



Joe Biden Elected As America's New President



By: TMO Staff

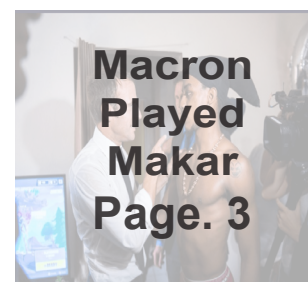
After days of waiting, America has chosen

Democrat Joe Biden as its 46th president over Donald Trump. In a victory speech Sat-

urday night in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, Biden thanked Americans who voted for

him and reached out to those who did not. "I un-

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Four Congresswomen known as 'The Squad' reelected to House



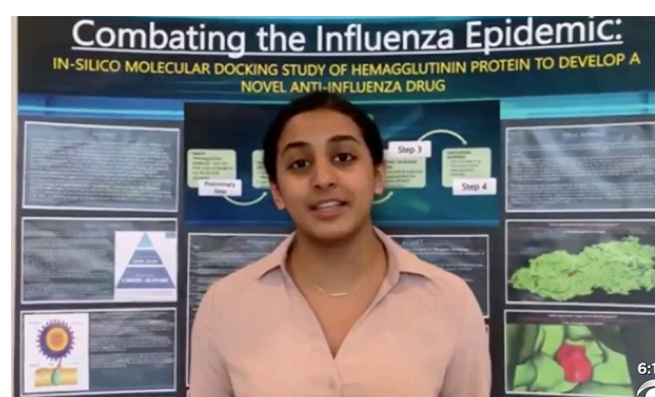
By: TMO Staff

Election week has been a rollercoaster ride sprinkled with good news. In the good news comes the reelection of Reps. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

of New York, Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts. Known as "the Squad" these four women of color and freshman lawmakers took

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A Texas teen might just have found the pathway to a COVID-19 cure



By: Aysha Qamar

As cases of the novel coronavirus increase nationwide, scientists and researchers are working day and night to develop a vaccine or possible cure, but they aren't the only ones. While most young teens are dread-

ing online classes and spending a lot of time on social media, one Texas eighth grader has been working on developing a possible cure for COVID-19. You read that right, a 14-year-old who hasn't even graduated

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Finding Islam on a Chicago Bus !

By: Aisha Qidwae.

Chicagoans embraced Islam thanks to the Islam ad campaign of GainPeace.

Leslie C. Toole had been considering embracing Islam for the past ten years.

But when the Chicagoan teacher saw a simple ad on a public bus, he knew the moment had come.

"I never truly committed and when I saw that sign I knew that was the final sign to complete my move."

Toole had come across Islam on a street corner ten years ago, when a man handed him a pamphlet telling him, he'll find enlightenment in it.

"And I kept reading and reading, and I wanted to make sure that

I understand what I got involved in."

Just last month, an Islamic advertisement rolled past him on one of the Chicago Transit



Authority buses. The sign caught his eyes, and eventually he called the number on the giant ad.

"How to become a member of Islam was my primary question.

"Toole embraced Islam on Monday, September 29.

His story is similar to that of 17 other Chicagoans who accepted Islam this month alone, thanks to the Islam ad campaign of GainPeace, a Chicago area outreach project of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA).

The group spent \$30,900 to place signs on 25 public buses serving across Chicago.

The ads direct people to a toll-free hotline, 800.662..

Islam, and a website established to help those who are seeking answers to questions about Islam.

The campaign was initially to run from September 19 to October 20, but it has been extended till November 23 because of the massive positive feedback.

The hotline has received thousands of calls, in addition to more than 300,000 hits on the website.

When curious Chicagoans dial the hotline, GainPeace also provides them with an English copy of the Noble Quran, The Message magazine on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as well as brochures and

books on topics related to Islam.

Campaigners say the aim of the bus ad campaign was to find a novel way to steer people toward information on Islam.

"The topic [of the ad] is Islam: the way of life with different prophets' names," Sabeel Ahmed, Director of GainPeace, said.

"The bottom and top message are supposed to generate more interest in people," Ahmed affirms that with the hotline and the website, people would get the chance to know more about Islam, with the opportunity to call knowledgeable Muslims to clear up any misconceptions, biases or fears.

"We want to create a channel through the website so people can interact with us and work out the commonalities, to get to know each other better."

Toole, the new Muslim, believes that the simple ad which merely says

"Got Questions? Get Answers" is a brilliant way to draw people's attention.

"I thought it was a neat idea... I had never seen that before."

ICNA, a New York-based grassroots organization that has 22 chapters across the US, has organized similar campaigns in Seattle and New York.

The Islam ad campaign does not run in Chicago alone.

In the Big Apple, 1,000 ads went up on the city's subway cars last month, portraying in a visual format questions that people may have about Islam..

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Op-Ed: Macron Played Makar (Deception) and God Has His Plans



By: Dr. Aslam Abdullah

The Arabic word Makar (deception) appropriately fitd Macron, the French President, who, after Islam's 1400 years of existence, suddenly discovered that it was in crisis and needed radical reforms. The discovery came when a Muslim man beheaded a teacher who showed his students a naked Prophet Muhammad cartoon.

Individual violent response is a matter of criminal justice, and any civilized country should deal with it as such. BMacron turned the incident into a crusade and blamed an entire religion and its followers for a crime that Islam considers a sin and a crime against God.

Macron could have invited French Muslim leaders to discuss the response and treated it as a law and order issue. But he escalated it level that would increase violence in France and different parts of the world. Already, the violence against Muslims in Europe and other places is on the rise. Churches, synagogues, and Temples, as well as the media, have started amplifying Islamophobic sentiments. In Israel, a derogatory song has gained popularity among its soldiers. India that promoted Muslim lynching and, through its terrorists, forced Muslims to chat Jay Shri Ram encouraged Macaron to take stern actions against Islam's followers. In Australia and the USA, the tri alliance of Christian evangelists, Zionists, and Hindutva has joined hands to attack Islam and Muslims and project them unfit to be part of Western civilization.

