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Durban to join earthquake 'Global Day of Action' for Palestine

Never before has a simultaneous global Palestine protest action of this magnitude been done, writes Ismail Suder

Durban will be joining millions of people across the world to stage synchronised protest actions on October 10, calling on Governments and businesses to end their complicity with Israel – a move that is seen as an earthquake in terms of simultaneous global action.

Mandla Mandela, prominent solidarity activist for Palestine, made a heartfelt plea for all people in South Africa to participate in the Global Alliance for Palestine (GAFP) protest actions across our towns and cities.

The major campaign, aptly called the "Global Day of Action" was announced by The Global Alliance for Palestine (GAFP) on Monday which is calling on thousands of grassroots organisations, trade unions, student networks, and civil society groups across Asia,

the Americas, Europe, Africa and the Middle East to be part of this mammoth campaign.

The core demands are for an immediate arms embargo against Israel; the implementation of economic and political sanctions, support for the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement, and an end to international complicity on the war in Gaza.

The mobilisation is backed by an international steering committee featuring prominent figures including Jeremy Corbyn, Mustafa Barghouti, and Yanis Varoufakis.

In Durban, Saydoon Nisa Sayed, the Coordinator for the South Africa Palestine Movement (SAPM) told *A1 - Qalam* that the group was busy planning protest events as part of the Global Day of Action from October 7-10.

"The South Africa Palestine Movement (SAPM) will join people of conscience across the globe for the main event on 10 October 2026 in a Global Day of Action marking three years

of the ongoing genocide and catastrophic suffering of the Palestinian people. Three years of death, destruction, displacement and deprivation cannot become normal.

"SAPM calls on South Africans to turn solidarity into action. We must demand an end to the killing, an end to the occupation and apartheid, unrestricted humanitarian assistance, accountability for international crimes, and the freedom and self-determination of the Palestinian people.

"South Africa has a historic responsibility to continue standing on the side of justice. Our own history reminds us that apartheid and oppression can be defeated when people unite and refuse to remain silent," she added.

She said building up to the main Global Day of Action on October 10, the SAPM will host an event on October 7, marking three years of genocide.

Meanwhile, Mandla Mandela – an icon of the Palestine cause – has called on



The South African Palestine Movement (SAPM) carry out weekly pickets each Friday in Durban. They will intensify protest actions between 7-10 October.

every civil society organisation, trade unions, student movements and community networks across our lands to "stand with us."

"On Saturday October 10, coordinated by the Global Alliance for Palestine, we will reclaim our streets and demand tangible accountability against the Occupation state.

We are taking collective action globally to force the world's attention back to the issue of Palestine. Make

no mistake, this is not limited to Israel's devastating genocide in Gaza. The state-backed Settler violence and systematic land seizures across the West Bank reveal a single, relentless campaign to erase Palestinian lives.

After more than 1400 days of destruction, empty international statements and hollow promises are unacceptable. We do not ask for gestures, we demand uncompromising political actions, an immediate arms embargo, targeted sanctions

and full BDS accountability. "I urge every movement, every leader and every community to answer this call. Move from words to intervention between October 9 to 11. Mobilise your people, register your local actions, and join this Global Day of Action. Stand with us. Hit the streets and turn our collective resolve into unstoppable for justice", Mandela pleaded.

The global event is expected to generate massive global news coverage.

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LOCAL NEWS

National Wills Week 2026: Reminder to update your Will

Albaraka Bank is giving away Will documents. You can download them from their website or get it free from any bank branch, writes an Al-Qalam Reporter

National Wills Week takes place across South Africa from 14 to 18 September, providing an important reminder to consider one of the most important, yet often overlooked, aspects of financial planning – having a valid and up-to-date Will.

A Will is far more than a legal document. It is an essential part of responsible financial planning and a meaningful expression of care for the people that matter to you. It provides clarity about your wishes, helps protect those you leave behind and ensures that the assets you have built over a lifetime are dealt with as you intended.

Much of financial planning

naturally focuses on life today and the years ahead, saving, investing, buying a home, growing wealth and providing for our families. Yet a truly comprehensive financial plan should also consider what happens to those assets when we are no longer here.

National Wills Week is therefore an opportunity to do more than simply prepare or review your Will. It is an invitation to reflect on your broader financial affairs; consider the legacy you want to leave behind and put the right plans in place today to protect tomorrow.

Why is a Will so important?

A properly prepared Will provides clarity about how your estate should be distributed and helps ensure that your wishes are understood and respected. Without a valid Will, your estate will be distributed according to the Intestate Succession Act of South Africa, rather

than according to your own wishes. For Muslims, an Islamic Will helps ensure that an estate is administered and distributed in accordance with the principles of Shariah, allowing Islamic inheritance requirements to be considered alongside the applicable laws of South Africa. Without an Islamic Will, the distribution of an estate under South African intestate succession laws may result in outcomes that do not align with Islamic laws of inheritance.

Having an Islamic Will in place therefore brings together two important responsibilities: putting your financial affairs in order and ensuring that the legacy you leave behind is managed in a manner that accords with your faith.

