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LOCAL NEWS

Essop's pregnancy 'radiation monitor' device wins top awards

By Azra Hoosen

When Dr Hafsa Essop was pregnant with her first daughter, she was given a dosimeter to monitor radiation exposure to her unborn baby. But there was one problem – she did not know how to use it.

When she asked colleagues who had previously been pregnant, she discovered that they had not used the device either or tracked their foetal doses.

“I found this very concerning, as a device that is meant to protect the fetus during pregnancy was not being utilised properly and therefore doses were not accurately recorded,” she said.

That experience led Dr Essop, a senior lecturer in Radiography at the University of Pretoria, to investigate the issue through her research and ultimately develop PregiDose, a prototype mobile application designed to improve foetal dose re-

cord-keeping and radiation safety among pregnant healthcare workers.

Her work has now earned her the 2026 South African Women in Science Awards (SAWiSA) Distinguished Young Woman Researcher Award in the Public Engagement with Science category.

“As a mother, you are overly aware and cautious about everything. Pregnant workers have even more fears, because the radiation environment has the potential to cause harm to the fetus if exposed to high radiation levels. It is therefore imperative that they are carefully monitored and fully supported,” she explained.

The prototype was developed using a user-centred approach, allowing Dr Essop to understand the concerns and challenges faced by pregnant workers in radiation environments.

“My dream is for PregiDose to one day be a leading brand in pregnancy dosimetry, InshaAllah. The road is

of course long, but I truly believe that this app and vision will benefit pregnant workers, both in South Africa and globally,” she said.

But the purpose of her research extends beyond earning a qualification. “I strongly believe that research is a catalyst for change, it identifies problems and provides solutions. Truly impactful research is one whereby you don’t just get a qualification from it, but people benefit in a positive way, because of what you have recommended or developed,” she said.

As a Muslim woman working in science and academia, Dr Essop said she strongly resonates with the hadith: “The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to people.” (al-Mu’jam al-Awsat)

She approaches her work with this in mind, whereby her success also lies in the success of those around her. “In academia, there is the proverbial PhD – Pull her Down. I strive every day to make sure that I try to uplift

and be of benefit to those around me,” she said.

Her identity as a Muslim woman has also remained important to her. “I also believe wearing my hijab in this space has given me a strong, unwavering identity as a Muslim. I am still able to continue with my work and perhaps excel in my work, without having to ‘fit in’ and I think that is important,” she said.

Dr Essop’s work has extended to the international stage through her involvement with the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP). She received the ICRP Claire Cousins Award in 2023 and contributes to international research on radiation protection. Her current postdoctoral research focuses on foetal dose record-keeping and recommendations that could inform international policy.

She has published 15 peer-reviewed articles, presented at national and international conferences and serves on the Pregnancy and



Paediatric Task Group of the Society of Radiographers of South Africa. She has also been appointed Scientific Chair for its 2027 Congress.

Despite these achievements, Dr Essop does not describe herself as someone who always had everything figured out. “I was not the smartest girl in the class; I did not have it all figured out, but one thing I always had was a deep sense of wanting to help people,” she said.

That desire continues to shape her message to young Muslim women considering science, healthcare or research.

“The world needs you. We are facing so many contextual challenges that can often be solved through science. It’s not only about getting a qualification, but it’s about using that qualification, knowledge and your hands to be of benefit to mankind,” she said.

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F.S. FREEDOM STATIONERY

Vote for the best candidate – not on sectarian lines



Muslims MUST vote in the Local Government Elections on November 4 – but their concerns shouldn't be for Muslim interests only, says **Imam Dr A. Rashied Omar**

Influential Islamic Scholar, Imam Dr A. Rashied Omar, has urged Muslims to vote in the Local Government Elections – because by not doing so means “dishonouring the sacrifices” of those who were imprisoned or died in the struggle for a better South Africa.

“The right to vote was won through immense sacrifice. Under apartheid, the

majority of South Africans were denied a meaningful voice in determining who governed them. Many people endured imprisonment, exile, torture and death so that all citizens could participate equally in shaping our country.

To abstain out of apathy or cynicism risks dishonouring that sacrifice and surrendering our influence over decisions that profoundly affect our communities. Casting a ballot is therefore an act of trust, requiring knowledge, conscience, humility, courage and concern for future generations yet to come.