Muslims, on their part, have called for a boycott of French products.

Will this solve the problem? Will it create peaceful conditions? Will there ever be a time when people of different faiths and no faith can live in harmony?

Freedom of Expression

Freedom is a noble practice, but it must be consistent and logical. If anti-Semitism is illegal in Europe, then Islamophobia should also be unlawful. If an attack on Judaism or Israel is considered hateful, then an attack on Hinduism, Christianity, and even paganism must also be bigotry. Law should be equal for all. There is a fundamental flaw in the practice of law about the freedom of expression in the world. The world practices biases against the other.

Right to dignity

Every religious community deserves a dignified status regardless of what they practice. The purpose of law is to protect the dignity of every citizen. By showing disrespect and ridiculing other's faith, a society cannot maintain harmony. A people who humiliate and put down each other can create stability, especially when several sections qualify for more privileges and rights.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is not new. Ever since the existence of Islam, it is prevalent in societies where Muslims live. It was the driving force behind colonization, and it is the dominant idea behind the Muslim ban or the

mass murder of Muslims in Norway or India, or New Zealand. The roots of Islamophobia are in the literature found in Christian, Jewish secular and Hindu literature. The religious power elites do not consider Muslims equal, civilized, or believers in a universal God. Through their hatred against Islam and Muslims, they want to create a Muslim-free world. In this environment, an individual criminal act by a Muslim becomes a theologically sanctioned work.

Misuse of Religion

Every religious community has people who misuse religion for its political or economic purposes. Christians and Jews use their scriptures to capture Palestine and persecute Palestinians. Hindu upper castes use their religious books to discriminate against people they call untouchables even they happen to claim the same faith. The shadow of a Muslim, Christian, Jew, and Dalits is impure in their eyes and touching them becomes a sin. Raping their women is another thing for them. Muslims misusing their religion are no different than their counterparts in other religions. By quoting religious texts, one cannot claim his or her action to be sacred.

Islam and other faiths

Islam does not claim a monopoly on God. Islam respects other religions and religious communities. Islam's textbook, the Quran, states loudly the following:

But do not revile those [be-

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Emgage pushes to register one million Muslim voters across the election finish line

By: Nargis Rahman

The first time Mohamed Gula, Emgage's National Organizing Director, attended a campaign rally was a campaign for Obama by Vice President Joe Biden in 2012. Gula noticed and wondered why no one looked like him at the rally - a Libyan American. This rally also took place around the time of the Arab Spring.

"We're never involved as POC and minorities," he said.

After the rally he spoke to Biden about his father, giving him a letter sharing his family situation. "My father had been undocumented for 20 years before this."

Biden listened to him. "From there, I had folks from campaign reach out," he said.

This spiked his interest in campaigns and the electoral process. Gula later served as an organizer for Hillary Clinton in 2016 and volunteered for Bernie Sander's campaign before joining Emgage in 2017.

Gula is now leading the Million Muslim Votes campaign with Aysha Ahmed, the Deputy National Organizing Director, to register one million Muslim voters nationally by election day, with a registration deadline in each state.

To do this, the group has been holding virtual rallies, making thousands of phone calls, and sending text messages to engage the voter base. Emgage shares their national data with partners, who they train. This information is based on algorithms to find Muslim-sounding names in each state and cities with a high concentration of Muslims.

"Our main purpose of turning out as many Muslims voters as we can... focusing on counties and districts in most battleground states," he said. "Every single one of the campaigns uses the same strategy."

Gula says candidates prioritize communities by a



Muhammad Gula (right) and Aysha Ahmed (center) and Adam Abuta (left) working on grass roots organizing

voter score, reflecting the community's civic health based on when they vote for smaller elections on local and state-level - not just the presidential elections. He says Muslim communities focus more on having demands met through policies but have a long way to have a healthy civic score.

"It's like going into a car dealership to buy a Lamborghini with a 400-credit score, and pay bills for you to have a low interest and monthly rate."

He says not voting is not an option. "If we don't often vote, our policies don't end up being a priority...even if the candidate we have to choose from is not the candidate that we fully agree with." He encourages people to think about voting in November as pushing long term policies in the future.

Muslims have voting power. For example, 270,000 potential Muslim voters are in Michigan - 70,000 of them in Wayne County; 110,000 voters in Wisconsin - 85 percent of them in Milwaukee County, make up one-third of electoral votes. He says other cities like Philadelphia have large Muslim voter bases that could carry the 2020 election.

Michigan's executive

director Nada Al-Hanooti says she's hopeful that Muslims become sought out voters. For example, Hillary Clinton lost Michigan by just 10,700 votes in 2016. Michigan has 270,000 Muslim voters. "Muslims may be the ultimate deciding factor in the (next) election."

"I want Muslim and minority groups to create such a large voting block that politicians come to us to stake out our votes... I want them to need the Muslim vote," she said.

Emgage Michigan ran digital campaigns for Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib of District 13 for reelection and Abraham Aiyash of District 4 for

the August 2020 primaries. Both presumably won their respective seats.

The team is now campaigning for Biden by making 150,000 calls and sending over a million text messages with a group of 19 volunteers this year. "Biden isn't the perfect candidate, but without a doubt, Trump is not the best for our community. The real work comes after Biden inshallah gets elected."

Al-Hanooti was elected in 2018. She says she comes from a political background. "I went to protests since I was five years old. My dad worked in the nonprofit Life Relief office and opened the first CAIR Michigan office."

