



Muslims to join Women's Day March against xenophobia

By Azra Hoosen

More than 60 civil society organisations, faith groups, trade unions and community movements from South Africa and across the continent are expected to unite under the banner of "Operation Ubuntu", calling for an end to xenophobia, greater protection for vulnerable communities and justice for all Africans.

Operation Ubuntu marches will take place tomorrow (Saturday, August 8) in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg, three cities across South Africa. In Durban, supporters are expected to assemble outside the eThekweni Mayor's Offices at 10 am. Organisers are also encouraging communities across Africa to hold vigils at 8 pm Central African Time, with participants asked to wear red as a symbol of sacrifice, unity and solidarity.

Durban community activist Saydoonisa Sayed of the South Africa Palestine Movement, told *Al-Qalam*

that Operation Ubuntu was a call to revive a shared humanity and stand in solidarity with vulnerable communities. "There is no place in Islam for xenophobia, racism, Afrophobia or hatred towards those seeking safety," she said.

Sayed noted that the early Muslim communities welcomed those fleeing persecution with generosity and compassion, urging communities to uphold those same principles today.

Shaheed Mahomed, the Cape Town organiser for the Operation Ubuntu campaign and member of the Workers International Vanguard League, told *Al-Qalam* that the campaign is about sending a clear message that xenophobic violence does not represent the values of ordinary South Africans.

"The broader community in South Africa is not xenophobic. We live in peace with our migrant and refugee sisters and brothers. We felt there has to be a public response, not only issuing statements or providing relief, but saying to the world

that the people of South Africa stand shoulder to shoulder with immigrants and refugees," he said.

The march comes amid growing concern over attacks on foreign nationals and is being held on the eve of Women's Day to highlight the vulnerability of women and children, particularly those displaced by conflict, poverty and migration.

According to the organisers, their campaign extends beyond opposing xenophobia. Their demands include land and housing justice, opposition to the PIE Amendment Bill, stronger action against gender-based violence, an end to the criminalisation of poverty, and what they describe as an end to the exploitation of Africa's wealth by multinational corporations.

Mahomed said that xenophobia is not unique to South Africa but is a global phenomenon. "When there are xenophobic attacks, it divides us and when we are divided, it makes it easier for the capitalists and impe-

rialists controlling Africa," he said.

He believes public anger is being directed at migrants instead of those profiting from the continent's wealth.

"The question is always that these people are taking our resources. It's a major distraction from who is really taking our resources," he added.

He argued that instead of blaming migrants for unemployment and poverty, attention should be directed towards the large-scale extraction of Africa's resources and economic policies that continue to leave many communities struggling.

He said that the country's wealth should be used to improve housing, health-care, education and job creation rather than allowing ordinary people to be turned against one another.

Mahomed said undocumented migrants are often blamed for problems they did not create. "The poor migrant who is coming here either as a refugee or as an



economic migrant should be welcome to come here," he said.

"We are saying, document the workers and propose a two-year moratorium on the mass expulsions taking place," he added. Mahomed stressed that the government should focus on addressing systemic failures instead of targeting vulnerable communities.

Mahomed said Operation Ubuntu is intended to be the start of a broader movement across the continent: "We are making a historic call. We are waiting for workers, communities and people

across Africa to respond... to say, 'Africa unites'."

Organisers said that the initiative was intended to remind Africans that lasting solutions to poverty, inequality and violence can only be achieved through solidarity rather than division.

He highlighted that Surah An-Nisa (4:36) instructs believers to show kindness to relatives, neighbours, travellers and those in their care, adding that these teachings remind Muslims to respond to migrants and refugees with compassion rather than hostility.

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Hijabi social worker challenges firearm licence process

By Neelam Rahim

For more than 20 years, Farzana Rahiman has dedicated her life to protecting vulnerable children. As a social worker, she has entered homes where violence, poverty and gang activity are an everyday reality. She has faced threats, witnessed dangerous situations and made difficult decisions to remove children from harm.

Yet it was not the dangers of her profession that left her most disheartened. Instead, it was being told that the hijab she has worn for most of her life had become an obstacle in obtaining a firearm licence.

A police officer at Parrow Police Station told her that her application came back with an X next to her photo. The officer told Rahiman that the problem with her application was that she had a scarf on, and her application was thus not approved.

Now the portfolio commit-

tee on Police is set to submit a question to the Provincial Police Commissioner on why the hijab wearing applicant was denied a licence.

The mother of two daughters said she grew up in a home where faith and education went hand in hand.

“My parents have four daughters and we were raised in an Islamic home with Islamic ethos but very strong on the sentiment of education. So, between my four sisters, we all hold degrees,” she told *Al-Qalam*.

She credits her late father for encouraging his daughters to pursue opportunities without allowing cultural stereotypes to limit them.

Those values remained with her throughout her career. Today, her work often takes her into environments where social workers are exposed to real risks.

She explained that there are communities where she no longer allows staff members

to conduct home visits because of safety concerns.

The decision to apply for a firearm licence, she told *Al-Qalam*, was not driven by fear but by practicality after years of working in unpredictable situations.