“In some respects, local government elections are even more consequential for our daily lives than national elections. Municipalities determine whether refuse is collected, streets are cleaned, drains are maintained, public spaces are safe, housing needs are addressed and basic services are delivered with fairness and dignity. They shape the condition of our neighbourhoods, libraries, parks, clinics, informal

settlements and community facilities. When local government fails, the poor and marginalised suffer first and most severely.”

He told *Al-Qalam* that “our vote therefore concerns more than party preference.”

“It concerns clean water, sanitation, electricity, housing, transport, safety and the responsible use of public money. It concerns whether councillors listen to residents, remain accessible between elections and act with integrity when allocating scarce resources. Local government is the sphere of democracy closest to the people; it is where lofty promises are translated, or fail to be translated, into lived reality.

“Islamic teachings offer enduring ethical principles by which political choices should be judged. Among the most important are justice (adl and qist), mutual consultation (shūrā), public welfare (maṣlahah) and accountability (ḥisbah). The Qur’an commands believers: “O Believers!

Stand firmly for justice, bearing witness for the sake of Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents or close relatives” (Surah al-Nisa 4:135). It also praises conscientious believers as those “whose public affairs are conducted through mutual consultation” (Surah al-Shura 42:38). Voting can thus be understood as one practical expression of our commitment to justice, mutual consultation and responsible public participation.

“There is no sound basis for claiming that Muslims may vote only for a so-called Muslim party. Nor does voting for a party imply approval of every aspect of its ideology or record. Electoral choice is necessarily an exercise in moral discernment among imperfect alternatives.

We should assess parties and candidates carefully: their competence and integrity, their record in office, the credibility of their promises, and their commitment to non-racialism, social justice and the needs of the poor. He said Mus-

lims should reject appeals based on fear, racism, sectarianism, inherited loyalty or narrow communal self-interest.

“We should vote for those candidates and parties most likely to serve all residents fairly, especially those whose voices are least heard. Our concern cannot be only for Muslim neighbourhoods or Muslim interests.

“The Qur’anic demand for justice obliges us to seek the wellbeing of the entire society, Imam Omar said.

Imam Omar drummed the point that once ballots were counted, elected representatives should be held accountable for both their political mandate and their moral mandate.”

“Their political mandate is to fulfil lawful commitments, govern competently and use public resources transparently. Their moral mandate is to serve rather than enrich themselves, to protect the vulnerable, to resist corruption and patronage, and to treat every

resident with dignity.

“This requires active citizens and strong civil society. Muslims should attend ward meetings, scrutinise municipal budgets, question councillors, report failures, support community organisations and join campaigns for honest and equitable service delivery. Masajid should help cultivate informed citizenship and offer principled, non-partisan spaces in which residents can deliberate respectfully. Religious leaders should serve as part of society’s moral conscience, not as uncritical agents of political parties.

“Let us hold those elected accountable, strengthen our neighbourhood organisations and remain engaged in the struggle for justice and human dignity.

“May Allah guide us to choose wisely and help us build municipalities that serve all people, especially the poor, forgotten and marginalized, with compassion, honesty and justice. *Allahumma Amin.*”

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Refugee children score top marks at AMA's Aman School in Lebanon

Al Qalam Correspondent

When Palestinian and Syrian children – broken by war – first entered the doors of the AMAN School of Excellence in Lebanon, they found stability, safety, and most of all hope, for their futures.

The school, started by Africa Muslims Agency (AMA) five years ago to cater for refugee children (excluded by mainstream schooling system), has since shown phenomenal results for both the learners, and also their families, thanks to your donations.

From those first uncertain days, the AMAN School has developed into a structured learning community spanning to Grade 9, through years of deliberate care: stronger academic departments, dedicated Heads of Departments, and real systems for tracking every

child's progress, behaviour and wellbeing.

Over the past five years, roughly 100 young people have completed their journey at AMAN and stepped confidently into their next chapter. This past academic year, the school achieved a 92.7% final pass rate. But the deeper story lives beneath the numbers: a child who once depended on a teacher for every task now works independently. A student once afraid to speak now raises a hand without hesitation. A few recognised words become a sentence, then a paragraph, then a young person ready for what comes next.

This progress has not come easily. Lebanon and the region have lived through conflict, displacement and profound uncertainty – and each time, AMAN refused to let education disappear. When classrooms closed, teachers reached students through online lessons,

WhatsApp materials and recorded explanations, keeping every child connected to learning and to each other. When students returned, teachers didn't simply resume the syllabus – they identified what was missed and rebuilt from there. Because during times of crisis, school offers children something beyond lessons: routine, familiar faces, and the reassurance that their future still matters.