Protecting your family and your legacy

The absence of a clear Will can create uncertainty at an already difficult time for a family. Questions around the distribution of assets,

the administration of an estate and the wishes of the deceased can potentially lead to delays and disagreements. A valid Will provides greater certainty and clarity. It also allows you to nominate an executor whom you trust to administer your estate, providing reassurance that your affairs will be handled appropriately.

In this regard, it is reported that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: “It is not advisable for any Muslim who has something to will to stay for two nights without having his last will and testament written and kept ready with him.” (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Importantly, a Will should not simply be prepared and then forgotten. Significant changes in your personal circumstances, such as marriage, divorce or the death of your nominated executor, may mean that an existing Will no longer adequately reflects your circumstances. National Wills Week is therefore a useful annual

reminder to ask: Is my Will up to date?

An opportunity to review your financial preparedness

Preparing for the future extends beyond having a Will. Understanding your assets and liabilities, keeping important financial information organised and ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place can make the administration of an estate considerably easier for those left behind.

Use National Wills Week as an opportunity to review your financial position, ensure that important documents are accessible, consider whether your existing arrangements still meet your family’s needs, and update your Will where necessary.

Taking these steps today can provide greater certainty for tomorrow.

As South Africa’s pioneer of Islamic banking, Al

Baraka Bank understands the importance of protecting your family’s future in a manner that is consistent with Shariah principles. In support of National Wills Week 2026, the Bank continues to encourage members of the community to take this important step towards responsible financial and estate planning.

The Albaraka Islamic Will can be downloaded directly from the Bank’s website or a free copy can be obtained from any Bank branch. Preparing a valid Islamic Will is one of the most meaningful acts of financial responsibility you can undertake. It helps protect your family, preserve your legacy and ensure that your estate is dealt with in accordance with Islamic laws of inheritance.

This National Wills Week, don’t simply think about your Will. Use it as a reminder to prepare your finances, review your affairs and plan responsibly for those who matter most.

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MYMSA helps tackle unemployment in SA

By Azra Hoosen

For many young people, completing matric is followed by uncertainty about what comes next. For others, unemployment can stretch for years, with limited resources and little guidance on how to enter the workplace.

It was these realities that prompted the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa (MYMSA) to establish Project HOPE in 2018, an initiative that helps provide practical skills to matriculants, unemployed people and those looking to start their own businesses.

The latest three-day skills training workshop took place at the Phoenix Care Foundation in Phoenix from August 24 to 26.

According to Project HOPE coordinator, Rashid Chopdat, the initiative was established after participants at a Youth Leadership Identity Camp were asked how they spent their time after leaving school. “The responses highlighted the harsh realities faced by many young people,” said Chopdat, not-

ing that some had been unemployed for more than two years, while others lacked basic resources such as well-prepared CVs, internet access or money to attend job interviews.

The programme covered a range of topics, including CV writing and interview preparation, personal finance, business plan development, volunteering, workplace experience, artificial intelligence and motivation.

Khairon Ghumran of Professionally Yours, an HR expert, facilitated the session on CV writing and interview preparation, while Shabnum Bux of Old Mutual addressed financial skills and responsible financial management.

Professional Business Advisor Ahmed Seedat facilitated business plan development, while internationally accredited life coach Zaf Nasri led a motivational session.

Participants also heard from Annisa Essack, a radio presenter and producer at Radio Islam International, during a Zoom session on the importance of volunteering, while

Sameer from Siyafunda spoke about AI for business.

Chopdat said that Project HOPE continues to update its short skills programmes to respond to changing needs and emerging opportunities, including the introduction of AI into some of its modules.

Chopdat said the programme aims to help participants secure employment or create their own income-generating opportunities.

He recalled two participants from a previous programme who baked goods to earn an income. After attending the seminar, they reviewed their vision and marketing plan and returned the next day with a finished product ready for the open market.

For 21-year-old Falayha Shazaadeh Adam, who matriculated in 2024 and is currently unemployed, the workshop was an opportunity to gain skills for employment while learning more about starting a business. “I registered to attend the Muslim Youth Movement workshop – Project Hope because I wanted to empower myself



and gain some rigid skills for employment,” she said.

Adam said she gained more from the workshop than she initially expected: “I did not expect to gain as many skills. Alhamdulillah, I gained far more skills that I could use for employment, such as smart CV writing and the etiquette for performing well during interviews.”

She said that the sessions on finances and AI were also valuable, particularly in learning how AI could assist with budgeting and saving. The workshop also helped Adam gain clarity about her future. She said that creating a vision-board helped her put her goals in order. “I definitely feel confident

about pursuing teaching and studying via UNISA,” she added. She plans to put her training to good use and eventually start her own small business.

Another participant, Raadhiah Mohamed, is an entrepreneur and founder of Durban-based micro-bakery Cardamom Club. She said the sessions on financial planning and starting a business stood out to her.

“The programme gave me practical skills that I can apply in both my career and my business,” she said. The volunteering session also changed the way Mohamed viewed gaining experience: “I realised that volunteering isn’t only about helping others, but can also help you

gain valuable experience, develop skills and create opportunities for your own future.”

For Mohamed, the message to others who are unemployed or uncertain about their next step is to not be afraid to start somewhere. “Keep learning, gain experience where you can, volunteer, develop your skills and do not underestimate what you are capable of,” she said.

The latest programme concluded with online and verbal evaluations, allowing participants to reflect on what they had learnt. Participants can also request a certificate and have their CVs or business plans reviewed by the relevant facilitators.