After completing accredited firearm training, purchasing a firearm and submitting the required documentation, Rahiman believed she had fulfilled every legal requirement. Instead, months later, she learnt there was an issue with the photograph accompanying her application because she was wearing a hijab.

Rather than simply complying, Rahiman began researching the legal framework herself.

She said she searched for court judgments and carefully examined the Firearms Control Act but could not find any provision preventing Muslim women from wearing a hijab in firearm licence photographs.

“As far as the Firearm Controls Act goes, the only thing that you’re not allowed to wear is a hat and sunglasses.”

What followed, however, left her questioning the system.

She recalled being advised that she could wear a wig instead or even use artificial intelligence to alter her photograph.

For Rahiman, those suggestions missed the fundamental purpose of an identity document.

She explained that every official identification document she currently holds, including her passport, driver’s licence and identity document features her wearing a hijab.

“If the purpose of the identification card is to be able to identify the licence holder, then you should be able to see me.”

The issue, she believes, ex-



tends beyond a single application. During the days following the publicity around her case, Rahiman said she heard from other Muslim women who claimed they had removed their hijabs simply to complete the licensing process.

She worries that many women may never challenge such decisions because they lack the knowledge, confidence or resources to do so.

“Not everybody has access to resources. Not everybody has insight in the ability to use those resources.”

Rahiman also expressed concern about what she believes is a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment online.

“Islamophobia is highly on the rise in South Africa, and this is something I’ve experienced personally,” she added.



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IMASA - medical equipment for Open Air School

By Azra Hoosen

For many learners at Durban's Open Air School, access to medical care is an essential part of the school day. Thanks to a donation of essential medical equipment from the Islamic Medical Association of South Africa (IMASA) Durban, the school is now better equipped to provide health care.

The handover took place on 23 July at Open Air School in Glenwood, a specialist public school that caters for approximately 260 learners from pre-primary to Grade 12 with special educational needs, including learning, physical and mental disabilities.

The donation included two beds, two medicine cabinets, a portable aspirator, a nebuliser, a stretcher and medicine kidney trays for the school's sick bay. The equipment will help staff respond more effectively to learners who require medical attention during the school day.

Speaking to *Al-Qalam*, IMASA Durban and IMA

Baytul Nur Chairman, Solly Suleman, said that the organisation was motivated by a desire to ensure that every child has access to a safe and supportive learning environment.

He stressed that care should never depend on ability: "Every child deserves to feel safe, seen and supported while at school, regardless of their disability. We wanted to help make their learning experience easier and more dignified."

Suleman explained that the equipment would strengthen the school's ability to provide day-to-day medical care. "With beds for rest, a stretcher for emergencies, and tools like a nebuliser and aspirator, the staff will be far more prepared to respond to learners who feel unwell or need immediate attention. It gives both learners and staff peace of mind," he said.

He told *Al-Qalam* that meeting the learners was one of the most memorable parts of the visit. He described the visit as "unforgettable", reflecting on how the IMA Durban team was welcomed with dancing,

singing, bright smiles and "the sweetest hugs". The learners were so full of light and so welcoming. "The hugs, the joy and the happiness were overwhelming in the best way," he added.

Suleman highlighted that the initiative reflects IMASA's commitment to serving communities and supporting vulnerable members of society. "At IMASA we are committed to helping anyone in need, regardless of race, religion, background or ability. Supporting Open Air School is part of living out that commitment and ensuring that even the most vulnerable in our community are cared for," he said.

He also thanked the school's staff for their dedication to the learners: "Thank you for the incredible love you pour into these children every single day. You are changing lives."

When addressing the learners, Suleman thanked them for the warm welcome: "You brought so much joy to our hearts. Keep shining, you are seen, you are loved, and you matter."

Suleman is confident that



the equipment will make a meaningful difference to both learners and staff, strengthening the school's ability to provide timely medical care when it is needed. The donation is a reminder of what can be

achieved when communities come together to support those who need it most.

Reflecting on the visit, Suleman said that the experience reinforced an important lesson. "This experience

reminded us that to give is to receive. We came to give, but we left having received so much more. The kindness of the learners softened our hearts and brought tears to our eyes. It reminded us why we do this work," he said.

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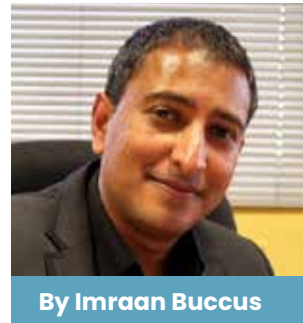
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OPINION

Xenophobia's Islamophobic turn worrying



By Imraan Buccus

Across the world, the right has increasingly made xenophobia one of its central mobilising strategies. Migrants are blamed for unemployment, pressure on public services, crime, social breakdown and the failures of government. In many countries, particularly in Europe, this anti-migrant politics has become tightly entwined with Islamophobia. Migration is presented not only as an economic or administrative problem but as a threat to national culture, religious identity and civilisation itself.

South Africa's anti-mi-

grant politics is now following this path. The xenophobic project led by March and March and supported by other authoritarian and far right forces is beginning to combine hostility towards migrants with hostility towards Muslims. The language has shifted from claims about migrants taking jobs and places in schools and hospitals to warnings about a Muslim "takeover", Muslim "dominance", an "Islamic invasion" and the introduction of Sharia law.