One AMAN teacher said: "I often ask myself 'did every child learn – and what can I do differently for the one who did not?'"

An AMA spokesperson said: "None of this would exist without the donors who believed in AMAN from Day One. Your support has never simply paid for books or buildings. It has protected something far more precious – a child's right to keep learning, and to keep believing in tomorrow. Every word read independently, every



exam passed, every one of those 100 graduates carries a part of what you have given. "For every child who walks through AMAN's doors with uncertainty - and then leaves

confidently, your continued generosity makes the difference. Your ongoing support is sadaqah jariyah. As Lebanon's families continue to face real hardship, AMAN's

mission is far from finished, and we remain committed to bringing the education and safety promised to these children for many years to come, insha' Allah."

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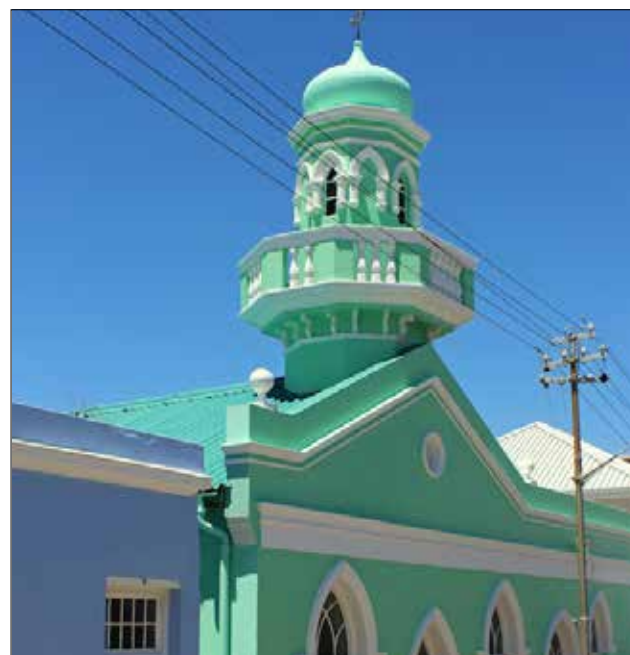
**By Fazlin
Fransman-Taliep**

"We do not want our kids to read about Bo-Kaap in history books," said Faa-iekah Ryland, secretary of the Bo-Kaap Civic and Ratepayers Association.

In January 2025, the City's Planning Appeals Advisory Panel recommended that the approval stand. The final decision, however, rested with Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis in his role as the City's ap-

Some places are larger than the streets that hold them. Auwal Masjid stands in Bo-Kaap, but its meaning reaches far beyond the neighbourhood. As South Africa's oldest masjid, it forms part of a wider story of Muslim faith, survival and belonging.

These tensions resurfaced on 28 August 2026, when residents protested again, citing construction damage, parking pressure and possible future complaints about the athaan. After discussions with the developers reached an impasse on 31 August



Flyt Property managing director Ryan Flowers maintains that the developer has followed the required processes over the past nine years, despite the continued opposition.

For now, the approvals allow the project to proceed. However, the dispute has become about far more than one building, its height or its footprint. The question, then, is not only whether the physical heritage of Bo-Kaap can survive development, but whether the living heritage that made the place significant can continue to flourish alongside it.

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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.

SAPM calls on Tunisia to release “Samud Four”

The South African Palestinian Movement (SAPM) expresses grave concern over the continued detention of the “Sumud Four” and calls on the Tunisian authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally.

The prolonged detention of these four humanitarian activists, who sought to advance the humanitarian cause of the Palestinian people, is deeply troubling. Their continued detention, together with the reports of hunger strikes and the resulting risks to their health and wellbeing, requires urgent international attention.

SAPM calls upon the Government of Tunisia and the relevant Tunisian authorities to act immediately to secure the release of the “Sumud Four” and to en-

sure that, pending their release, they are treated humanely, have full access to legal representation and independent medical care, and are afforded all protections guaranteed under international law.

With a court hearing scheduled for this week, SAPM urges the Tunisian authorities not to allow the detention of the “Sumud Four” to continue indefinitely.

SAPM further calls upon the Government of the Republic of South Africa, through the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), to intensify its diplomatic intervention with the Tunisian authorities and to use every appropriate diplomatic avenue available to secure the immediate release and safe return of the “Sumud Four”. South

Africa has consistently affirmed its commitment to international law, human rights and the protection of humanitarian actors. We therefore urge South Africa to stand firmly with those who have placed themselves at risk in pursuit of humanitarian solidarity with the Palestinian people.