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OPINION

Local government - going beyond morality

By Imraan Buccus

In the media South Africa's municipal crisis is routinely explained as a failure of leadership. The explanation centres around corruption, gangsterism and incompetence, and the language is overwhelmingly that of moralism.

There is truth in this. There are councilors who loot, officials who cannot do their jobs, considerable penetration by organised crime and political actors who treat public office as nothing but a route to private enrichment via public funds. All this must be noted and directly confronted.

But this account does not go far enough. Municipal collapse cannot be understood as only a failure of leadership or ethics. It also has to be located in deeper structural dynamics that shape what local government is, what it does, and what it is able to sustain. Without confronting these dynamics, calls for clean governance will remain necessary but insufficient.

The first of these dynamics is the political economy of

patronage. Local government has become a key site for the distribution of resources in a society marked by mass unemployment and deep inequality. Municipal office offers not only a salary, but access to tenders, influence over hiring, and the ability to distribute opportunities.

In a context where millions of people are locked out of formal work, this power is intensely contested. The struggle for office is not just about politics. It is about survival. This is why, in some parts of the country, such as Durban, competition for positions as councillors results in regular assassinations.

Under these conditions, factionalism is not an aberration. It is produced by the system itself. Loyalty is organised through networks of distribution rather than shared political programmes. Decisions are shaped by the need to hold coalitions together. At the same time, municipalities become arenas of struggle between competing patronage networks with the result that administrative capacity is subordinated



to political survival. The second dynamic is the depoliticisation of the public. With the notable exception of Abahlali baseMjondolo, the mass movements of the 1980s are long gone and for many people participation in governance does not extend beyond voting every few years. Even more people do not bother to vote.

When a space is made for civil society it is usually for NGOs rather than membership-based organisation. In these spaces the technocratic language of governance has displaced the language of politics. Questions of power and distribution are recast as matters of management.

All this weakens the capacity of ordinary people to act collectively in defence of the public interest. It also creates space for anger to be mobilised in destructive ways. Where there are no effective democratic channels, resentment can be redirected in toxic ways by toxic actors.

We see this clearly in growing attempts at xenophobic mobilisation. It presents itself as a defence of local resources. In reality, it expresses a politics that cannot confront the structural causes of deprivation but happily scapegoats migrants instead.

The third dynamic is the erosion of collective institutions. Trade unions, civic organisations and other forms of collective life have historically played a central role in mediating between the state and society. They have organised demands, built solidarity and exercised pressure from below.

Today, many of these institutions are weakened. Union density has declined. Some unions are deeply corrupt and authoritarian, and a senior union leader is wholly captured by a donor. Civic structures are often fragmented or absent and there has been a systemic substitution of NGOs for membership-based organisations. Where people have tried to organise they have, as with Abahlali baseMjondolo and a number of communities dealing with mining issues, faced serious repression, including assassinations. The consequences of all this are serious. There are fewer mechanisms to discipline political elites and fewer

spaces in which collective demands can be formed. The capacity to defend the public as a shared good is weakened, and politics becomes more individualised, more volatile, and more open to manipulation.

These dynamics reinforce each other. Patronage corrodes administration, depoliticisation weakens accountability and the erosion of collective institutions removes the social foundations on which democratic governance depends.

To be clear, none of this means that leadership and ethics do not matter. They do. There are municipalities that function better than others, and leadership is part of the explanation. But even the best leadership operates within structural constraints that cannot be overcome by integrity alone. Corrupt people and practices must be dealt with as an urgent priority, but the structural issues need to be confronted too.

This means addressing the political economy of patronage. It requires tightening procurement, professionalising administration and limiting opportunities for rent-seeking. It also requires confronting the wider reality of unemployment and inequality that drives competition for access to the state. If we do not treat mass structural unemployment as a crisis we will never resolve our political and social problems.

It is also necessary to re-politicise the public by rebuilding forms of participation that enable people to act collectively. In much of the country spaces like ward committees have long been captured by toxic actors but it is possible to build outside these spaces. The public can only be effectively politicised from within, and this requires a new generation of activists like those that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, including universi-

ty-trained activists willing to work with ordinary people on the basis of mutual respect.

We also need to address the crisis in the trade union movement. Some unions have passed the point of no return with endemic corruption, death threats being used to contain dissent and the buying of internal elections.

The unions and union leaders that sustain integrity – such as the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa (GIWUSA) and Zwelinzima Vavi – need to be supported and new credible unions built from the ground up.

As with rebuilding community organising this requires a new generation of committed activists, who can do the work that people like Jabu Ndlovu, Moses Mayekiso and many others did in the past. This also requires the commitment of university-trained activists who can do the kind of work that people like David Hemson, Neil Aggett and Jay Naidoo did in the 1970s and 1980s.

In a situation of mass unemployment it is also imperative to connect the organised working class to the unemployed and the poor. It is an uncomfortable reality that many in the union movement look down on the poor and share the prejudices of the middle classes. Across the global south the urban poor have become key political actors and the fetish of the worker as the only legitimate political actor needs to be put aside.

The problems we face are ethical, but they are also political and – contrary to the assumptions of the media – moralism is not a sufficient response.

