a few weeks, the regime would be so weakened that it could not choke off the Strait of Hormuz, and the likelihood that Iran would land blows against US interests in neighbouring countries was assessed as minimal." Forty days of spirited retaliation by Iran which undermined and defeated Netanyahu's goals in addition to exposing Trump's complicity in Israel's genocidal war, and extracting a ceasefire on terms dictated by the IRGC, has reinforced Iran's status and prestige among oppressed masses of the world.

Israel's genocidal regime has had to unwillingly, reluctantly with resentment and annoyance, pay a price for the ceasefire.

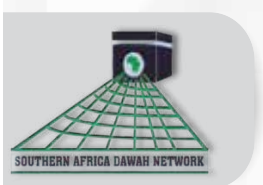
Despite Netanyahu's efforts to sabotage the cease-



fire, Trump was desperate to be relieved of his erratic demands and obligation to follow through on his threat to "open the gates of hell" on Iran. Now that the US has conceded defeat and Netanyahu is being forced to halt his war on Hezbol-

lah, Iran has rightfully re-emerged as the leading edge of the global Islamic Movement and the axis of Resistance.

Iqbal Jassat is an Executive Member of MEDIA REVIEW NETWORK.



Date Release:
01/04/2026

PRESS RELEASE

SADN would like to inform the public that the following staff members are no longer with the organisation due to health reasons. May Allah (SWT) reward and grant them the best for the future. Ameen;

Mr. Farouk Shaik Essop
Mr. Omar Mukhtar Khumalo

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OPINION

BDS may take action against Govt if it continues supplying Israel with coal

By Al-Qalam Reporter

The South African BDS Coalition has condemned the continued export of South African coal to Israel at a time when South Africa has placed before the International Court of Justice evidence of genocide against the Palestinian people.

A spokesman said: "In January 2024, the ICJ confirmed that there is a plausible risk of genocide, triggering obligations under international law on all states to prevent genocide, avoid complicity and ensure that they do not aid or assist in internationally wrongful acts.

"Yet South African coal continues to leave our shores and enter Israel's electricity system providing material support to Israel's ongoing and continuous crimes against humanity."

*On 23 March 2026, the SA BDS Coalition addressed

formal demands to the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition* calling for the immediate use of statutory powers to prohibit the export of South African coal to Israel and delivered its report, *Fuelling Genocide: An Analysis of South Africa's Coal Exports to Israel*.

On 1 April 2026, SA BDS addressed an urgent demand to the Minister of Transport calling for immediate steps to investigate, detain and prohibit vessels intending to load or transport South African coal to Israel.

On 9 April 2026, SA BDS addressed correspondence to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation demanding urgent legal and executive guidance to ensure that the South African state acts consistently with its constitutional and international obligations.

The SA BDS Coalition argues that the South African government's constitutional

and international legal obligations are clear and unambiguous and government has the power under existing law to take immediate measures to halt these complicit exports.

The activist group said there are currently three ships en route to deliver South African coal to Israel - Genco Courageous, Genco Tiger and Navios Lumen. These are the second and third Genco ships which have departed with coal for Israel in the last 6 months. Most recently, the SA BDS Coalition identified Genco Courageous docking at the Richards Bay Coal Terminal at the end of March, scheduled to load 165,000 tonnes of our coal destined for genocidal Israeli ports.

The SA BDS Coalition warned government that the risk of complicity through these shipments is real, immediate and urgent, yet despite bringing the Minister's attention to this matter, the Genco Courageous



was allowed to load coal and is currently on its way to Apartheid Israel. "If the South African government fails to prevent private actors from exporting coal, the SA BDS Coalition is prepared to take all necessary action to ensure that the

South African government complies with its obligations under domestic legislation, our Constitution and international law.

South Africa cannot speak of justice in The Hague while enabling injustice in

Richards Bay. South African coal must not be used to power genocide, ethnic cleansing, illegal occupation, apartheid, the dispossession of the Palestinian people, or unlawful wars against the people of Lebanon and Iran."