"I had a passion for justice. I felt like an activist growing up," she said. "I love serving my community."

The Palestinian American wants people to recognize the American Muslim vote's strength by organizing, voting and lobbying. At the same time, Emgage supports candidates and provides resources to educate the community.

Al-Hanooti's grandparents left Palestine in 1948 and moved to Syria to a one-bedroom home with ten children. She says her mom grew up in a refugee camp and lived through a war in 1973 between Israel and Syria. Her family eventually moved to the United States.

She encourages people to reflect on their personal stories to become motivated to vote.

"Remember your parents and grandparents, the adversities of your family. Think about who you're fighting for in this election season."

"I know the work I do and the work my colleagues do. It's our wajib. I go to bed every night... even if I got one person out to vote, knowing I did something good."

Wael Alzayat, CEO of Emgage PAC, said the organization began in South Florida after 9/11 in 2006 to bring the community together due to rising Islamophobia. "Emgage PAC is a bi-partisan national political

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The Making of a New America

By: Dr. Aslam Abdullah

In this election, 61% Protestants, 50% Catholics, 71%Mormons, and 51% Other Christians voted for Trump, while 68% Jews, 61% other religious groups, 64% Muslims and 59% Hindus voted for Biden.

One report published by CAIR said that 70 percent of Muslims voted for Biden and 17 percent Trump. The AP survey revealed that 64 of Muslims voted for Biden while 35% voted for Trump.

In Minnesota and Michigan, two Muslim congresspersons, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, retained their Districts and played a pivotal role in Biden’s victory. Andre Carson, in Indiana, was the third Muslim to maintain his District.

In Michigan, he beat Trump by 150,000 votes. Clinton lost the state by 11,000 in 2016. In Minnesota, the victory margin for Biden was



higher than in 2016. The Muslim votes were crucial in all battle-ground states for Presidential, senate, and house races. They overwhelmingly voted for Biden. There were 110 Muslims who ran for various offices in different parts of the country. Over 50 of them won. Most of the winners were younger people representing several ethnic communities. Biden’s victory is the people’s victory. One hopes that in domestic and foreign affairs, Biden would reflect people’s aspirations. The US does not exist to patronize dictators, and human rights violators in India, Israel, Saudi Arabia, or any part of the world. The primary obligation of a US Administration is to serve Americans and not the state of Israel of the multinational corporations. The country would expect Biden to take swift action on COVID-19, economy, immigration, environment, and racial equality. He has the mandate, and he should use it for the good of all and not only for the well being of an elite or a part of the country.

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Ms. Petronin's Conversion Spoils Mr. Macron's Plan

By M. Burhanuddin Qasmi

A sane human cannot oppose everything and anything, nor can he or she support something all the time. No one is saying everything in France is wrong, or everything in the USA, UK, India, or any Muslim majority country is just right and fair. We are humans, and humans do error. All people are not bad, and all cannot be equally good too.

Muslims don't like the Prophet's and the Qur'an's disrespect; it's a matter of faith of nearly 2 billion people from around the world. It's a big deal; Muslims love their Prophet (saws), their Book, and their belief in monotheism is very, very dear to them. They love these things more than even their souls, and everything belongs to them. A non-Muslim may not be able to figure out how precious and adoring these things are to every practicing Muslim – male and female, from all corners of the world.

France doesn't understand it and doesn't respect these things by its social and cultural openness or whatever reason – fair enough. Unfortunately, a notorious news-



paper carried scathing cartoons of the Prophet (saws), a few years ago, there was bloodshed in France. The whole world was upset; the Muslim world too condemned that attack. Later on, this much sense must prevail in every educated and wise society that it is a serious thing for our Co-citizens in France and Muslims from all over the world- one agrees or disagrees- it may create trouble and even may cost human lives. Thus, better avoid playing with guns and live bullets or burning fire, which may harm us and others.

Human lives are no joke and not a thing to amuse with and showcase your "art." An art can not create trouble; if it does, it is not art but a political tool in disguise. Yet

a member of the French far-right group repeated this notorious provocation in a planned manner because he announced to do that, and he was suggested to avoid it.

However, he did what he wanted, the first wrong. A young man – a teenager, went too violent following this incitement and killed that man, which was a crime, and nobody justified it; that was the second wrong. Police shot-dead that boy on the spot without arrest and trails against the standard norm of a free, democratic and secular system. Okay, be gone be bygone, a crime was punished, let's move on, but that was the third wrong to note.

We know Mr. Macron is upset because recently,

when he received Mrs. Sophie Petronin, the four-year-long captive in Mali and a very high profile lady, things went wrong for him at the airport. Petroni was released voluntarily by her kidnappers on Christian religious leaders and Church's request because she was a missionary, doing humanitarian work there in Mali and is 70-year-old.

Nevertheless, Macron invited media cameras and received her from the aircraft to showcase that he has done it and is a strong "Christian" leader. Everything was being recorded, and some channels were even live on-air.

This author was also following that developing story. It was supposed to

be a big political achievement for Macron and his party. He could not perform up to his voters' expectations, gain some points from the communal front, and boast in front of his opponents. But to everyone's surprise and Macron's utter disappointment, Ms. Petronin came out from the aircraft while her head was covered as Muslim women do. She waved everyone presents down therefrom within the craft, came down, met Macron just at the aircraft stairs, stopped for a while, looked at his face, and said in French, '... I have converted to Islam, I am no longer the previous Sophie Petronin but I am Maryam Petronin now. I did not make this announcement before so that people should not misunderstand that I might be forced to Islam. I wanted to announce this only when I am free by my own will...and my captors have treated me well...'