SAPM also calls upon governments, parliamentarians, human-rights organisations and civil-society movements across the world to raise their voices and demand:

- * The immediate release of the “Sumud Four;”
- * An end to their prolonged detention;
- * Full access to their lawyers and independent medical professionals;
- * Protection of their health



and safety; particularly in light of the hunger strike;

* Respect for their fundamental human rights and due process;

* Urgent diplomatic action to facilitate their safe

return. The “Sumud Four” must not be forgotten.

Their continued detention is not merely a legal matter. It is a humanitarian matter that demands an urgent response. SAPM stands in solidarity with the “Su-

mud Four” and all those committed to humanitarian assistance, freedom, justice and the rights of the Palestinian people.

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addition represents another exciting chapter in the Gorima's journey and allows us to share our products and passion with even more customers. And the excitement doesn't stop there.

Gorima's is thrilled to announce that we are now the Official Spice Partner of Durban FC. This exciting partnership brings together two proudly local brands and celebrates our shared passion for community, excellence and the city we call home.

As we celebrate 40 years of Gorima's Workshop, we also look forward to the future with great excitement.

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OPINION

From Loving to Living the Prophet (s)



By Ebrahim Rassol
(Former Ambassador to the USA)

In the month celebrating the birth of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (s), some strive to be obedient to his every utterance. Others yearn nostalgically for his leadership in a dangerous and fractured world. A few seek synergy with his divine mission and purpose. But the crucial question should be: How can we move us from effusive loving to profound living of the Prophetic legacy so that we locate the words of the Prophet (s) within his personality, and in turn, contextualise his words and habits in the Sirah – his entire life trajectory – while always

mindful that his Sirah is the product of the Sunnah – praxis – with the Quran as divine fountainhead.

This is important for the Fiqhul Mu-amalat – the jurisprudence of contemporary engagement in the affairs of society, politics, economics, transactions, and the underpinnings of statecraft, nation-building and social cohesion. It is, therefore, a search for a methodology to access and animate the Prophetic legacy so that it speaks to us beyond the jurisprudence of worship – the Fiqhul Ibadah. We can rest with the dominant methodology of Taqlid or imitation in the performances of the various acts of worship and embrace the Prophetic advice: “Pray as you have seen me pray,” [Bukhari Bk10 H28] and enjoy it as it provides a signature and identity to the multitudes of Muslims across their diversities.

But taqlid may be somewhat unsustainable in the realm of the worldly affairs of Muslims. The root of taqlid in the Arabic language is “qa-la-da” which means literally to place a collar or necklace around the neck or to straight-jacket, with the implications of limiting choice, and reducing

pragmatism, and narrowing adaptability, especially in a world where the state of the Ummah (the global Muslim community) is parlous and characterised, by and large, by domination and authoritarianism where we are majorities; by suspicion and islamophobia where we are minorities; by technological consumption and intellectual stagnation; and deep sectarianism and ambiguity in our relationship with difference.

The conundrum lies in how to access the Prophetic leadership and thus respond to the Quranic injunction: “In the Messenger of Allah, there is for you an Uswatun Hasanah for those who place their hope in Allah, who are mindful of the last day, and who remember Allah abundantly.” [Q33:21]. ‘Uswatun Hasanah’ means excellent example, beautiful template, or the best of patterns. The key, therefore, to regaining the dynamism of the ummah beyond imitation and literalism, lies in grappling with how uswah – example, template or pattern – could lead to the dynamic and impactful followership of the Prophet (s) as envisaged in the Quran.

The ummah has historically

been dynamic intellectually, scientifically, politically, and socially because it possessed ijthadi tools for regenerating ideas and extending the frontiers of knowledge – through reading and writing; reasoning and analysing; synthesising and applying – for both the fighulibadat wa mu-amalat. These tools present themselves as qiyas and ijma – analogy and consensus. Simply put: If a new situation or challenge present themselves, an inclusive scholarship would look for an analogous precedent or a matter of some similarity on which to base a ruling for the new situation.

This intellectual device involved discerning essence from form. Where essence asks what principle must be preserved and transposed in an inviolable state from the original to the novel; form asks what has changed in time and space and how will the essence give life to the new form and allow the faithful to be both true to history and circumstance.

