



PRESS RELEASE

NO EMBARGO

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Al Jama-ah honours Prisoner of Conscience, Dr Aafia Siddiqui and others.

In delivering his Members Statement to Parliament on Tuesday 28 February 2023 Hon Ganief Hendricks MP and leader of Al Jama-ah called on the South African government to speak out against women that have been falsely accused and imprisoned because of their political activism and conscience.

Hon Hendricks was referring to one such prisoner, Dr Aafia Siddiqui who was arrested and imprisoned by USA's security services in 2003. "Dr Siddiqui was deceptively arrested and imprisoned on trumped up charges. She remains close to our hearts here in South Africa and elsewhere and is seen as the very warp and woof of struggle against oppression," says Hendricks.

Stating that on the eve of International Women's Day (8 March) he called on the Madam Speaker of Parliament and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation (Dirco) to encourage Members of Parliament to speak against Siddiqui's imprisonment.

"When one harms a woman, one harms the very foundation stone of society. I beseech you that you join us along with thousands of others for Dr Aafia Siddiqui's immediate release; this plea is comparable to the plea that many of us made when for Palestine's Fatah's Leila Khaled who endlessly struggled for her people's freedom," he adds.

We call on government to demand a *habeas corpus* and an assurance that Dr Siddiqui is (a) alive and well and that she be (b) released on humanitarian grounds.

If we do not make ourselves heard publicly and universally, then we partly to blame for the maltreatment not only of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui and others that encountered endless hardship at the hands of these regimes. "We should feel ashamed for these dastardly acts that continue under our watch as a democratic state; one that upholds the principles of decency and civility. Let us use this opportunity to reject all sorts of atrocious acts against our women folk no matter where these acts are perpetrated," he stated.

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