This unexpected announcement was something extraordinary for the whole of the world and for the extreme rightists in the West, a bitter pill to swallow. It

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Prophet Muhammad(PBUH): A Beacon of Hope for all times

By: TMO Staff

Through his character, he inspired people to change their lives; through his message, he empowered people to find the real purpose in their lives, and through his leadership, he motivated them to work as a team to serve humankind.

He transformed his environment within 23 years, and his followers changed the world in less than fifty years after his departure in 632 CE. What was so unique in his character, message, and leadership? Why did people responded to him then and respond to him now?

Monotheism was not a new idea that he introduced. Leadership was never absent in any community, and the philosopher and sages were always present to guide

humans. Yet he did what others could not in a recorded human history stretching almost 7,000 years.

A man who stood on a mountain alone, inviting a handful of people to realize the real purpose of life through consistency in their words and actions, created the biggest ever shift in human thoughts and effort. Humans are far from perfection, and nations are still at odds with each other. Justice is a distant dream, and equality is still an illusion. But freedom, justice, equality, and human rights are the goals that every nation considers as its declared goals.

Behind this monumental reconstruct, one can see the face of Muhammad, the apostle of God, as viewed by Muslims, who

forbade his followers to preserve his facial features in any form or shape except in his character's description.

That character is full of one and only one dominant feature, the quest for dignity for every human being and every creation. It was the dignity of all he stood and lived. He understood that the purpose of divine creation was to empower every human to live a dignified life regardless of the status at birth. His concern was to liberate humans from the shackles of slavery and injustice and the chains of superstition of human domination over the other based on class, creed, wealth, status, or even righteousness. He knew that once human beings achieve dignity, they can conquer all the obstacles they come across, and

he offered his life as an example of all that he preached. His concept of dignity included all included his enemies, even with those who planned to kill him. Ninety-nine point nine percent of his followers were his bitter enemy, ready to destroy his character and kill him. Yet, through his example, he brought out the best in their behavior to show dignity to all human and physical universe.

By dignity, he meant that all humans have their origin in God and all deserve an autonomous without being dependent on others for their life.

It meant they have the right to acquire knowledge and choose a path based on their understanding. It meant freedom of expression. It

meant courage, to tell the truth, and to fearlessly speak the truth. Above all, it meant to empathize with every fellow human beings,

His quest for dignity led women to find equality, slaves to find freedom, people to have a place in the echelons of power, and the poor and needy to work harder for their higher mobility. It also led people to demonstrate discipline and organization in their work.

Dignity is divine because only a higher authority can think for all without any biases. Elegance is the essence of human existence. Only people free from any shackle achieve their best, and self-respect is the motivational force that brings about the change in human

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American Muslims Ran For Office In Record Numbers And Made History

By: Aysha Qamar

The Muslim community has a number of historical wins to celebrate as a result of this year's election. Without any doubt, Muslim Congresswomen Ilhan Omar of Minnesota and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan won reelection alongside other members of the Squad, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts. Rep. André Carson of Indiana also won reelection resulting in three of the four Muslims in the House of Representatives to maintain their seats.

But these weren't the only wins the Muslim community saw. Not only did Oklahoma make history with Mauree Turner, the first Muslim person elected to the state's legislature and the first openly nonbinary person to ever be elected as a state lawmaker in the entire country, but other states also had firsts in electing Muslims to office. Here's a list of them:

Madinah Wilson-Anton as the first Muslim woman to be elected to the general assembly

Democrat Madinah Wilson-Anton became the first Muslim to be elected to the general assembly in the state of Delaware, getting more than 70% of the vote. She will represent District 26 as a member of the Delaware House of Representatives. Not only is she the first Muslim to be elected to the state's general assembly but she is also the first Muslim woman to ever be elected to office in Delaware's history.

"There is a stereotype that women that cover, that are Muslim are oppressed, are quiet, aren't free to be themselves, and I don't know how anybody can look at a 27-year-old Black woman who covers and ran for office and won as somebody who's oppressed and doesn't speak her mind," she told ABC News.

Her platform focuses on a number of issues including education funding reform, affordable housing, and accessible child care.

Congratulations to our newly elected Muslim officials!



Nida Aziz Allam - NC
Durham County Commissioner



Mauree Turner - OK
HD-88



Madinah Wilson-Anton - DE
HD 26



Abraham Alyash - MI
State Senate



Farrah Khan - CA
Mayor Elect, Irvine



Yassamin Ansari - AZ
PHX City Council (runoff)



Zohran Kwame Mamdani - NY
State Assembly



Iman Jodeh - CO
State House



Samba Baldeh - WI
State Assembly



Christopher Benjamin - FL
State House



Omar Fateh - MN
State Senate



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Mo Sabbagh - MI Dearborn
Heights School Board



Iman Jodeh as the first Muslim lawmaker in Colorado's state history

Another first for both Muslims and Muslim women was the election of Iman Jodeh to the Colorado House of Representatives. Jodeh, a community activist, educator, and daughter to Palestinian immigrants will represent Colorado's District 41 as the state's

first Muslim lawmaker.

When asked about why she ran, Jodeh told The Colorado Sun, that running

to be the first was never her intention. "I'm running because I feel like my lived experiences have the ability to influence progressive policy and move the needle in a positive and progressive

way." She added that although the state has had inadequate Muslim representation, she is proud to live there and

that her election wouldn't just be about representing Muslims, but an ally and voice for identities "across the board."

"I think it's important that we do honor our democracy and not

squander the voice of the people," she told The Colorado Sun. "Women fought for a very long time to have a voice and

a vote. People of color fought for even longer."

Samba Baldeh as the first Muslim elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly

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The Tyranny Continues in Kashmir

By Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

October 27 marks the beginning of the Indian Occupation of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. It is forever scarred in the collective minds of the Kashmiri people as the day they became occupied.