Unless we are able to move beyond taqlid or imitation in the realm of the contemporary world, we are going to reproduce anachronisms: we

will have successful revolutions that remove dictators but falter because our models recreate literally the so-called Islamic State; and where we proclaim such states, they will be synonymous with misogyny, kleptocracy, theocracy, dynasty, and a totalising instinct. Could we not rather posit the idea of emulation of the Prophetic tradition and suggest from the Arabic language and practice the notions of muhakah and iqtida?

Muhakah generally refers to simulation – often used in the ICT world – meaning the transference or reproduction of a property or quality from one application or context to another. Iqtida, on the other hand refers to role-modelling, desiring the outcomes exemplified in another application or person, and following another’s pattern or template for success. Muhakahthus speaks to the transference of the principle or essence in another context, while iqtida is more closely aligned with the Quranic injunction to model ourselves on the Prophet Muhammad (s). Both show a way beyond taqlid or imitation and moves us towards emulation. But for this to succeed in a dangerous world and in a fragile ummah, we must understand that the critical principles to be transferred are those consistent with the intents of Islam and the shariah – al maqasid al shariah, where the context has changed, but without the preservations or rights being compromised. The implications of emulation for statecraft, for example, mean that if we are not trying to imitate the form of the state (the khilafat) but can rather emulate the Prophetic intents and values in another form, then you could potentially have an inclusive, rights-based state underpinned by salaam (peace), amaan (security), shura (consultation), and hurriyyah(freedom).

It may just be that an emulative approach towards the Prophetic tradition will shift us from the nostalgic love for the Prophet (s) to a strategic appreciation; from loving Muhammad (s) profusely to living his uswa seamlessly and successfully; and from being an ummah justifiably proud of our past to one confidently recreating a golden future from the Prophetic legacy.

Ebrahim Rasool is former ambassador to the U.S. and former Premier of the Western Cape



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Ibn Umar (r.a.) narrates the Nabi (SAW) said: “The place of prayer (salah) in religion is like the place of the head in the body.”
Tabarani



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What will move Muslim voters in Cape Town?

By **Fazlin Fransman-Taliep**

In Cape Town, Muslim voters are often spoken about as though they share the same circumstances, think in the same way and can be moved by a single issue.

They do not.

Voters do not leave the rest of their lives at the door when they enter a voting booth. They carry the municipal bill that arrived that morning, the worry of a child still searching for work, the memory of gunshots the night before. They carry loyalties, disappointments and doubts, and weigh the promises before them against the lives they actually lead.

The difficulty lies in deciding what to prioritise when no party represents everything that matters to you.

For one Rylands family, that dilemma is painfully specific. They trust their ward councillor, yet they do not want to reward his

party. “We have supported our councillor because he works for our community. In 2024, we voted for a different party because of Palestine. It was a difficult decision. We know he supports Palestine too, and we intend to support him in the municipal election, the family member said.”

The family asked not to be named, fearing that publicly supporting a DA councillor while opposing the party’s position on Palestine could lead to criticism or ostracism within their community.

Ward 46 offers a useful window into that tension. Rylands and Gatesville are long-established centres of Muslim residential and religious life.

The DA won 53.13% of the Ward 46 vote in the 2021 municipal election. By the 2024 National and Provincial election, its support across the same ward boundaries stood at 39.5%. The ballots are not directly comparable as they elect different spheres of gov-

ernment. However, the 13.6 percentage-point gap points to a constituency that has become more politically contested.

What the numbers cannot tell us is why.

Palestine is an obvious part of the 2024 story, but the figures cannot establish how many Muslim voters moved because of it, or where they went.

In Lentegeur, Mitchells Plain, the calculation sounds different.

Boeta Agmat Agmat is less concerned with party identity than with whether politicians can be trusted to deliver. “Everyone can make promises,” he said. “But who will stop the crime? How will they do it? And what have they done before that makes those promises believable?”

The contrast is revealing. For the Rylands family, the dilemma is whether a trusted representative can be separated from anger at his party’s position on Pal-

estine. For the Lentegeur resident, the first question is whether anyone can convincingly address crime and gangsterism in his community.

That does not make Palestine any less important in poorer or working-class communities. It means voters are weighing it alongside pressures that are immediate and lived: whether there is work, whether the streets are safe, whether housing is secure, and whether basic services function.

National research reflects that complexity. A University of Johannesburg study before the 2024 election found job creation, improving people’s lives and service delivery among the most commonly cited reasons for choosing a party.

Political analyst Ebrahim Fakir describes the choice in similarly layered terms. Voters, he argues, weigh values, performance and strategy, asking whether a party reflects what they believe, whether it has de-



livered on what matters in their lives, and whether their vote can shift the balance of political power.