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Trump likely to cave In to Iran's legitimate demands In defence of its sovereignty



By Iqbal Jassat

Reports from various sources suggest that negotiating teams from the United States and Iran may return to Pakistan in the coming days to resume talks aimed at ending the war in the Gulf.

Though reference is made to the “war in the Gulf”, it does not adequately describe the reality of the war against Iran, nor why it was launched and by whom it was launched.

It is thus crucial to recall that Israel and the US launched Operations Roaring Lion and Epic Fury on February 28, with the stated aim of collapsing the government of the Islamic Republic and imposing regime change. Iran retaliated by firing missiles at Israel, across the Middle East at Gulf nations hosting US military bases in the region. The sustained ferocity of Iran's response demonstrated its ability to defend itself from the combined air and naval attacks by the US and Israel.

Though Iran claims that hundreds of soldiers from the attacking forces have been killed, Israel has downplayed this. According to Zionist media, only twelve IDF soldiers and 23 civilians have been killed, and at least 7,693 more injured in ballistic missile attacks across Israel since February 28, while eleven US soldiers have been killed.

While uncertainty about the toll reigns, and a fragile truce hangs by a thread, the US has imposed a blockade on the Strait of Hormuz. Trump has threatened to sink any



ship that dares to defy the blockade, adding that US forces will employ “the same system of kill” used against drug trafficking boats in the Caribbean Sea.

Despite Trump's bravado, we learn that four Iran-linked vessels have sneakily skirted around his blockade – with China blasting the siege as “dangerous and irresponsible”.

Netanyahu comes unstuck too with global economic crisis brewing and the IMF now issuing warnings about negative growth rates. As the instigator of the unprovoked and illegal war, Netanyahu is aware that the likelihood of a global recession resulting from

his criminal actions and having dragged Trump along, places his regime as the central cause of it. Alarm that's gripped western economists point to strain on supply chains. The unwise and foolish military blockade by Trump to ostensibly “punish” Iran for exercising its sovereignty over the Strait, puts the international community at risk of a global food crisis, the chief economist of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations warned on Monday.

While Netanyahu exercises his manipulation of US policy against Iran, Saudi Arabia has publicly been pressing the United States to end its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz

and return to negotiations with Iran, according to The Wall Street Journal report.

The report said Riyadh fears the standoff could trigger a broader regional escalation, including threats to Red Sea shipping routes and Saudi oil exports.

In obedience to Netanyahu and fearing axing - which ultimately led to him being fired - Mossad Director David Barnea proclaimed at the Holocaust ceremony that his spy agency will not rest until it facilitates the “fall of the Islamic regime of Iran”.

“Our mission is not yet complete. We did not think that our mission

would be completed immediately with the fading of the battles, but rather we planned, and [really] we planned to continue, and this will be manifested even after the time of attacks on Tehran,” said Barnea.

This was the first time that the Mossad chief publicly addressed his role and views about regime change in Iran.

After regime change in Iran had not transpired in the early weeks of the war, and even more since a ceasefire kicked in without regime change, various Israeli and American officials have sought to blame the Mossad and Barnea for the failure.

Unconvincingly pushing

back, the Mossad desperately rejected allegations that it has failed or that it tried to “sucker” the US into believing in delusions of regime change.

Having failed miserably to attain any of his military and political goals, Netanyahu is in a fix - domestically as well as internationally.

With Trump desperate to end his malicious adventure that has resulted in a huge fallout of his prestige and power, he is set to cave in to Iran's legitimate demands in the forthcoming second round of talks hosted by Pakistan.

Iqbal Jassat is an Executive Member of MEDIA REVIEW NETWORK.

FEATURE

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



The KFC Moral Foods Phoenix team generously sponsored a mass feeding at Aleemia Mosque, where thousands gathered to share in a meal. The event reflected true unity, as people from all racial backgrounds came together and enjoyed a delicious chicken breyani. Moulana Mohamed Tariq, High Priest of Aleemia Mosque, expressed his sincere gratitude to KFC Moral Foods for this meaningful gesture. As Eid is a time of celebration, compassion, and giving, this initiative truly embodied the spirit of remembering and supporting the underprivileged. Such acts of kindness strengthen community bonds and remind us all of the importance of sharing during blessed occasions like Eid.