The Kashmir conflict began in 1846 with the illegal, immoral, and inhumane sale of the historical state of Jammu and Kashmir to a non-Kashmiri Dogra family for services rendered to the British Raj. From that point onwards, Kashmiris have long for self-determination. Yet, tragically, their legitimate aspirations were crushed with the grotesque, irregular, and illegal ascension by the brutal foreign ruler Maharaja Hari Singh who did not have the consent of the people. With Indian soldiers' arrival, the historic Black Day of Occupation begins its most recent and insidious manifestation.

The Princely State of Jammu & Kashmir obtained independence on August 15, 1947, when British paramountcy lapsed. At that moment, under international law, as understood by Indian National Congress, The Muslim League, and Great Britain, sovereignty in Kashmir devolved on its peoples, not its autocratic Maharaja. Indeed, Kashmir was beset by the wholesale domestic revolt against the Maharaja when independence arrived and widened in the initial months after that. To save his despotism from collapse, the Maharaja requested the Indian military's assistance on October 27, 1947, after ostensibly signing an Instrument of Accession to that nation. British Scholar Alistair Lamb has convincingly demonstrated that the Instrument of Accession was as bogus as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion or the Donation of Constantine. An original has never been found, and there is no plausible explanation for a disappearance if an original had ever existed.

Resolution # 47, adopted on April 21, 1948, is



a constant reminder to the people of Kashmir. That states that the future status of Kashmir must be ascertained by the wishes and aspirations of the people of the territory. This resolution was agreed upon by both India & Pakistan, negotiated by the United Nations, and accepted by the Security Council.

Ambassador Warren Austin of the United States said it the best in the Security Council on January 24, 1948, "... When India accepted the accession of Kashmir, it made its act stand for a great principle by stating as a part of the acceptance, that it was conditional on fair plebiscite being held to determine the will of the people of Kashmir concerning its accession. I think an example was made in history at that point."

India, however, was soon undeceived of its delusions over Kashmir's political yearning. Recognizing that its people would never freely vote accession to India, it contrived excuse after excuse to frustrate a plebiscite. When the United Nations proposed arbitration, a reference to the World Court, or any other method of resolving minor demilitarization quarrels, India nixed them all. After a few years, it dropped all pretense of acceding to a referendum by unilaterally proclaiming Kashmir's annexation. India's proclamation has never been accepted by the United Nations, which lists Kashmir as a disputed territory whose future status is yet to be determined by its people.

History proved the British Prime Minister Clement Richard Atlee wrong when he said on

November 7, 1947, "...he (Pandit Nehru) undertook that the will of the people should be ascertained, and he proposed that this should be done under the authority and supervision of the United Nations...I can't believe that Mr. Nehru's pledges have the sinister implications."

India's creepy design was also confirmed by Bertrand Russell who said in 1964 "The high idealism of the Indian government in international matters breaks down completely when confronted with the question of Kashmir."

So, a false narrative was concocted by India, out of nothing more than thin air, in a vain attempt to intellectually subjugate a people. This challenge is most serious, since it resonates, even today with more vigor. How often do we hear outlandish statements like, 'Kashmir is an integral part of India'? These statements do not exist in a vacuum. They are loaded and violent. This form of violence is more insidious, more difficult to confront, for it is attempting to indoctrinate Kashmiris about their past, their present and direct them to a future that does not belong to them. They had become the objects of history rather than the masters of it.

Another serious challenge that the people of Kashmir face when attempts are made to confine the Kashmir dispute to a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan as if Kashmiris were inconsequential. This charade of sorts represents an outrageous attempt to restrict Kashmir's discussions to India and Pakistan to the exclusion of the most important

party to the conflict — the people of Kashmir. Today, this strikingly ignorant political strategy has collapsed after the Abrogation of Article 370 & 35 A on August 5, 2019, and no longer is considered an honest initiative for resolving the Kashmir dispute. It has not achieved any of its desired objectives of bettering relations or resolving Kashmiri aspirations for self-determination. It is evident that this policy has proven a colossal failure. If in more than 73 years, the 'bilateral masquerade' has produced nothing more than cheap photo opportunities, then it is better to once and for all, put this show to an end.

The world powers and saner elements in India and Pakistan need to realize that India and Pakistan's bilateral talks have always remained barren. And the trilateral dialogue between the Governments of India, Pakistan, and the leadership of Kashmir — without any precondition from any side — is the only way to resolve the issue of Kashmir once for all. The participation of Kashmiri leadership in the dialogue process is the sine qua non that will help achieve lasting peace and tranquility in South Asia.

In fact, a 'Kashmir Quartet' should be established that includes Kashmir, Pakistan, China, and India. Moreover, outside intervention and mediation should include the United Nations. The chairmanship of the Kashmir Quartet mediation should be undertaken by a person of international stature, such as Kjell Bondevik former prime minister of Norway, or President Mary Robinson of Ireland.

Today, the challenge before us is that a new generation in Kashmir has been raised with blood and tears for which death no longer poses a threat to what can death do that life has not done before: their suffering is freeing them from fear. Kashmiris' fearlessness has led to powerful protests and the largest demonstrations in recent years. The presence of hundreds of thousands of people on the streets of Srinagar, marching towards the office of the UNMOGIP, is proof that the freedom struggle is not a terroristic movement but a movement that is indigenous, spontaneous, peaceful, and popular.

Now is the time that Mr. Antonio Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, brings the situation in Kashmir to the Security Council's attention under the provision of Article 99 of the United Nations Charter. It is here in the region of South Asia that not two but three nuclear powers have been eyeball to eyeball for the last one year? Article 99 authorizes the Secretary-General to 'bring to the Security Council's attention any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security'. If not now, then when can Article 99 be invoked to bring peace and stability to the region of South Asia.