Jacinta Ngobese-Zuma, the leader of March and March, recently asked on social media whether South Africans were wrong to oppose Muslim organisations that shelter or provide humanitarian support to migrants displaced by xenophobic violence. She claimed that foreign Muslims were seeking "dominance" in South Africa.

Speaking to the BBC,

Ngobese-Zuma said that South Africa was undergoing a "very serious religious takeover". Muslims comprise only around 1.5% to 2% of the population. The idea that such a small minority is taking over the country is plainly absurd. But the lack of any factual basis for Ngobese-Zuma's claim does not make it politically insignificant. Far-right politics has never depended on an accurate description of reality. It works by identifying a vulnerable group, exaggerating its power and portraying its ordinary presence in society as a co-ordinated threat.

Nkosikhona Ndabandaba, also known as Phakelumthakathi and closely associated with the same xenophobic mobilisation, has taken this language further. Responding to an image warning of an "Islamic invasion" and the introduction of Sharia law, he reportedly wrote: "Never ever, especially the



terrorists!" In the standard move of the right around the world migrants, Muslims and terrorists are collapsed into one category. Muslim religious identity becomes grounds for suspicion, and the presence

of foreign Muslims is portrayed as a security threat. This is a significant and alarming development in South African far-right politics. The migrant is no longer accused only of competing for jobs, us-

ing hospitals or operating small businesses. The migrant is now also presented as the carrier of a hostile religion and an agent of cultural conquest.

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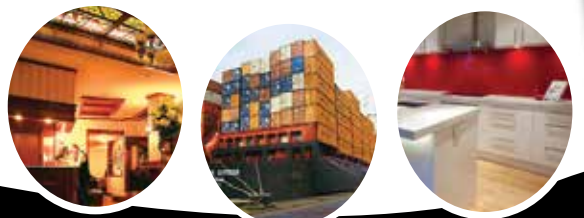
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The expansion of the target is already visible. Xenophobic mobilisation is usually justified by saying that it is directed only against undocumented migrants.

In practice, documented migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, foreign-owned businesses and South Africans who defend them are also threatened. The turn towards Islamophobia widens the target again. Muslim organisations, business owners, charities and South African Muslims who defend migrants can now be portrayed as part of the alleged take-over.

A recent post by the Pakistan South Africa Association described a visit to a church in Delmas, where it distributed food and grocery hampers to families in need.

The initiative was explicitly interfaith and humanitarian. Yet some of the responses accused the association of trying to buy influence, gain control of the country or conceal

predatory intentions. An ordinary act of solidarity was treated as proof of conspiracy.

The same suspicion is directed at Muslim organisations that defend migrants from unlawful arrest, exclusion or intimidation. When Muslim organisations call for due process or support migrant-owned businesses, their intervention is not treated as a constitutional position. It is presented as Muslims protecting “illegal foreigners” in pursuit of a larger religious agenda.

The argument is structured so that Muslims cannot answer it. If Muslim organisations remain silent, they can be accused of refusing to contribute to South African society. If they provide food, shelter or legal support, their assistance is described as an attempt to buy influence or impose religious dominance.

The xenophobic and Islamophobic narratives strengthen each other. Xenophobia constructs the border as being under attack. Islamophobia con-

structs the nation’s culture and religion as being under attack.

Ethnic nationalism adds a further claim that a particular community is losing control over territory, institutions and political authority. Together, these narratives allow a movement that emerged around resentment over jobs and public services to appeal to fears about identity, religion and national survival.

Democracy requires that questions of citizenship and legal status be decided through lawful procedures rather than by political movements, mobs or social-media campaigns. It protects freedom of religion and the right of civil-society organisations to offer humanitarian and legal support.

March and March’s politics increasingly challenges these principles. It claims the authority to decide who belongs, who may enter a hospital or school, who may run a business and which organisations may assist people under threat. Its leaders present migrants as people



whose rights can be suspended and Muslims as a community whose motives are inherently suspect.

The growing danger of far-right populism extends beyond migrants and Muslims. Journalists, progressive lawyers, left learning trade unionists and radical grassroots activists are all

coming under increasing attack. March and March has actively sought to delegitimise constitutional and humanitarian opposition to xenophobia.

The threat to South Africa does not come from Muslims or migrants. It comes from a far-right politics that turns the poverty, in-

stitutional collapse and kleptocratic politics that drives and justified public anger into hostility towards minorities, while leaving the political and economic forces responsible for the crisis untouched.