Dr Buccus is editor of Al Qalam and research fellow at the University of Johannesburg's Institute for Advanced Study (JIAS)

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Galloway soon in SA: 'I want to meet the 'heroes' who took Israel to ICJ'

By Al Qalam Reporter

George Galloway, the UK politician and a powerful voice for Palestine, said he was looking forward to his "People Power" tour of South Africa later this month – and also to meet the "brave South Africans" who charged Israel in the International Criminal Court.

Galloway will be accompanied by UK Journalist, author and advocate for Palestine, Yvonne Ridley to "confront global imperialism head-on and to fight for real justice" amidst SA's case at the ICJ. Their first stop will be in Durban before proceeding to other major centres across the country. In a video message, Galloway said he was looking forward to meeting the brave South Africans who put together the original charge of Israeli genocide at the ICJ. He said South Africa had paid a heavy price for taking the case to the ICJ, including being disinvited to the G20 Summit.

"South Africa, I salute you and I look forward to meeting the heroes of the ICJ case." He added.

The organisers have urged the public to support the fund-raising engagements by the two powerful advocates for Palestinian justice. The Durban leg of the tour is hosted by Palestine House South Africa and Wage Peace International, and features a press conference, mosque talk, and a university event designed to bridge geopolitics and grassroots action, united against imperialism, according to Shabnam Palesa Mohammed

The main event, however, will be a fundraising dinner at the NMJ hall on September 26 costing between R750 (Early Bird) and R1000 per person. To book, go online: www.GallowayRidley.co.za

George Galloway

George Galloway is a prominent British politician who served as a Member of Parliament seven times across five decades, from 1987 to 2024.

He shares a deep, historic connection with South Africa. During the 1980s, Galloway worked closely with the London cell of the African National Congress (ANC) under the guidance of Aziz Pahad and Ismail Coovadia. On behalf of the London-based ANC leadership, he travelled extensively throughout South Africa during the Apartheid era to support the liberation movement.

His activism came at a high personal cost; he was once severely beaten at the Guguletu Police Station for his involvement. Over the decades, Galloway collaborated with numerous high-profile struggle leaders, both inter-

nally and internationally, and later received personal recognition from Nelson Mandela for his contributions to the anti-apartheid cause. A dedicated Socialist, Galloway currently leads the Workers Party of Britain. He is also the founder and host of the "Mother of All Talk Shows", a twice-weekly broadcast that attracts an average of 10 million views per week, alongside a social media following of millions. At 23, Galloway promised "to devote the rest of my life to the Palestinian and Arab cause, whatever the consequences."

"He has kept that promise. But his vision extends far be-

yond Palestine. He has argued that "poor countries are poor because the rich countries became rich in part through making them and keeping them poor," and called for a "seismic shift of wealth" to achieve global justice.

This is a critique of imperialism itself, not just a plea for peace.

Galloway founded the Stop the War Coalition, campaigned against sanctions on Iraq, and was expelled from the Labour Party for his outspoken opposition to the Iraq War. His political identity is rooted in a tradition of anti-imperialism, anti-colonial-

ism, and solidarity with the working class of every nation.

Yvonne Ridley

In September 2001, while working for the Sunday Express, Ridley crossed into Afghanistan disguised in a burqa.

She was captured by the Taliban and held for 11 days. Rather than returning to Fleet Street as a hero, she shocked the world by describing her captors' "courtesy and respect." She promised to study the Qur'an if released. Two years later, she reverted to Islam. Since then, Ridley has become one of the most



recognisable women in the Islamic world. But her politics are rooted in the radical fire of Scottish working-class heroes like Jimmy Reid, John MacLean, and Mary Barbour. She was a member of the Labour Party but resigned over

the invasion of Iraq, aligning herself with left-wing, anti-imperialist causes. She has led the Viva Palestina convoy to Gaza, spoken at universities across the globe, and continued to expose the injustices of Western foreign policy.

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EDITORIAL



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NB. All views reflected in this column are the opinion of the writer and do NOT necessarily reflect the views of the Editor.

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

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‘Well done to the South African Muslim Charitable Trust for R400 000 donation’



I had the privilege of attending a presentation at Drommedaris School in Rieger Park, Johannesburg. The South African Muslim Charitable Trust (SAMCT) made a R400 000 donation towards new computers and an upgrade to the school's ICT room.

Judge Mohamed Navsa, who grew up in Rieger Park, was instrumental in securing this donation and was present to see it come to life — a full-circle moment for someone giving back to the very community that shaped their journey.

What struck me most was the calibre of the school itself: the visible commitment of the educators and learners, and the professionalism behind every detail of the event.

Registration was managed entirely through QR codes, and a second QR code — linked to the cloud — played footage of the

computer room before and after the upgrade.

Well done to the South African Muslim Charitable Trust, Judge Navsa, and the entire Drommedaris School community.

Schools like this deserve far more support, and I'd encourage other organisations to take note of what's possible.

Shabir Chohan
CEO - Al Baraka Bank South Africa

March and March: ‘So who’s behind some of its Islamophobic rhetoric?’



as early as March 2024 and gained prominence in South African and international news media in 2025, when they stationed themselves at public health facilities in KZN.