Cape Town’s Muslim voters may be weighing all of those considerations at the same time.

They can regard Palestine as a moral red line and still worry about crime. They can distrust a party and val-

ue its councillor. They can agree with another party on Palestine and still question whether it can govern.

The idea of a single “Muslim vote” misses that complexity. Shared convictions may shape how people see the choice, but they do not determine which concern becomes decisive when the ballot is finally in front of them.





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Credit: Recipe and images courtesy of Gorima's Facebook Page



INGREDIENTS

- 4½ cups flour
- 2 cups self-raising flour
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 12 tsp ground aniseed
- 1 tsp ground cardamom
- 2 tsp grated tangerine peel
- 1 large egg
- ¾ cup oil
- 1½ cups milk
- 1½ cups warm water
- 1 tbsp active dry yeast
- 1 tsp sugar
- Oil for deep frying

FOR THE SYRUP

- 2¼ cups sugar
- 1½ cups water
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 cardamom pods

METHOD

In a large bowl, combine the flour, self-raising flour, sugar, salt, ginger, aniseed, cardamom and grated tangerine peel.

Add the oil, milk and warm water. Mix well.

Add the active dry yeast and mix until a soft dough forms. Allow the dough to rise until doubled in size.

Roll out the dough and cut into strips. Twist or shape each strip into a

koe`sister.

Heat oil in a deep pan over medium heat.

Carefully fry the koe`sisters until they are golden brown and cooked through.

Prepare the syrup by boiling the sugar, water, cinnamon stick and cardamom pods together. Place the hot koe`sisters into the syrup and allow them to soak briefly.

Remove from the syrup and roll in desiccated coconut if desired.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Egypt's Amina becomes youngest woman squash world number one at 19

Orfi, the reigning senior and junior world champion, topped the rankings with victory at the Qatar Classic last week, Anushe Engineer reports

At 19 years and two months old, the Egyptian eclipsed the previous record set by New Zealand's Susan Devoy, who was 20 years and two months old in 1984.

Orfi dethroned compatriot Hania El Hammamy from world number one when she defeated the 26-year-old 3-2 in the Qatar Classic final (7-11, 11-7, 11-8, 7-11, 12-10). The victory earned Orfi her first Platinum title, third major victory and 15th win of her career.

"Sweat, tears, heartbreaks, and tons of sacrifices all for this moment,"

she wrote in an Instagram post on Monday, when the official Professional Squash Association (PSA) rankings update weekly.

Orfi's historic milestone is the latest of her outstanding year. In May, she became the youngest world champion at 18 years and 10 months when she beat then world number two Nour El-Sherbini in a thrilling five-game final at the World Championships in Egypt.

The win made her the first player to hold both the world junior and senior PSA championship titles at the same time. The PSA is the global governing body for men's and women's professional squash circuits.

"It feels amazing," Orfi



said after her victory in Doha on Friday.

"To become world champion and become world

number one in the same year is a dream that I've had since I was very young and I really want to enjoy it.

"I want to just stay at this level now and keep trying to improve every day. I want to stay on top now that I'm the world num-

ber one, and I want to win a lot more titles too," said Orfi, who has been in the world's top three since last October.

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OPINION

Grounding Biko's consciousness in lived experiences



By Mphutlane wa Bofelo

As an agronomist, Amílcar Cabral drew upon his extensive interaction with diverse communities while conducting agricultural surveys throughout Guinea and Cape Verde. This work provided more than technical knowledge of soil, crops, and production systems; it offered him an intimate understanding of the lives and aspirations of the people. Cabral viewed culture not merely as a re-

pository of traditions, but as a living source of resistance capable of sustaining oppressed peoples in their struggle against colonial domination.

Similarly, as a psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon drew upon his observations of mental health patients in the colonial context. Fanon demonstrated how individual psychological suffering was inseparable from broader structures of political domination, economic exploitation, and cultural oppression.

Both Cabral and Fanon refused to confine themselves to philosophical inquiry. While producing some of the most influential intellectual works of the twentieth century, they became active participants in armed struggles, embodying a unity of theory and practice, thought and action. The history of anti-colonial movements is replete with scientists,

scholars, artists, educators, and cultural workers who transcended the boundaries of a fenced pedagogy. Rather than treating knowledge as something produced exclusively within specialised institutions, they practised a lived, borderless pedagogy connecting sites of learning, social experience, and political action. Learning emerged through engagement with lived realities rather than through detached observation alone.