The UN Secretary-General should listen to Mr. Gross, US Ambassador to the UN, who said in the Security Council on December 5, 1952, we feel that it is the Security Council's role to assist the parties seeking to reach an agreement.

So, now is no time for complacency or temporizing. And the chilling suffering and misery of the Kashmiri people continue every day a peaceful resolution is deferred.

Dr. Fai is the Secretary-General, Washington-based World Kashmir Awareness Forum. He can be reached at 1-202-607-6435 or gnfai2003@yahoo.com

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Biden's plan to revive Iran talks could calm the Middle East – but on Israel he and Trump largely agree

By: *Muqtedar Khan*

When the Taliban recently voiced its hope that Donald Trump would win a second term because he would withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan, it was a reminder that the 2020 U.S. election has big implications for the Middle East – and, by consequence, for American national security.

Foreign policy barely registers on Americans' election agenda this year in a race dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, economic woes and structural racism.

Nonetheless, the United States' global role is on the ballot in November. Trump has an "America First" vision in which narrowly defined U.S. interests rank as more important than helping maintain the global order. Biden, whose decades of foreign policy experience include chairing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wants to restore the United States' international stature.

A Biden win would change American foreign policy significantly. But my research on U.S. policy in the Middle East suggests the United States' actual engagement there might only show cosmetic changes.

Trump's Mideast policy Trump came to office promising to tame Iran, end the Islamic State and make "the deal of the century" between Israel and the Palestinians.

But he has executed no grand strategy in the Middle East.

Today Iran is emboldened, there's no Israeli-Palestinian peace deal and, despite Trump's claims, the Islamic State still exists. Trump withdrew the U.S. from a 2015 international agreement that restricted Iran's nuclear program in exchange for lifting sanctions. But restoring sanctions has not curbed the Iranian government's regional influence, much less forced regime change. New sanctions just imposed on Iran's



banking system, for example, are mostly just making life harder for ordinary Iranians during a pandemic by reducing the value of the Iranian currency.

One consistency in Trump's Middle East policy is Israel. Trump steadfastly supports its escalating opposition to Iran and aggressive policies in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza territories. Trump also departed from decades of settled U.S. policy on Israel's capital, Jerusalem – a holy city for Muslims that the Palestinians likewise claim as their capital – by moving the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv. This shift angered Muslim nations across the Middle East and beyond, and effectively killed hopes of peace with Israel.

The Trump White House scored one diplomatic victory in the region by normalizing relations between Israel and two Arab nations, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

In numbers, that matches what presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter together achieved in the Middle East: Carter normalized Israeli ties with Egypt and Clinton with Jordan. But without a just solution to Palestinian demands for statehood, critics say, genuine peace with Arabs is not possible.

Either way, Trump has

unquestionably altered the geopolitics of the Middle East, pushing aside Israel-Palestine as the region's main conflict. For both the U.S. and leading Arab nations, the priority is now stopping Iran from developing nuclear weapons and reducing Iranian attacks on American interests and allies.

Biden's challenges

If Biden wins the election, he would have to contend with more hostile U.S.-Iran relations than what he and Barack Obama bequeathed to Trump in 2016.

In a CNN op-ed when Biden promised to rejoin the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, Biden wrote that through greater cooperation, he believes Iran can be pacified. Rejoining the deal – signed by the U.S., China, Russia and several European powers – would have the effect of improving frayed U.S. cooperation with those nations, too.

But increased engagement with Iran would hurt U.S.-Saudi relations, which have grown closer under Trump's son-in-law and Mideast adviser, Jared Kushner. Saudi Arabia is entangled in what it considers to be a zero-sum struggle with Iran for domination of the Gulf region. The Saudis see U.S. pressure on Iran as a key component of its strategy to contain Iranian influence.

Biden has also signaled that the U.S. will no longer support Saudi Arabia in its devastating intervention in Yemen's civil war.

Iraq, Syria and Libya are all also embroiled in civil wars, conflicts that Biden – who believes the U.S. has "an obligation to lead" – would have to decide how to engage with.

Biden would also contend with a new development in the Middle East: Turkey, which now has military presence in Syria, Iraq, Qatar and Libya. Trump has largely accommodated Turkey's growing regional assertion of its influence.

Israel-Palestine

Biden's rhetoric about Israel differs from Trump's. In May he came out publicly against Israel's proposed annexation of the West Bank – an inflammatory plan that the Trump administration may have quietly opposed but would not condemn. Israel has since suspended that plan as part of the United Arab Emirates deal.

But there's no sign the United States' Israel policies would differ substantially under Biden. His campaign has repeatedly stated its "ironclad" support for Israel, condemning any effort to boycott the country or withhold aid to force policy change. As vice president, Biden in 2016 helped get the country its biggest ever U.S. aid package, US\$38

billion. Biden has already announced he would not move the U.S. embassy back to Tel Aviv if elected.

The U.S. is Israel's strongest ally. Every American president since 1973 has given substantial foreign aid and military technology to the Israelis while shielding Israel from international condemnation over its policies toward Palestinians.

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Palestinians almost certainly won't get their land back under Biden. But they could get more money and political support. Biden promises to restore some of the \$600 million in U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority and to the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, among other agencies. Trump eliminated that funding last year in a failed effort to force Palestinians to accept his peace plan.

Obama created some goodwill in the Mideast, which may help Biden. But the region presents challenges that have for decades stymied American presidents, Democratic and Republican alike.

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Cont. from page 7. American Muslims Ran For Office

Not only did Samba Baldeh become the first Muslim elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly, but Baldeh is also the first Black man to represent Dane County in the legislature.

