



**PRESS RELEASE
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AL JAMA-AH honours International Women's Day: A year of decisive action to advance women's rights in South Africa, Africa, and the world.

Today, March 08th 2023 marks International Women's Day. Al Jama-ah Party joins the rest of the world in commemorating this significant day to reflect on the challenges faced by millions of women all over the world.

Delivering his debate to Parliament on Tuesday March 07th 2023 on International Women's Day under the theme, "A year of decisive action to advance women's rights in South Africa, Africa and the world", Hon Ganief Hendricks, Al Jama-ah's leader and Member of Parliament, paid tribute to all women.

All our women have multiple roles in our communities; while each one of them performs, inter alia, the role of wife, mother, daughter, sister, aunt, caregiver, administrator, director, disburser, economist, disciplinarian, teacher, and even as a health officer, it is beyond question that she is indeed the queen in and outside her house. Apart from all of these essential roles, women play a key role in society's socio-economic development.

Hence a saying by Prophet Muhammad (s): "The condition of a society depends on the consciousness of its women." Women's leadership is vital to peacebuilding, social integration, and driving prosperity to not only advance gender equality and secure the women empowerment in our time, but they also collectively bring about social cohesion within society.

So, if we continue to mishandle women in our homes, in the workplaces, in public spaces, we are not only depriving her of fulfilling her role in society, but we harm ourselves as societies or as nation-states. The crime statistics of July 2022 until September 2022 revealed almost one thousand women were murdered in gender-based violence cases. The question that we should ask is: why are our women being murdered when they basically seeking their rights for maintenance for both their children and for themselves?

Considering these negative happenings, we beseech our government to speed up the amendments to the Maintenance Act; an Act that has been discriminating against our women for years. We too plea with government to eliminate the basic challenges that our women experience when processing claims for maintenance.

Another Act that has harmed and continue to harm the dignity of our Muslim women is the fact that up until today their marriages, which have been performed according to Islamic rites, have not been





recognised by our democratically elected government; it is a known fact that such non-recognition places many hardships on our women as well as our children in Muslim marriages.

In many communities especially in rural areas, women continue to bear the brunt of water collection and provision. They spend many hours a day collecting water for the family and are often exposed to dangers such as sexual violence and health risks. Much effort should be made to stop this henceforth.

The role of women's leaders, as demonstrated during various crises such as the anti-apartheid struggle, should be enhanced for humanity's progress. Women in parliament should take up a leading role in supporting other women living under occupation as in the case of Palestine and Western Sahara; and women, who live under extreme poverty conditions and encounter perpetual gender inequality as well as those who are domestically abused and are politically disadvantaged, should be given the necessary support and assistance.

Our women – the world over and in different parts of the continent – face a multitude of struggles; and we should come to their aid and assistance at all levels and in different spheres. Together and with them, we should find ways to build bridges for justice, peace, inclusion, and prosperity between the women and the men and among all communities that culturally discriminate against them.

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