Dr Buccus is an academic, political analyst and editor of Al-Qalam



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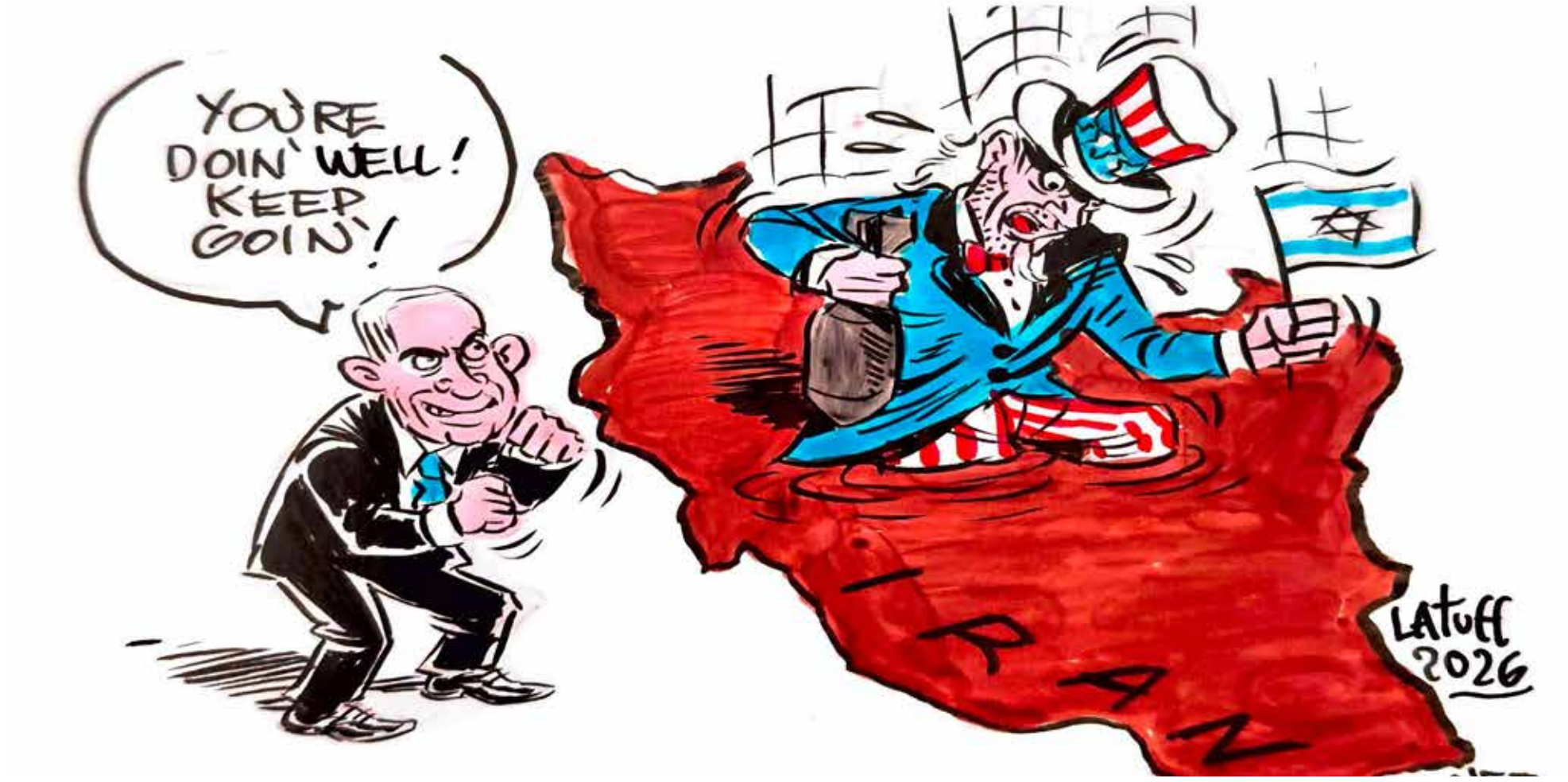
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We would like to thank all our respected readers for sending in your comments, views and opinions to our 'Letters to the Editor' column. We value your thoughts on the various aspects affecting the Muslim community. Keep them rolling in.

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National Mosque Day – ‘challenging Islamophobia through engagement’

The South African Muslim Network (SAMNET) has been highlighting noticeable rise in anti-Muslim misinformation, stereotypes and hostility, particularly on social media. Muslims are increasingly being portrayed as outsiders, despite being part of South Africa’s history and heritage for more than 300 years.

One of the most effective ways to challenge prejudice is through meaningful human interaction. Research from around the world consistently shows that when people meet, engage and learn from one another, fear and misconceptions begin to disappear.

National Mosque Open Day (NMOD) was launched by SAMNET in 2017 and is held annually on Heritage Day, 24 September.

The initiative encourages mosques across South

Africa to open their doors to the public and welcome visitors from all backgrounds. Since its inception, the campaign has grown significantly, with dozens of mosques participating across the country and across Africa.

The concept is simple: invite your community to visit your local mosque, learn about Islam, observe the mosque environment, ask questions freely, and engage with Muslims in a welcoming and relaxed setting. A typical Open Day may include a guided mosque tour, an explanation of prayer and wudu, refreshments, and possibly a Q&A session.

National Mosque Open Day is not about debate or conversion. It is about building understanding, strengthening relationships and creating opportunities for people to learn directly from one another rather than through stereotypes or misinformation.



Heritage Day provides the perfect opportunity to showcase the diversity of our nation and to demonstrate that mosques are not only places of worship, but also centres of community, service, compassion and learning. It is

a Public Holiday when most people are available to attend and volunteer.