On 30 June (the deadline set by them for illegal immigrants to go), more than 20 civic groups were part of protests organised in all provinces. The demonstrations were largely peaceful, with marchers accompanied by police officers throughout the day. They did a good job of highlighting the illegal migrant problem nationally and globally, and we again thank them for that.

However, they are the only protest movement that wants to carry on Marching and protesting till local elections in November. Many political parties have joined them (Action SA, MK etc) and so the question arises: “is it really a concern about illegal foreigners or something more than that?” Is there a hidden agenda to influence the November election?

To add to the intrigue, in August 2026 March and March formed a

partnership with AfriForum, a body that makes no apologies for protecting the rights of the previous colonizers and oppressors of this country.

A body that supported the lies Afrikaners took to USA to complain that ‘white genocide’ is taking place in South Africa. Then to add salt to the wound, they started attacking Islam and Muslims. March and March has increasingly integrated Islamophobic rhetoric into its nationalist, anti-migrant campaign, according to recent reports and socio-political analysts. Analysts like Dr Imraan Buccus, observe that March and March’s anti-migrant narratives are being combined with far-right populist claims about “religious dominance” and cultural takeovers. Group leadership has portrayed the broader Muslim community as one whose motives are inherently suspect. Inkosi Sekelela Afrika.

Sheigh Rafeek Hassen
Founder & Director iiFRi-Islamic Interfaith Research Institute Durban

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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

Israeli settlers ‘hike’ through my West Bank village. Next, violent land grab

By Fareed Taamallah

For decades, my hometown of Qira was a sanctuary of quiet endurance. One of the smallest villages in the occupied West Bank, nestled in the Salfit governorate and tucked away from covetous eyes, it remained relatively shielded from major land confiscations and aggressive incursions throughout the long years of Occupation.

That protective obscurity is ending. In recent weeks, organised groups of armed Israeli settlers have begun making regular, unauthorised “exploratory hikes” through our village, wandering past our homes, inspecting our ancient Roman water pool and descending into the valley to survey local shrines, assigning them Hebrew names and claiming biblical connections.

What may appear to an outside observer as harmless recreational outings is, in fact, a precursor to territorial expansion - a scouting campaign signalling that no Palestinian space is safe. Settlers have succeeded

remarkably in embedding themselves in the collective Palestinian consciousness as a constant threat, encroaching upon and seizing ever more of what Palestinians own. Their expansion is no longer limited to open areas, state lands or communal grounds.

The strategy follows a methodical blueprint: first, settlers arrive to “explore” and scout the land, assigning Hebrew names to Palestinian sites to manufacture historical entitlement. Next, they pitch a single tent, which soon becomes a caravan with additional structures; then come an animal pen and a truck unloading a herd.

Gradually, this temporary post evolves into a permanent home for a family or a group of young men, who unleash their livestock to overrun local pastures, driving out Palestinian herds and claiming the land as their own. The architects of this “pastoral settlement” model have equipped these outposts with four-wheel-drive vehicles, camera drones, automatic rifles, night-vision goggles and all

the logistical support needed to sustain their presence. Their reach is now expanding at an alarming pace, with organised tours to familiarise themselves with the surrounding geography: historic sites, religious shrines, water cisterns and springs deep within Palestinian cities, villages and communities.

A narrative trap

The psychological dimension of these incursions is as deliberate as the physical presence. Settlers record their tours and broadcast them across social media in polished videos set to music.

Most unsettling of all is the sonic theft: the videos feature traditional Palestinian folk melodies, rhythms tied to our countryside and our ancestors, re-recorded with Hebrew lyrics invoking religious themes. By superimposing Hebrew lyrics on native Palestinian melodies while walking through our fields, the settlers attempt a double erasure, relabelling ancient Palestinian landmarks with biblical toponymy while appropriating

the very soundscapes of rural Palestinian life. These incursions also set a dangerous trap for residents. It is no longer surprising for a Palestinian to open their window and see settlers wandering through the village streets, potentially entering their courtyard, inspecting their shop or taking their property.

Yet when Palestinians attempt to defend themselves, their homes or their belongings, they are immediately portrayed by Israeli authorities and media as having attacked “Jewish hikers” out of nationalist motives. This inverted narrative effectively grants settlers licence to abuse or kill Palestinians under the guise of self-defence.

For the Palestinian, the cost of resistance is absolute. Defending one’s property can mean being killed on the spot, seeing one’s family home slated for punitive demolition and watching the entire village subjected to collective punishment and lockdown. There have been no clashes or property destruction in Qira yet, but the quiet brings no relief:



Israeli settlers walk towards a Palestinian home under construction in the village of Qusra, south of Nablus in the occupied West Bank, (Jaafar Ashtiyeh/AFP)

surveying of this kind rarely stays passive for long. When settlers walk through my village, set our melodies to Hebrew prayers and claim our ancient Roman pool as their own, they assert ownership over what is ours, transforming our sanctuary into an active frontier. No one can predict how, when or where this unbearable tension will erupt. Despite this relentless strangulation, our attachment to our land, our history and our country remains unwavering. Sumud, our steadfastness, is the daily act of waking up in Qira, tending our olive trees and refusing to be erased. We have no desire

to leave, and we have no other home. What we want is to remain with dignity on our own soil. The pressure on us is mounting to an unprecedented degree, especially for a younger generation who sees every path to a normal life blocked. To stay, we need genuine support from the international community, and above all meaningful pressure on the occupying state to halt unchecked settler terrorism across the West Bank.