Baldeh, who ran in Wisconsin's District 48, defeated Republican Samuel Anderson with 80% of the vote. As a Muslim who immigrated from Gambia to Madison, Wisconsin, Baldeh told HuffPost he hopes his win is an inspiration to both Muslims and children of color.

"Being the first Muslim to ever be elected at the state Assembly is really exciting, but also an opportunity that I am thankful for," he said. "I am looking forward to the challenges, but obviously I'm very excited about the opportunity to serve District 48, but also to represent, not only my constituents but my Muslims, Africans, and constituents of color."

Christopher Benjamin as the first Muslim to be elected to any state office in Florida

Christopher Benjamin made history in Florida by becoming the first Muslim American to be elected to any state office. Benjamin, a lawyer and South Florida native, will represent District 107 in the House of Representatives. His platform focuses on criminal justice reform, expanding Medicaid, and speaking up on issues that affect the Muslim community.

"This election has been a great journey. I've been preparing for this type of office since I was an undergrad at Florida Memorial University, a private historically Black university, where I majored in political science. This is a great completion of that cycle, and to make history on top of it, is almost overwhelming."

Nida Allam as the first Muslim woman to serve the state of North Carolina

Nida Allam was elected Tuesday onto the Durham County Board of Commissioners in North Carolina. She will serve as one of the five women, all Democrats, who were elected onto the Durham County Board of Commissioners. Allam's historic win coincides with the country's decision to elect its first all female board. Prior to this, she was elected as the first Muslim to serve on the Executive Council of the North Carolina Democratic Party in 2017.

"Growing up Muslim American I never thought running for office let alone winning and making history would ever be a possibility," Allam said.

Allam was inspired to go into politics following the death of her close friends, three Muslim students who were killed in Chapel Hill in 2015, Deah Barakat, Razan Abu-Salha, and Yusor Abu-Salah. All three students were shot in their home by a neighbor, yet the incident barely received any media coverage or attention nationwide.

"How can I be content with all the blessings I have been given in this world when there is so much to do to fight injustice, uplift one another and to make our communities healthier," she said in a statement on her website. "I'm fighting for a better nation so that others don't have to suffer the pain my community did."

Abraham Aiyash elected to the Michigan House of Representatives

Abraham Aiyash was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives to represent District 4 on Tuesday. The seventh of eight children, Aiyash was born in Michigan to immigrants from Yemen. According to his campaign, he believes in hard

work, giving back, and commitment to service.

Aiyash's platform focuses on a number of issues including criminal justice reform, anti-Black racism, education, and healthcare.

"We can reimagine a politics of the possible if we're willing to engage ordinary citizens in our democracy," a statement on his website read.

Omar Fateh elected to Minnesota State Senate

Omar Fateh will represent District 62 in the Minnesota State Senate. He defeated Sen. Jeff Hayden in the August primary and believes in bringing "people power" in the form of community to the capitol to solve issues. His platform heavily focuses on affordable housing and partnering with community organizations.

Minnesotans "should be able to access the folks that are representing us and make sure that they're partnering with the community," Fateh told The Appeal. The child of Somali immigrants, Fateh hopes to "bridge the gap" between immigrant communities and American culture.

Fady Qaddoura as the first Muslim to serve in the Indiana Senate

Beating incumbent Republican state senator John Ruckelshaus, Fady Qaddoura was elected to the Indiana Senate Tuesday. He will represent District 30. Qaddoura's win gives hope to Democrats of eventually regaining their position in the Senate.

"We did it! Only in America can someone immigrate to this country, work hard, and earn the trust of tens of thousands of voters to become the first Muslim State Senator in Indiana's history. I will work hard every day to represent all Hoosiers—including the ones who did not vote for me," said in a statement posted to Facebook.

Zohran Kwame Mamdani elected to New York State Assembly as the first South Asian and second Muslim serving in the Assembly

Zohran Kwame Mamdani was elected to represent District 36 in the New York State Assembly on Tuesday. He will serve as not only the first South Asian but the first elected Ugandan in the state. Additionally, he will also be the second Muslim to serve on the state assembly.

Indian-Ugandan New Yorker Mamdani announced in October that he was running for New York State Assembly District 36 comprising the Astoria, Ditmars-Steenway, and Astoria Heights neighborhoods in Queens. Prior to his campaign, he worked as a housing counselor for immigrant families. His campaign centers on three emerging issues: housing for all, justice for all, and energy for all.

"This election isn't about a single candidate—it's about a movement. As a democratic socialist, I know that we'll never win the rights we all deserve—rights to healthcare, housing, education, nutrition, childcare, and public power—without a grassroots movement of the working class rising up to demand them. Another world is possible, but only if we fight for it together."

Data last compiled in 2015 by the National Conference of State Legislatures found that only three state legislators identified as Muslim, with the growing number of diverse Muslims running for office the number is now unclear. Not only did the Muslim community see historical wins and run for office, but Muslim Americans also turned out in record numbers to cast their vote. According to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, approximately 1 million Muslims voted in this election

with 69% choosing Democratic candidate and former Vice President Joe Biden as their pick for president.

"The Muslim community's significant ability to impact the results of numerous races across this country—including the presidential election—was recognized nationally by candidates and the media," CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad said.

Following Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric and xenophobia policies these wins, no matter how big or small, are noteworthy and beyond cause for celebration.

"Muslim American representation isn't just about winning an election, having a seat at the table, or even power. It's about reclaiming the American narrative. It's about making sure that the little Ayshas, Ahmeds, and Maryams sitting in their classrooms experiencing life different from everyone else, see political ads, text messages, literature, and mainstream media covering people that look like them, sound like them, and pray like them—in places of power," Mohamed Gula, national organizing director of Emgage, told Daily Kos. "It's about having an example and being able to dream. That's what running while Muslim is about."