At a time when Islamophobia is growing globally, opening our doors is a practical and positive response. Every con-

versation helps replace suspicion with understanding, strangers with neighbours, and misconceptions with meaningful human connection. We invite all mosques and musallahs to participate in this year’s National

Mosque Open Day on 24 September 2026.

For more information or to register your mosque, please contact SAMNET at info@samnet.co.za or WhatsApp 0843333979 or visit www.samnet.co.za

Targeting of Halal Certification by Israeli Aligned Lobby Smacks of Islamophobia



By Iqbal Jassat

Business Day has published a letter of complaint regarding Halal certification, which apart from being contradictory, is deliberately conflated with what the writer refers to as “consumer awareness and transparency”.

In addition to his attempt at mischief-making by hoping to provoke the ire of

Christians through injecting a controversy on the Halal industry in South Africa, it will not be far removed to conclude that he does so in pursuit of Israel’s Islamophobic agenda.

That he represents an agency linked to the settler colonial regime which faces serious charges of committing genocide in Gaza, Daniel Jacobi and his outfit known as “South African Friends of Israel”, it does not surprise us that he would do so.

Published on 6 August 2026, and titled “Religious certification’s role in consumer choice”, it is riddled with contradictions.

For instance his question about why Halal certified products have become the “default standard in so many supply chains”, is explained and answered by himself.

“Businesses are free to seek certification where there is

consumer demand or export markets require it. For many manufacturers, halal certification is a commercial decision that opens access to local and international markets”, is his explanation.

Indeed if it is understood in such logical terms underlined by the fact that Halal certification is purely a dietary requirement, not a bogey of any sort, nor associated with what Israeli-inspired Hasbara (propaganda) peddles as “Islamist terrorism”, why then is it necessary to politicize it as Jacobi does?

We are confident that the overwhelming majority of South Africa’s consumers respect and accept Halal as a matter of dietary choice, health standards, and consumer transparency rather than an ideological symbol.

It is common wisdom that the guidelines for Halal certification share similar im-

peratives for Kosher certification. These are amongst others hygiene, cleanliness, ethical treatment of animals and quality control.

Crucially, these practices ensure food safety which benefit all consumers regardless of faith. While these facts are indisputable, Jacobi’s dispute lies elsewhere. It is to politicise an Islamic imperative which he unashamedly does by injecting red herrings.

His fake concerns must be rejected with contempt. Jacobi is the same person who on the appointment of former Minister Naledi Pandor as chair of the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), publicly alleged that it has been hijacked by “radicals”.

He also led a group of South African members of parliament and religious leaders on a highly controversial trip to Israel during

2025. Jacobi confirmed that the trip was made and described it as “a mission to discover historic facts to Israel.”

The confirmation took place after the Good Party raised questions about its “secret mission.”

At the time, Rebecca Davis (Daily Maverick) critiqued it by claiming that it seemed to have been “a very one-sided ‘fact-finding mission’”.

She correctly assessed that any of the nine South African MPs who visited Israel on a recent “fact-finding mission” will testify to the media that “there was no evidence of apartheid and, to the contrary, Israel is a vibrant progressive multi-racial and multi-ethnic society, in which the rights of all citizens are protected and upheld by the rule of law”. Her conclusion was based on the claim of the group

that organised the trip in its press statement: “All delegates observed that, and will confirm with South African media, that there was no evidence of apartheid and, to the contrary, Israel is a vibrant progressive multi-racial and multi-ethnic society, in which the rights of all citizens are protected and upheld by the rule of law.”

By all accounts it is evident that Jacobi and his pro-Israeli aligned group are invested in promoting and defending the Zionist-apartheid regime.

The issue of Halal thus becomes a convenient decoy to raise the ire of South African consumers against Muslims at a time the country is confronted with social issues related to foreign migrants, xenophobia and Islamophobia.

Iqbal Jassat
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Amnesty: India sent 2,596 arms shipments to Israel during genocide

Amnesty said its ‘conservative’ methodology meant it was likely underestimating the true extent of India’s contribution to Israel, writes South African journalist Azad Essa

Indian state-owned and private companies shipped at least 2,596 consignments comprising hundreds of thousands of arms, ammunition and military components to Israel during the genocide in Gaza, a new Amnesty International report has revealed.

The shipments, sent between 7 October 2023 and 30 November 2025, included machine-gun components, 155 mm high-explosive artillery shells supplied to Elbit Systems, explosive warheads for the SkyStriker “kamikaze” drones - similar to those discovered amid the ruins in Khan Younis - and armoured vehicle components destined for major

suppliers to the Israeli military.

According to Amnesty, these amounted to 564,970 parts of explosive ordnance (drone warheads, artillery shell casings and others), 390,516 small arms parts for military-grade weapons, and 298 components of military vehicles to large Israeli companies that supplied the Israeli armed forces.

As of 29 July 2026, at least 247,387 Palestinians have been either killed or injured since Israel launched its military campaign in Gaza, following the Hamas-led attacks on southern Israel on 7 October 2023.

The report, “Made in India: The Supply of Weapons and Ammunition to Israel”, published on Thursday, said its findings were “based on a deliberately conservative methodology”, and were likely to underestimate the “true ex-

tent of India’s contribution to Israel’s military supply chain”.