We promise that we will not leave. All we ask is to be left in peace to live, build and flourish in our homeland.

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Tony Blair's Disgraceful Crusade Against Palestinian Identity



By Iqbal Jassat

When news broke that former British Prime Minister Tony Blair traveled to Ramallah to demand that the Palestinian Authority erase the very word “Palestine” from its school textbooks, the collective groan across the Middle East was mixed with a chilling sense of déjà vu.

Operating as an envoy for Donald Trump’s “Board of Peace,” Blair reportedly warned Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas that wiping their homeland from the curriculum was the pre-

requisite for being deemed a “credible partner.”

There is a profound, sickening irony in Tony Blair—a man whose political legacy is permanently stained by the blood of an illegal war of aggression—lecturing an occupied, besieged people on the parameters of international credibility. This latest diplomatic overreach is not merely a bureaucratic misstep; it is a continuation of a lifelong pattern. Blair remains what he has always been: a high-handed imperial administrator willing to rewrite the reality of sovereign nations from the comfort of a foreign boardroom.

To understand the sheer audacity of Blair’s demand, one must revisit the defining crime of his career: the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The Chilcot Inquiry, the definitive British investigation into the war, laid bare the anatomy of Blair’s deception. It concluded that Blair chose to join the US-led invasion before peace-

ful options for disarmament had been exhausted, presenting flawed, unverified intelligence about weapons of mass destruction with a certainty that was wholly unjustified. The Nuremberg tribunals established that initiating a war of aggression is the “supreme international crime.” By facilitating the destruction of Iraq, bypassing the United Nations Security Council, and unleashing a torrent of sectarian chaos that claimed hundreds of thousands of civilian lives, Tony Blair cemented his status as a war criminal in all but a formal ICC dock. He did not bring democracy; he brought devastation. He did not build peace; he built a graveyard.

Now, more than two decades later, the ghost of Iraq has re-emerged in the West Bank. The mechanism has changed from smart bombs to schoolbooks, but the fundamental objective remains identical: the forced imposition of Western and imperial will over an indigenous population.

Demanding that Palestinian children be forbidden from reading the word “Palestine” in their own classrooms is an act of profound cultural violence. It is an attempt to execute a linguistic cleansing, wiping an entire national identity off the map before it can even take root in the minds of the next generation.

By forcing the adoption of foreign designations, Blair is attempting to legitimize the permanent erasure of Palestinian statehood under the guise of “pragmatism.”

Who, then, is Tony Blair to define “credibility”?

A man who fabricated the case for war, shattered the post-WWII international order, and walked away to earn millions in speaking fees and advisory roles for autocrats has zero moral authority.

For Blair to look at the Palestinian people — who have endured decades of military occupation, land theft, and

displacement — and tell them that their language is the barrier to peace is an unparalleled display of colonial narcissism.

Furthermore, Blair’s current vehicle, the “Board of Peace,” is rapidly exposing itself as an instrument of subjugation rather than stabilization. Far from a neutral, multilateral body designed to foster genuine self-determination, it operates as a top-down, centralized authority. It treats the Middle East not as a region of sovereign peoples with fundamental rights, but as a real estate portfolio to be managed, partitioned, and pacified. Blair is the perfect frontman for such an enterprise: a polished, smooth-talking executive who can package the total surrender of national identity as a necessary step toward economic development.

Abbas’s flat refusal of Blair’s demands was the only dignified response possible. Sovereignty is not a commodity to be traded for

the favor of a transitional board, nor is identity something that can be edited out of a textbook to appease foreign occupiers.

Tony Blair’s career has come full circle. He began the 21st century by physically destroying a Middle Eastern nation; he is attempting to spend the latter half of his life conceptually erasing another.

The international community must see this intervention for what it truly is: a desperate, shameful attempt by an unindicted war criminal to remain relevant by doing what he does best—trampling on the rights, the history, and the future of the Global South.

Palestine cannot be erased by the stroke of an imperial pen, and Tony Blair’s record cannot be washed clean by his latest pretense of peace-making.

Iqbal Jassat is an Executive Member of the MEDIA REVIEW NETWORK



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Top PMB architect Ismail Cassimjee honoured

By Al-Qalam Reporter

The South African Institute of Architects (SAIA) recently presented a “Gold Medal of Distinction” to Ismail Cassimjee of KwaZulu-Natal. The SAIA Gold Medal of Distinction was awarded to Cassimjee in recognition of a four-decade career that has treated the conservation and renewal of Pietermaritzburg’s built heritage as inseparable from the practice of architecture itself, and for his lasting contribution to design excellence across KwaZulu-Natal.

Its president, Monique Gillespie, said Cassimjee had spent a lifetime “treating buildings as archaeology — reading what a place already holds, in memory, material and use, before deciding what it actually needs.” Co-founded with his brother Haroon, of Ismail Cassimjee Architects (ICA) and Urban Designers, a practice that began,

by their own account, ‘in their parents’ garage’ in 1984, Cassimjee has spent over four decades applying that instinct across Pietermaritzburg and the wider KwaZulu-Natal region.