The pressing question confronting us today is how knowledge producers in the postcolonial condition can continue this tradition. How can they resist becoming confined within a gated pedagogy that treats academia as a self-contained province divorced from broader social struggles? How can they challenge approaches that obscure the ideological dimensions of medicine, education, and science, or frameworks that individu-

alise social suffering while ignoring systemic forces?

Perhaps the challenge is to recognize that knowledge is already being produced beyond the university. The task is to rebuild organic relationships between intellectual work and popular struggles, professional expertise and community experience, and scholarly inquiry and social transformation.

This September, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the martyrdom of Bantu Stephen Biko, it is not enough merely to sing songs, recite poems, invoke slogans, and ritualistically declare that “Biko Lives.”

To honour Biko authentically requires a critical interrogation of our social practice and a commitment to transformative action. Each of us must ask how, within our own field of experience and expertise, we contribute to advancing the quest for a

humane, just, and egalitarian society.

We must ask how, in our daily lives, we give concrete expression to the injunction to free the mind in order to free the land. How do we ensure that our knowledge, skills, and professions serve the cause of human dignity rather than the reproduction of inequality and domination?

Biko's life reminds us that consciousness is not an end in itself but the beginning of personal and collective transformation. The measure of our commitment lies in what we do—how we live, work, organise, create, teach, heal, and struggle. It is entirely possible to repeat the words “Biko Lives” while simultaneously betraying the substance of what he stood for.

Biko lives, but we are dead. Dead to the suffering of others, dead to solidarity,

and dead to the courage required to confront injustice and speak truth to power. In our deadness, we kill Biko anew every day—not as a man, but as a living social and political possibility.

Every act of indifference, every retreat into cynicism, and every refusal to translate consciousness into action becomes another burial of the Biko we claim to celebrate.

If Biko is to live, he must live through us: through a restless commitment to justice, the recovery of our humanity, and the unfinished struggle to build a society founded on freedom, equality, and human dignity.

Mphutlane wa Bofelo is a scholar in Governance and Political Transformation and a popular educator, currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Johannesburg. He writes in his personal capacity.



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Muslim world outraged as Netanyahu enters tunnels beneath Al-Aqsa Mosque

The Muslim World League was outraged by news that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had toured tunnels beneath Al-Aqsa Mosque as hundreds of Israeli settlers raided the Islamic holy site last weekend.

Ahead of Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, Netanyahu joined tens of thousands of Israelis for Selichot prayers at the Western Wall, adjacent to Al-Aqsa, on Saturday night.

The prime minister later posted a video of himself and his wife, Sara, touring tunnels beneath the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex.

“It is moving to touch the rock of our existence. We are here very close to the Holy of Holies,” he said.

Tens of thousands of people attended Selichot prayers at the Western Wall plaza, including Israeli government ministers and officials. On Sunday morning, hundreds of Israelis raided

Al-Aqsa, including National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir.

Ben Gvir was filmed praying alongside other Israelis inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex under heavy police protection.

The Palestinian Authority’s Jerusalem Governorate said around 800 people raided the site on Sunday.

The incursions came amid heightened Israeli security measures in Jerusalem’s Old City and around Al-Aqsa, with a heavy police presence deployed as the Jewish holiday season got under way.

The Jerusalem Governorate said Israeli forces had turned the Old City into a “military barracks” to secure settlers’ access to the area around Al-Aqsa.

Further incursions were recorded on Monday, with more than 400 people taking part in morning raids, according to Palestinian authorities. The Muslim World League strongly con-



demned the raids. Its secretary-general, Dr Muhammad Al-Issa, “denounced the provocative practices that inflame the sentiments of Muslims around the world” in a statement on Monday. He called on the international community to halt what he described as

repeated violations of the mosque and its legal status quo.

The status quo refers to a decades-old arrangement governing access to and management of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Under the arrangement, the entire 144-dunam

(14.4-hectare) compound is recognised as an Islamic holy site.

Responsibility for access, prayer arrangements, maintenance and excavations falls to the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, the religious trust that administers the

mosque. Since Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967, however, it has steadily sidelined the Waqf and undermined the status quo through measures including allowing near-daily incursions and Jewish prayer at the site. - Middle East Eye



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LOCAL NEWS

Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng’s court win: ‘Never remain silent on Palestine’

By Neelam Rahim

A disciplinary complaint over two social media posts has raised a wider question for South Africa’s Palestine solidarity movement: can legal and professional processes create a climate in which speaking out for Palestine comes with consequences?