Rising Indian complicity

The report is the latest in a series alleging that India has materially supported Israel’s genocide in Gaza, following earlier allegations that New Delhi supplied combat drones, bombs and weapons components to Israel after October 2023.

In May, the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement and No Harbour for Genocide warned of a “flood” of military supplies from India to Israel.

“Israel has a huge domestic production, but they rely on specific components, whether it’s like high-end technology material for aerospace or bulk materials such as military steel,” a spokesperson for



No Harbour for Genocide told Middle East Eye at the time.

Likewise, an Al Jazeera investigation based on Israeli Tax Authority import

data found that India was the second-largest exporter of military-related goods to Israel between October 2023 and October 2025.

Al Jazeera noted the data

likely represented only a partial picture of total arms transfers to Israel and did not establish the end use of the shipments in Gaza.

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Likewise, Amnesty's investigators based their analysis on shipments classified under specific Harmonized System (HS) codes, the internationally used customs classification system for traded goods.

These included HS codes 9301-9307, which cover weapons, ammunition and their parts and accessories; and HS code 8710, which covers armoured and fighting vehicles and their components.

Researchers excluded shipments labelled only with internal product or part numbers, where it was not possible to determine whether the items were military or civilian.

It also excluded hundreds of shipments of dual-use small-arms components, as well as weapons, parts and ammunition likely intended for anti-missile defence systems.

Amnesty said its deliberately conservative methodology meant its findings were likely to underestimate the true extent of In-

dia's contribution to Israel's military supply chain.

Nonetheless, its findings revealed there were several companies, including state-owned ventures, involved in supplying military aid to Israel.

It said it wrote to nine companies as well as the Indian state but did not receive a reply by the time of publication.

"In light of the International Court of Justice's provisional measures orders recognizing a plausible risk of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, the Indian authorities cannot credibly argue that they did not know that continuing to authorize and facilitate arms transfers to Israel carries a substantial risk of contributing to serious violations of international law," Agnes Callamard, Amnesty's secretary general, said in a statement.

Callamard added that while the Israeli military continued to inflict death and suffering in Gaza, "Indian companies continued to profit by supplying components and munitions destined for Israel's de-

fence sector."

India-Israel ties

India-Israel defence ties have accelerated over the past decade under the leadership of Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Benjamin Netanyahu.

India is the world's largest purchaser of Israeli weapons, and several Israeli arms manufacturers have established production facilities in the country through joint ventures with Indian companies.

Earlier this year, during Modi's visit to Israel, the two countries upgraded ties to a Special Strategic Partnership for Peace, Innovation and Prosperity.

The relationship has since expanded further, with a series of new memorandums of understanding and reports of potential defence partnerships, including discussions over India manufacturing Iron Dome interceptor missiles for Israel. Diplomatically, the Indian government has been one of Israel's staunchest supporters.

New Delhi has refused to



join South Africa's case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, which alleges violations of the Genocide Convention, and has rejected calls to impose an arms embargo on Israel.

It has also cracked down on pro-Palestine protests and activism within India. When Indian civil society groups petitioned the Supreme Court in September 2024 to halt arms exports,

the court dismissed the case, ruling that decisions on foreign policy fall within the government's domain, not the judiciary. External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar has also maintained that India's arms exports are guided by the country's "national interest".

"The issue of India's exports, including India's exports of anything which directly or indirectly has

any military implications, is guided by our national interest and by our commitments to various regimes," Jaishankar said in December 2024. "Where Israel is concerned, it is a country with which we have a strong record of cooperation in national security. It is also a country that has stood by us at different moments when our national security was under threat," he added – *Amnesty International*

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Israel pursuing ‘undeclared annexation’ of West Bank, Peace Now says

A leading Israeli advocacy group has accused the government of pursuing the undeclared annexation of the occupied West Bank through coordinated measures that undermine the Oslo Accords.

Peace Now, which monitors Israeli violations in the West Bank, said the measures include broadening the powers of the Israeli Civil Administration, expanding settlements and weakening the Palestinian Authority.

“Netanyahu’s government is playing with fire, disregarding its international commitments and endangering Israel’s security - all in order to take control of more territory and land in the West Bank,” the movement said in the report, obtained and reported by Ynet on Tuesday.

One of the measures was introduced in February, when the security cabinet authorised the Civil Administration to enforce regulations and oversee environmental protection, water and archaeology in Areas A and B of the West Bank.

The Civil Administration is a body under Israel’s defence ministry that implements civilian policies in the

occupied West Bank. The government said the move was aimed at preventing environmental hazards and damage to heritage sites.

Peace Now said the environmental and archaeological measures use definitions broad enough to enable Israeli civilian authorities to intervene in Palestinian construction across much of the West Bank. Under the 1995 Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B and C as a temporary administrative arrangement that remains in place.

Area A is under full Palestinian Authority control for civil administration and internal security and includes major Palestinian cities.

Area B is under Palestinian civil administration, while security responsibilities are shared with Israel. It includes smaller towns and rural villages.

Area C, which accounts for about 60 percent of the West Bank, is under full Israeli civil and security control. Most Israeli settlements and military bases are located there, built on Palestinian land. Despite the accords, Israeli forces have operated inside Areas A and B for years. However, civilian

interventions have largely been restricted to Area C until now.