His master planning included public buildings, healthcare facilities, commercial development, and the restoration of the city’s historic fabric.

That instinct showed itself early. Returning to the Church Street neighbourhood that he had grown up in, Cassimjee led the restoration of a small mosque that apartheid-era development freezes had placed off-limits for repair.

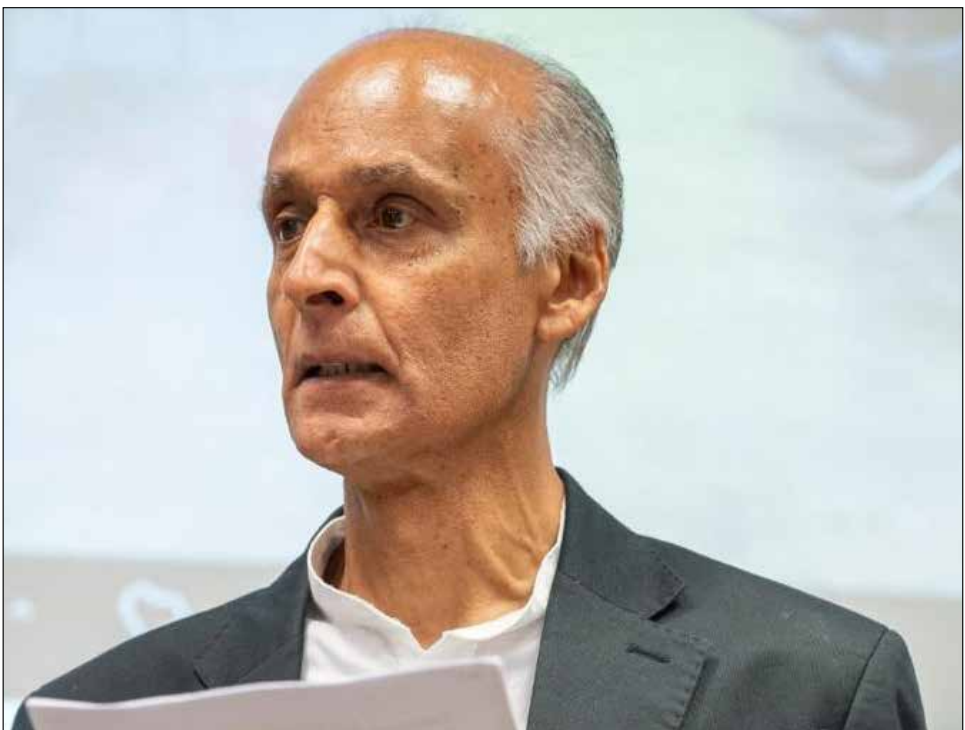
The work went ahead quietly, funded by two brothers from the community who gave up building their own home to save it instead, and was completed at a point when, as one contractor on site put it, “prayer alone seemed to be holding the structure

together.”

Cassimjee drew the mosque’s pattern work directly from a Quranic verse on light, reading its numerology into the geometry of the screen itself — an early, unpublished project that nonetheless set the template for everything that followed.

He later restored Pietermaritzburg’s old Magistrate’s Court, a civic building carrying the added historical weight of having held Nelson Mandela overnight following his capture, treating the building’s political and architectural history as inseparable.

During restoration work for the Ingonyama Trust Board and the late King Goodwill Zwelithini, his practice again balanced heritage fabric against a demanding new institutional brief, placing ICA at the centre of one of the region’s most significant cultural commissions. Faced with a



family-owned property in disrepair and a shoestring post-pandemic budget, Cassimjee’s team chose adaptive reuse over demolition wherever possible, salvaging brick from the buildings they could not save — bricks that had themselves originally been fired barely

600 metres away, at Pietermaritzburg’s historic brickworks. He has described the ambition simply as turning a shoestring budget into a golden thread; the result is a small, lively precinct of independent tenants now genuinely woven into the neighbourhood’s

daily life. This conservation-led body of work has been recognised repeatedly over four decades — from the SAIA Conservation Award in 1989, through three Pietermaritzburg Heritage Society awards in a single year (2016), to the SAIA KZN Award in 2019.

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FEATURE

My Father; George Galloway; and the Power of People



By Shabnam Palesa Mohamed

I have been sitting with this for weeks now, trying to find the right words. I am not sure they exist. My father returned to God a few long weeks ago. He was in hospital, weak, barely able to speak or move. His body was there, but the man I knew, the one with the loud laugh and incisive opinions. The one who gave me my love for human rights, poetry, art and nature. He was fading before my very eyes.

Then something happened. George Galloway sent him a get-well message. At first he thought it was a video call. He tried to say "Hello George." My heart broke

into a million pieces. I told him it was a recording. He watched, and then I held it up to his ears and played it twice so he could understand. He could barely speak. He was not even eating. But when he heard that voice, a smile, small and fragile, but real, crossed his face. He said: 'Thank you George'. The words did not come out properly, but I understood. And so I sent a message to George saying my father smiled and said, thank you.

That moment, one of many etched in my memory, did not save him. But for those moments, I saw my father again. Not the patient. Not the diagnosis. I saw my dad who raised his fist when he was readmitted to say 'I will fight this.' He lost his battle a few weeks later. I am not ready to talk about the rest. The way he was treated in those final days - the cruelty, the neglect, the indignities - that story is a heavy stone in my chest. For now, I just want to say this: Rest in peace Dad. I love you. I

miss you. And in the way I feel, I think, the way I stand up, the way I find light in the dark - I am you.