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South Africans Prepare to Set Sail to Break the Siege on Gaza

Amidst genocide and expansionist aggressive war, South Africa will next month join the Global Sumud Flotilla together with many countries across the globe.

The objective of the Mission is to open a humanitarian aid sea corridor to Gaza and challenge the conditions that allow for starvation and almost two decade-long siege of over 2 million people in a concentration camp.

The blockade on Gaza has resulted in one of the most devastating man-made famines in history.

Per the most recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification data, between 16 October and 30 November 2025, around 1.6 million people (77 percent of the population analysed) faced high levels of acute food insecurity. This includes more than half a million people in Emergency, and over 100,000 people in Catastrophe. This wilful deprivation echoes centuries of colonial deployment of malnutrition as a tool of subjugation, settler colonialism, and submission.

Israel and its co-conspirators in genocide have expanded this violent policy of weaponising starvation despite censure from major human rights organisations. They have bolstered the blockade despite the provisional

measures laid out in the 28 March 2024 order of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which ordered Israel to ensure the unhindered provision of humanitarian aid to Gaza. This is also an obligation under international law that the international 'community' has failed to enforce.

In this context, the South Africans set sail where States have failed to fulfil their compulsory legal and moral universal duties to Palestinians and to all humanity to punish and prevent genocide as set out in the Genocide Convention.

They sail against structural impunity for apartheid, Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism, aggressive war, and settler colonial genocide. They sail in the spirit of the long history of mutual solidarity between anti-apartheid South Africa and Palestine.

They sail against starvation and imperial climate catastrophe. They sail against the genocidal racist regime of Zionism. They sail against the ongoing Nakba.

A spokesman for the Global Sumud Flotilla said the participants will "set sail with the spirit of solidarity that the South African people have with our Palestinian comrades and siblings. They sail with total commitment to the cause of Palestinian



self-determination."

"They sail because complicit States continue to arm the genocidal Israeli State. Mining conglomerates like Glencore continue to power the Israeli grid fuelling multiple genocides and wars across the globe while grossly exploiting labourers and plundering the environment. As the South Africans sail they carry our redoubled commitments to the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanc-

tions Movement." From Palestine to Venezuela, from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Cuba, from South Africa to Sudan, they sail knowing our struggles are connected. They sail in solidarity with oppressed and subjugated people in South Africa, Africa, and all over the world in the face of the colonial racial capitalist machine.

They sail in the footsteps of thousands who resisted and continue to resist

apartheid, fascism, and genocide in Southern Africa, Palestine, and across the world.

They sail in the slipstream of millions in the Global Majority who have risen to resist colonial domination throughout history. They sail against the winds of war as the tide turns at the end of a dying empire.

They sail to bear witness as judgment day looms. They sail with the knowl-

edge that all colonisers fall eventually.

They sail, in the words of writer and delegation co-chair Zukiswa Wanner, towards "a world already in the making, in which the solidarity of those who stand on the side of justice is as global as the profits of the plunderers."

For further info please contact Firoza Mayet : +27836346093 or Zukiswa Wanner : +27610635928

SAMNET says uptick of Islamophobia in South Africa worrying

This week (15 March) marked the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, a United Nations-designated annual observance that calls for global attention to the rising tide of anti-Muslim prejudice and discrimination. The South African Muslim Network (SAMNET) said in a statement that Islamophobia in the

world — and increasingly here in South Africa — is manifesting in harmful rhetoric, discriminatory practices, and acts of hostility and violence that undermine social cohesion and human dignity.

"These trends echo global concerns raised by the UN, which notes that Muslims continue to face institutional dis-

crimination, socioeconomic exclusion, and targeted hate driven by misinformation and inflammatory narratives.

"Like all forms of hate, Islamophobia does not exist in isolation.