In June, the Civil Administration also moved to strip the Palestinian municipality of Hebron of broad planning and construction powers relating to settlements and several holy sites in the heart of the city.

The Peace Now report also cited Israeli military orders issued in July to requisition Palestinian land inside Area A for a road connecting two settlements.

The movement said it was the first time since the Oslo Accords were signed that military land-requisition orders had been used inside Area A for an explicitly civilian settlement purpose, rather than for military purposes.

The group said it had also documented at least 23 settlement outposts established in Areas B over the past two and a half years.

Even when the military occasionally removes the outposts, Peace Now said, they are rebuilt and expanded, including with permanent structures.

The outposts have been accompanied by the construc-

tion of roads, the takeover of water sources and the displacement of Palestinian residents.

Settlers have also taken over abandoned Palestinian homes in Areas B and C after residents were forced to leave following repeated settler attacks.

“The government’s actions in Areas A and B are not isolated incidents but part of an organised policy whose ultimate goal is to collapse the Palestinian Authority and create chaos that would allow it to expand settlements into cities and villages deep inside the West Bank,” the report said.

‘Only the beginning’

The measures in the West Bank come as the government carries out an organised and “consistent” campaign to weaken the Palestinian Authority economically, politically, territorially and in terms of security, Peace Now said.

One of the main tools used to pressure the Palestinian Authority is the withholding of tax revenues collected by Israel on its behalf under the 1994 Paris Protocol. The revenues amount to about 11 billion shekels (around \$3.66bn) a year and have



historically accounted for more than 60 percent of the Palestinian Authority’s budget, according to Ynet.

Peace Now said only about half of the funds owed to the Palestinian Authority were transferred under the current government between 2022 and 2025. Since June 2025, not a single shekel has been transferred, according to the report.

Peace Now stressed that the government has not formally announced the cancellation of the Oslo Accords, nor has it introduced legislation to annex the West Bank or dismantle the Palestinian Authority. However, the group argues that the measures combined amount in practice to a process of

undeclared annexation.

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said the report was a “certificate of achievement for the Israeli government”.

“What they call ‘the erosion of Oslo’ we call correcting an injustice resulting from 30 years of neglect,” he said, according to Ynet.

“What they call ‘de facto annexation’ we call establishing Israel’s security belt.

“I am proud of the settlement revolution I have led to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian terrorist state in the heart of the country. This is only the beginning.”

Middle East Eye



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'Used as human bait': Leaked image shows elderly Palestinian men before execution by Israeli forces

Journalist says Nadi and Ali Marouf were abducted, used as human shields and killed in northern Gaza in November 2024, according to *Middle East Eye*

The last known photograph of Palestinian men Nadi Marouf and Ali Marouf, who were reportedly killed in November 2024 after being used as human shields (Younis Tirawi/X)

A newly leaked photograph shows two blindfolded elderly Palestinian men from Beit Lahia in Gaza, hours before Israeli forces killed them in November 2024, according to Palestinian journalist Younis Tirawi, who published the image.

The photograph shows Israeli military personnel standing between two blindfolded men, whom Tirawi identified in a post on X as Nadi Marouf and Ali Marouf.

He said the photograph was taken hours before their deaths and that the two men were "used as human bait and then executed".

In an earlier post in October 2025, Tirawi had said that troops from the 92nd Battalion of the Kfir Brigade abducted the men from Beit Lahia and held them as human shields for several days. "Israeli troops from the 92nd Bat-

alion of the Kfir Brigade abducted two elderly Palestinians from Beit Lahia and used them as human shields for days before killing them," Tirawi wrote.

The Palestine Chronicle reported in October 2025 that the men had been detained for several days before being released near al-Tawam roundabout and shot.

The report said that images showed the men stripped to their underwear, with one apparently having his hands tied behind his back. It added that they had been forced to enter buildings before Israeli soldiers went inside.

Ramy Abdu, chairman of the Geneva-based Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, said at the time: "After being used as human shields, their relatives found them after three days and they had been executed."

The newly shared photograph adds to a series of images and testimonies that have raised allegations about the treatment of Palestinian civilians during Israeli military operations in northern Gaza.

Independent reporting has previously documented incidents in which Palestinian civilians were forced to enter buildings and tunnels ahead of Israeli soldiers to check for explosives or fighters. In May 2025, the

Israeli army said it was investigating several such cases and acknowledged that using Palestinians as human shields or coercing them into participating in military operations was "strictly prohibited" under its orders.

A United Nations investigation into Israeli military conduct in Gaza previously concluded that forcing Palestinian civilians to enter houses ahead of soldiers amounted to the use of human shields and violated international humanitarian law.

Wider abuses

An Associated Press investigation published in 2025 included testimony from Palestinians who said they had been forced to enter buildings and tunnels ahead of Israeli troops. Israeli soldiers also described the practice as widespread.

Al Jazeera subsequently reported on the findings, citing seven Palestinians and two Israeli military officers who described the practice.

The developments also come as Palestinian prisoners continue to report harsh detention conditions.