My father would want the People Power Tour to make a difference

Grief does not stop the villains running the world. Action does. The world needs us to show up. That is why I am writing this from a place of both deep sorrow and fierce determination. Because when we buried my father, I promised him that I would tell him when South Africa and Palestine are free. The fight for justice did not pause. The people of Palestine are still being bombed. The people of Sudan and Congo are still starving. And in our country, we have to fight greed, corruption and poverty.

George Galloway and Yvonne Ridley are coming to South Africa. And Durban... we need to get ready.

George, politician, pod-



caster and author, showed up for us during apartheid when it was not popular. He stood with the liberation movements when it cost him. He has shown up for Palestine for decades - banned, smeared, attacked, and still refusing to shut up on The Mother of All Talk-shows (MOATS).

Journalist, author and activist Yvonne Ridley's life is incredible. While on a story, she was captured by the Taliban, and after reading the Quran, embraced Islam. She was also kidnapped by Apartheid Israel.

That tells you a lot about her. She spent the years calling out injustice, no matter who it upsets. They are not coming to talk down to us. They are coming to work with us, to unite, organise and mobilise. Lets remind each other that the power of the people is stronger than people in power, that consistent solidarity is a strategy that changes everything. It's why I chose that theme: People Power.

Two Projects Close to My Heart

During their visit, we aim

to launch two projects that are urgently needed - Ubuntu and Ihsaan: Our Story, Our Voice, Our Role.

The first is a documentary series called Ubuntu and Ihsaan. It tells the story of Muslims in South Africa. We have been here for centuries. Cape Malay. Indians. Anti-apartheid. Everyday South Africans trying to raise kids, pay bills and keep faith. Authentic and beautiful. This series captures that.

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Al-Qalam

Al - Qalam

Southern Africa's Muslim Newspaper

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Jerome Buisson

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continued from page 10

Ubuntu is that beautiful South African philosophy that we are human because of others. Ihsaan is an Arabic word that calls to excellence, compassion and contribution. Together, they capture who we are. This project is not just about looking back. It is about reminding ourselves what we are made of, and what we can do to serve South Africa, so we can help lead Africa and the Global South to liberation.

**Zionism in Africa:
The Research We
Cannot Ignore**

The second project is called Zionism in Africa (ZIA). A research initiative. And it is critical. Here is what people do not talk about enough. For decades, American Christian Zionist groups, backed by the Israeli government, have been flooding Africa with ideology, money, policy and influence.

African leaders who speak up for Palestine often find their lives or partnerships with Israel threatened. Congo’s president was just in Israel, the same Israel pillaging Congo’s resources. We must understand the terrain. That is what ZIA will do. It will map out how Zionist

ideology, political influence and economics has taken root in Africa, who is funding it, and how we disentangle to protect ourselves.

Durban Must Lead Again

We need to remember what happened here in 2001. It was powerful. Durban hosted the World Conference Against Racism. And the declaration was clear: Zionism is racism. That was not diplomacy. That was truth. Decades later, we still stand by that declaration. But standing by it is not enough.

We need to act. The Galloway-Ridley tour is part of that action. We are here to remind each other that we have power when we exercise multipronged strategies. March and boycott. Educate and lobby. Use the law and the arts. Don’t let Zio -Imperialism confuse, distract, divide and conquer us.

What Is Happening in Durban

The meaningful and strategic Durban leg of the People Power tour includes:

- A press conference on the politics of division and the role of independent media
- A fundraising dinner with panel discussions, poetry

and an art exhibition

- A university event with young people, activists and academics

Each event is designed to connect global struggles with local action. The fight for Palestine is not foreign. It is connected to our history of apartheid, which Israel supported. It is connected to our own struggles for dignity and justice. After all, Israel did steal our anti-missile tank technology, uses South Africans to commit genocide, and is still taking coal from our country to kill children, women and men.

Full details and tickets are at www.GallowayRidley.co.za.

Turning Pain into Power

My father is not here. I carry that loss every single day. But he raised me to make a difference. He raised me to show up, even when showing up hurts. So I will. For you Dad, for the rest of my life.

I will show up in Durban and at other legs of the national tour. I will welcome Galloway and Ridley, other special guests and you, The People. I will help launch these key projects. And I will keep telling the story



of my father, Yunus Mo-hamed. The way he smiled with a raised fist during a 1994 freedom march, his incredible books, the way he hated Trump the misogynist, and the cruelty that ended his life. For now, I ask you to show up too. Support the events. Support the projects. Stand with South Africa. Protect Palestine. Build the

Global South. Stand with everyone who is suffering the weight of empire.

That is ubuntu. That is ih-saan. That is who we are. And that is what my father taught me. Amandla!

*Shabnam Palesa Mo-hamed is a daughter, activist, journalist, lawyer, strat-

egist, and Durban convener for the People Power: Galloway-Ridley in South Africa Tour. She is the founder of Wage Peace International, trustee of Palestine House S.A, board member of Nanda Soobben Arts Foundation, and parliamentary advisor to The Association for Medical Health and Legal Practitioners in Africa.



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