



**PRESS RELEASE
NO EMBARGO**

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Registration of Muslim marriages halted until further notice:

Al Jama-ah Party informs the Muslim community that the 'Registration of Muslim Marriages,' at the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), has temporarily been frozen until further notice.

The registration process, which is being supervised and monitored by Al Jama-ah members and registered by DHA officials, was halted since anomalies were identified soon after the process started more than a week ago.

The pilot project, which got off the ground, revealed that DHA officials issued 'marriage certificate' in accordance with the 'customary marriage' and not according to the 'Muslim marriage' rites system; this is an error that cannot be ignored since it has legal implications and should be rectified as soon as possible. Alongside this, the DHA's technical team should make sure that they update the department's system accordingly.

While the party expresses its regret for the suspension, it felt that it had to be done at this moment so that the legal issues be addressed and solved by DHA. Both the DHA and the party agreed that as they register couples that there would be challenges along the way and this was one of them.

That being the case, the party, however, would want to assure the Muslim community that it was being done in the community's best interests. Moreover, since the party had 'oversight desks' at each of the four DHA (Mitchells Plain and Wynberg in the Western Cape; Harrison Street in Johannesburg and Umgeni Road in Durban), it informed DHA that these have provisionally been withdrawn.

Furthermore, Al Jama-ah's Hon Ganief Hendricks, who is the party's leader and Member of Parliament stated that, "it has come to our knowledge that the Nikah marriage is being registered under 'The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act' instead of 'The Recognition of Muslim Marriage'." He added that, "if left as is then in the near future, the Muslims might encounter major negative consequences in the years ahead; and this should be avoided at all costs."

"The DHA uses the 'customary marriage statutory form' as an alternative or replacement, and this is a problematic. When a DHA official register using this form, then he/she would have to demonstrate that the registration does not fall under the

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scope of 'The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act;' and this is unfortunately not the case presently," says Hendricks.

The DHA and the party, which are involved in this process, wish to ensure the process complies with 'the agreement' as well as with the 27 June 2023 Circular. Now for this issue to be smoothened out, the party's legal counsel is engaging with the DHA officials, and soon thereafter, the party's spokesperson will inform the Muslim community about the outcome.

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