



## INSIDE PARLIAMENT WITH HON. GANIEF HENDRICKS

Thursday | 23 April 2020

### ALJAMA-AH CELEBRATES 13 YEARS

Today we celebrate the 13th year of the formation of the Al Jama-ah, a political party for all communities. Al Jama-ah was formed on the 23rd April 2007 by its President Ganief Hendricks who is also the party's leader in Parliament. Al Jama-ah made history when it became the only and first Muslim political party in South Africa to win a seat in National Parliament and in the Western Cape Legislature in 2019.

Although AL JAMA-AH is physically unable to celebrate its 13th anniversary due to the Covid-19 lockdown, the party has enough reason to be proud of several achievements made over the past few years. The party has also a total of nine municipal councillor seats, in the Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal and in Gauteng. Despite being looked at as a "small" party, Al Jama-ah has a much bigger role to play not only in the Muslim community, but in All communities, hence our logo: "A Political Platform For All".

This year Al Jama-ah's anniversary will be focused on assisting the government to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Party leader and founding member, Ganief Hendricks says: "We have embarked on help fighting Covid-19 on every level possible, and with every available member and volunteers in remembering our 13 years of existence as a political party. Our fight against the Coronavirus is much bigger than a birthday celebration.

Hendricks grew up in a very politically active household and since a young age his parents tagged him along to political meetings and to visit political prisoners. The family home was known to have hidden various political activists from KwaZulu-Natal and many times Hendricks had to sleep under the kitchen table. Very important meetings from that of the Pan-Africanist Congress to the African National Congress took place in his parents' home. It was then no surprise when Hendricks himself as a youth became involved in social movements and trade unions. His community activism later led to the formation of Aljama-ah.

The party's mission is also to leave a legacy behind for Muslims to continue to take part in South African politics. "Our aims include to support the interests of Muslims, to uphold Shariah Law and the welfare of the wider community. Prior to Al Jama-ah's joining Parliament, Muslims did not have a voice at Parliamentary level to address matters such as the Nikah marriages which is still not recognised as legal. Our children are then certified as "illegitimate" and death certificates of as "never married," Hendricks explained.

Aljama-ah has formed a Covid-19 Team 24 comprising of its staff with a zest to assist communities during the pandemic. The councillors based in five municipalities in the country all have their own hotlines for people to call for assistance. City of Cape Town councillor, Faried Achmat heads Team 24 and he and fellow members are working around the clock to assist the vulnerable people during the lockdown while councillor Achmat Hendricks manages the Team 24 hotlines.

He said although the journey was long, it was certainly worth the hard work and sacrifices he made. "The party's growth has been tremendous and as Al Jama-ah celebrates this milestone, the party looks forward to many more victories ahead. The experiences I enjoyed was campaigning in every corner of the country, sleeping in a car at garages and in mosques. I always had the best of party stalwarts with me who transported me for hours from town to town to hang up posters.

"I am indeed proud to say that the contribution of Party stalwarts who remained steadfast during uncertain times of the Party's future that they have achieved much and left a great legacy behind. Gaining more votes, but not getting any seats was a daunting challenge during our first elections campaigns. But we had to pick up the pieces and prepare for the next five years with no real funding." Hendricks added that it is now up to young people to make valuable use of Al Jama-ah's political platform to shape the future they aspire to and to offer their voluntary services to the party's projects. "We call on the youth to aspire to become councillors, lawmakers and to become staff members. We recognise the important role young people can play to develop policies," he said.

Best wishes,

*Ganief Hendricks*

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