Dr Mazen Rantisi, a 71-year-old Palestinian physician known as the "doctor of the poor", was detained during a pre-dawn Israeli raid on his home in

Ramallah on 21 June, according to Palestinian and rights organisations.

He serves as chairman of the board of the Health Work Committees, a Palestinian organisation that provides medical services.

Rantisi told a lawyer that prison authorities had withheld his regular medication during his first 10 days in Ofer Prison and continued to deny him one of his medicines.

He also said that prison units repeatedly raided his cell and beat detainees.

His lawyer, Saja Misherqi Baransi, said Rantisi had rapidly lost weight after being given small portions of food that he described as unfit for consumption, including mouldy bread, almost-rotten tomatoes, uncooked hummus and foul-smelling rice.

Belgian rights group Viva Salud said Rantisi and another Health Work Committees official were arrested on June 21 and expressed concern about their health and access to appropriate medical care.

Meanwhile, Gaza's broader humanitarian crisis continues to deepen.

The Gaza health ministry has reported more than 73,000 Palestinian deaths since the war began in October 2023, according to recent reports.



The scale of the killings remains difficult to establish fully because thousands of bodies are believed to remain beneath destroyed buildings.

A mass funeral in Gaza on 4 August included 112 people killed in a 2023 Israeli air strike whose remains were only recently recovered.

Gaza authorities have estimated that thousands more people remain buried beneath rubble.

The UN has previously recorded 193 malnutrition-related deaths in Gaza, including 96 children.

In July 2025 alone, 11,877 children between six and 59 months who were screened were found to be

suffering from acute malnutrition, including 2,562 with severe acute malnutrition. UN agencies have continued to warn that food insecurity and malnutrition remain critical.

An analysis cited by the UN humanitarian office projected that more than 100,000 children between 6 and 59 months could suffer acute malnutrition through October 2026, including more than 31,000 severe cases.

The continuing allegations over the treatment of civilians, detainees and the dead have added to international scrutiny of Israel's conduct in Gaza, where humanitarian agencies continue to report severe restrictions on access to food, medicine and other essential supplies.

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SPORT

AMS KZN Champions dinner honours sporting excellence and character

By Azra Hoosen

After weeks of competition on the netball courts and soccer fields, the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) KZN gathered learners, coaches, parents, principals and organisers for a Champions Dinner that celebrated not only the winning teams, but also the people whose dedication made the tournaments possible.

Hosted in partnership with Al Baraka Bank, the evening brought together the winning Open Category soccer and netball teams on July 29th at the Al Baraka Bank Head Office in Kingmead, Durban.

For AMS, the dinner marked the culmination of months of preparation, competition and collaboration between its affiliated schools. AMS head of sports, Zain Muhammed, said the sporting programme

has grown into much more than a series of tournaments.

“Over the years we have built a real synergy between our affiliated schools, where the focus is on growing together. The sports wing is one where we encourage mass participation. The learners look forward to the tournaments every year, and they continue to get bigger and better,” he said.

Muhammed described the Champions dinner as a fitting conclusion to the season.

“We culminate in this dinner to acknowledge the achievements of the learners, coaches and schools. It is important that they are recognised for the effort they have put in throughout the season,” he said.

Nasir Seedat, General Manager of Retail, Wealth and Marketing at Al Baraka Bank, told *Al-Qalam* that the Champions Dinner was about celebrating the people

behind a successful sporting season.

“While the trophies mark the end of the competition, we wanted to recognise the dedication, commitment and hard work that went into getting there,” he said.

The evening’s programme reflected both celebration and personal development. Proceedings opened with a recitation from the Qur’an, followed by welcome addresses from AMS and Al Baraka Bank.

One of the highlights was a leadership session presented by a Dale Carnegie representative, encouraging learners to develop the communication and leadership skills needed to succeed both on and off the sports field.

Guests also heard from one of the learners, who shared a personal reflection on the tournament experience and the opportunities it had created. The evening concluded

with an interactive quiz before attendees gathered for dinner.

While the Champions Dinner recognised the Open Category tournament winners, Seedat said the season also placed significant emphasis on character.

During the tournament, the Akhlaaq Awards recognised one team in each age group for demonstrating exemplary character, respect, teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the competition.

“We believe these qualities are just as important as winning because they reflect the true spirit of sport and the values we hope young people will carry with them throughout their lives,” said Seedat.

He hopes that learners left the evening with an appreciation that success extends beyond lifting a trophy. “The tournament reminded us that commitment, discipline and teamwork are es-



Abdullah Ameen - COO



Nasir Seedat - GM Retail, Wealth and Marketing

sential, but so too are humility, respect and integrity,” he added.

Seedat said that recognising young people’s achievements encourages them to strive for excellence while reinforcing that character is as important as talent.

“Sport teaches resilience, discipline and leadership, but it also teaches respect for teammates, opponents and officials. Those lessons stay with the learners long after the final whistle,”

he said. Reflecting on the broader impact of the AMS tournaments, Seedat said the events strengthen relationships between learners, parents, educators and schools while promoting healthy competition and mutual respect.

“Sport has a unique way of bringing communities together. Success belongs not only to the players on the field, but also to the people who encourage and support them behind the scenes,” he said.

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