It often intersects with racism, prejudice, and broader social inequities, compounding the marginalisation of af-

ected communities. This intersection makes it even more urgent for all sectors of society to confront and dismantle these patterns of intolerance.

"Worryingly, Islamophobia is also being exploited by political, nationalist, and extremist religious groups seeking to build power bases, divert attention

from corruption, human rights abuses, and deflect accountability for socioeconomic failures.

It is even more concerning that mainstream political parties in established democracies are breeding this hate through social media.

"Such manipulation deepens division, fuels mistrust, and distracts

from the real challenges facing our society and future generations.

SAMNET reaffirmed the need for collective action — across communities, institutions, and leadership — to counter all forms of hate, uphold human rights, and strengthen a South Africa grounded in justice, equality, and mutual respect.

FEATURE

Why I'm solo camping/traveling towards the heartland of the Great Karoo

Senior Al-Qalam journalist **Ismail Suder** is on yet another solo camping adventure – this time to savour the pristine desert life of the Great Karoo.

For months I've been painstakingly planning a 4000km solo camping road trip into the arid Great Karoo region of South Africa, but after two failed attempts, the idea fell flat.

The first attempt failed when I came down with the flu. The second attempt had to be cancelled because an order for crucial camping equipment – an awning for my Suzuki 4x4 that would protect me from the wind, rain and sun – was not delivered on time. Then the blessed month of Ramadan came and the road trip had to be put on hold – indefinitely.

Then last week, as I lay in bed contemplating the meaning of life, I could hear my late mother's words: "Never give up, son!"

'That's it', I muttered. 'I am

going,' – attempt number three!

A few days later, after fajr salah and lots of dua for protection, I hit the road with Bismillah on my lips.

It was also the day when fuel prices went up, but it wasn't going to stop me – not now.

The moment I hit the freeway towards PMB, I felt a mixture of euphoria and liberation. My first stop was at the Glensheiling campsite, set in the lush green countryside of Nottingham Road, in the Midlands. But before that, I dropped in at the only halaal establishment called the Field House Café & Musallah which serves the finest burgers, shawarmas and pizzas. Set on a sheep farm, the corrugated iron farmhouse-style café was a welcome sight after a monotonous drive from Durban. After zohr salah read at the onsite salah quarters, I was ready for my first night of camping.

Back at the "Glensheiling"

campsite, Julie, the owner, welcomed me warmly. I set up camp opposite the lake and climbed up to my rooftop tent and went to bed, lulled into sleep by the sounds of night birds and crickets. The campsite is set alongside a privately-owned indigenous forest where you could go on trails alongside a gurgling stream.

The next camping spot was about 40km away, close to Howick, called Bushwillow. The manager, John and his wife, made sure I was comfortable. It was Easter weekend and the campsite was buzzing with people – including shrieking kids, but my campsite, set opposite a trout dam, looked stunning as the waters shimmered in the moonlight night.

By the time you read this, I would be camping at the spectacular Mahai campsite set beneath the foothills of a mountain in the Royal Natal National Park.

The Jimny is a little mountain goat eager to take on any mountain or river cross-



View of the Tugela River near Royal Natal National Park



Taking in the beauty of Allah's creation in the Royal Natal National Park

ing. So many people ask me: "Aren't you afraid to travel & camp solo? Don't you get lonely on the road? What would you do in an emergency in the middle of nowhere?"

If I still have fuel in my tank, then I might still forge on to the Karoo National Park to camp amidst the nama-Karoo shrubs and hills to absorb the beauty of quiet Karoo nights – if Allah wills.

In January last year, I undertook a 5000km road trip – 40 days in all – camping all along the coast of the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, the Atlantic West Coast, Namaqua and almost to the border with Namibia.

This trip is somewhat different. The route will take me into the vast semi-desert natural region located in the central and western interior

of South Africa. It spans 400 000 square kilometres, making it one of the largest arid regions of the country.

The only advice my brother Yusuf gave me is: "Just DON'T breakdown in that part of the world OK!"

*To check out Ismail's adventures on his road trip, follow him on his Instagram channel: @jimny_go Afrika

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