At the centre of the dispute is South African medical doctor and former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng. The complaint against her followed posts she made in January 2025 during the Gaza ceasefire, including

“F*** you, Netanyahu” directed at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. After UN Watch executive director Hillel Neuer criticised her, Mofokeng responded: “You white man. Evil scum. Voetsek.” The South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) subsequently complained to the

Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The HPCSA later found Mofokeng guilty of unprofessional conduct and imposed a R10 000 fine for bringing the profession into disrepute. She challenged the finding in the High Court.

The HPCSA subsequently decided not to oppose her application after the Department of International Relations and Cooperation advised on her immunity as a UN Special Rapporteur. The finding and fine were set aside by agreement on September 9. The SAZF has stressed that the court did not determine the merits of whether her language constituted professional misconduct.

For Mofokeng, the significance extends beyond the disciplinary process. She believes legal and professional mechanisms can have a chilling effect on those who challenge Zionism or publicly support Palestine.

In an interview with *Al-Qa-*

lam, she said: “If I was in any other profession or that I was unemployed, which other statutory body were they going to misuse? That’s the question we must ask ourselves, right?” she said.

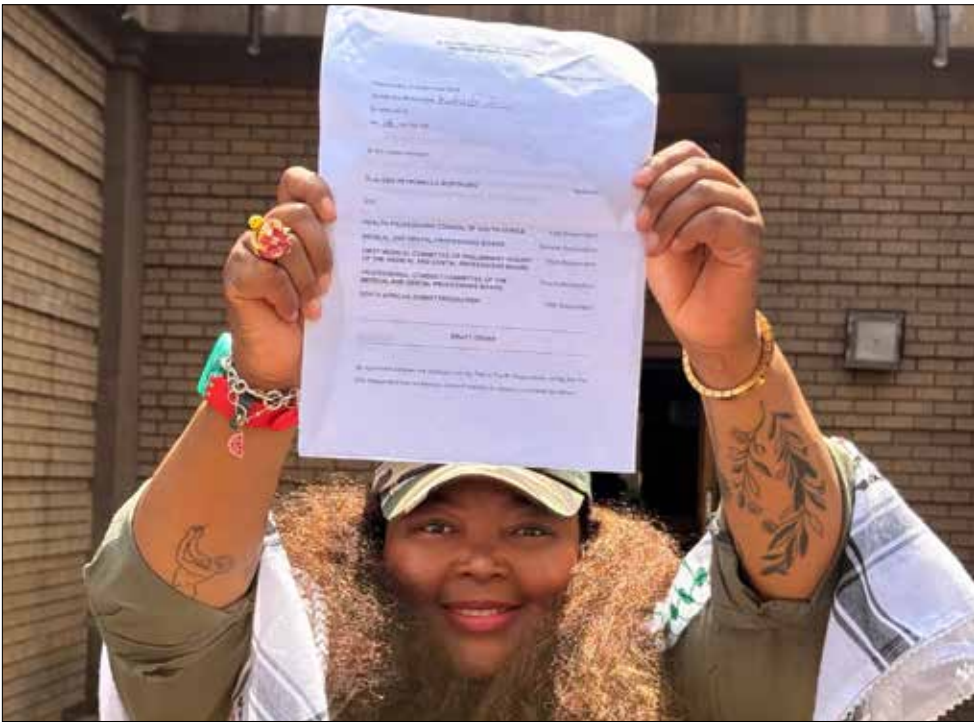
“They’ve been well-organised, well-funded, and their pockets run very deep,” she said. “So historically, they do like using the courts’ processes and any disciplinary process for that matter to frustrate anyone who stands against Zionism.”

Mofokeng also raised concerns about the influence she believes Zionist organisations exert over public narratives.

“They have so much control, even in the media, that they can even decide what goes out and what goes on,” she said.

She pointed to the difference in coverage between the HPCSA finding and the court outcome.

“When the HPCSA initial



finding was made, the news broke for 24 hours in a cycle in South Africa. When I won in the Pretoria High Court, not a single media covered that in the way that they did on television screens. Not even a blurb,” she said. For

Mofokeng, the issue ultimately concerns whether people remain willing to challenge powerful interests over Palestine.

“And so absolutely, it’s done for a chilling effect,”

she said. “If you can silence a medical doctor, a well-known feminist in the country, a UN official while doing UN work in her home country for doing that work, it would be a complete disaster.”



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