This list is not exhaustive; if you know of a candidate who has not been mentioned please email us.

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Cont. from page 6. Prophet Muhammad

society.

Prophet Muhammad restored the confidence in people around him in

their ability and right to live a dignified life. In this context, Muslims understand the divine words preserved in the Quran:

"And [thus, O Prophet,]

We have sent thee as [an evidence of Our] grace towards all the worlds" (21:107). "And as a guide towards the truth have We bestowed this [revelation] from on high; with this [very] truth has

it come down [unto thee, O Prophet]: for We have sent thee but as a herald of glad tidings and a warner," (17:105), "VERILY, in the Apostle of God you have a good example for everyone who looks

forward [with hope and awe] to God and the Last Day, and remembers God unceasingly" (33:21).

Mauree Turner makes history as first Muslim elected to Oklahoma state

By: TMO Staff

Making history as not only the first Muslim person elected to the state's legislature but one of the first nonbinary state lawmakers in the country, Mauree Nivek Rajah Salima Turner, known as Mauree Turner, won their election for state House in Oklahoma's 88th district. According to the LGBTQ Victory Fund Turner is the first openly nonbinary person elected to a state legislature and one of five openly LGBTQ elected officials currently serving in Oklahoma. "I have a lot of feelings about tonight. But overall, I'm grateful for HD88 granting me this opportunity. I hate SQ805 & so many other things slipped through our fingers ... But I'm ready to fight hard as hell so they never do again," Turner said on Twitter.

The 27-year-old community organizer and political newcomer beat Republican Kelly Barlean for the seat. While the 88th District remains widely Democratic, Oklahoma is a predominantly Republican state. With a platform that centers on criminal justice reform, higher minimum wage, and access to affordable health care, Turner announced their candidacy in February, noting that "it has never been a more important time for those closest to our state's problems to be structuring the solutions."

Oklahoma currently has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the



country, making criminal justice reform that much more important. In their announcement, Turner noted that criminal justice reform impacts other areas of political issues including housing insecurity, substance abuse, and a lack of access to education and job opportunities.

When asked about their inspiration to run for the State House, Turner told the Council of American and Islamic Relations (CAIR) Oklahoma chapter that growing up in a single-parent household as the child of an incarcerated parent impacted their decision. "When we don't have someone with shared lived experiences advocating for us inside the capitol it makes it a lot easier for us to be carved out of the solutions that govern our everyday lives – and that is also what I stress to the students I talk to in middle and high schools

around the state," Turner said.

"I always said I would never run for office, but would always be devoted to finding the best candidate out there. I live in House District 88, one of the most liberal places – if not the most liberal place – in Oklahoma, we should be driving the conversation, and action, around what inclusive and equitable policy looks like."

Representation played a big part in Turner's decision to run as they hope this new position will allow future generations to have a relatable role model. "As a child, I honestly remember having conversations with my mom where I thought that things would just be better if I was white, or if I was just different in some way, shape or form," Turner said. "So, it means a lot to be able to provide that visibility for other folks."

According to HuffPost, despite the district consisting of 20% Latino and 10% Black residents, there have been no Black or Latino representatives in Oklahoma's 88th District. In an interview with the HuffPost in October, Turner said that it would be "formative for young Muslim folks to see" should they be elected as the state's first Muslim lawmaker. "We are no longer fighting for a seat at the table," Turner said. "We're creating a whole new table where everybody eats."

Turner grew up in a multifaith household and learned about Islam from their father after he converted in prison. Prior to running for office, the hijab-wearing progressive worked as a field director for the American Civil Liberties Union's criminal justice reform project, Campaign for Smart Justice. Additionally, Turner has worked

in direct policy advocacy at the state capitol since 2018.

In sharing what their experience has been in running for state office as both a Muslim and person of color, Turner was simultaneously vulnerable and truthful. "In this fight my community is fighting to no longer have an ally represent us, but actually be our own representation," Turner told CAIR Oklahoma. They said that the experience has been difficult, with people encouraging them to back out and run for school board or city council instead.

Reflecting on the Quran's Chapter 2 Verse 177, Turner said that while they felt heartbreak from the people who would not support them, they felt healing in the reason why they chose to run, and encouraged others to read the Quranic chapter to "think about what that means in the context of where we are in the nation."

"I also found peace in seeing folks show up for this movement I would have never expected. We have had folks hold fundraisers for us in other states, we have had artists create artwork for this movement, and around this campaign, we have had donors from across the country," Turner said. "To be able to find, educate, and build community across the nation has been wonderful, Alhamdulillah."

Black, Muslim, and Queer, Turner's win is historic.

Cont. from page 1. 'The Squad'

office last year creating not only representation for minorities but taking on Donald Trump.

Due to their popularity and the significant impact they have created

in their positions, none of the incumbents faced significant challenges this reelection term. As they ran for to maintain their seats they were endorsed by top Democratic Party leaders including Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Over their last year in office, all four members have faced criticism and hate at the hand of Donald Trump and his supporters. Omar, specifically, has been targeted for wearing the hijab and being a refugee. Trump has consistently taken

to degrade the women in any form he can including attempting to shame Ocasio-Cortez during one of the presidential debates.

Their win proves that despite any false information Trump and his

supporters may spread, America knows what's best for them. 'The Squad' depicts resilience and diversity and is here to stay.

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CONTINUED STORY

Cont. from page 4.
Emgage

action committee that supports local, state, and federal candidates who share our vision of an inclusive and tolerant America.” The PAC endorses, financially supports candidates “who have a track record of upholding civil rights, welcoming diversity, and protecting religious freedom.”

He said before 9/11, Muslim communities had apprehensions about politics, with a generational suspicion of politics, in some cases saying voting is haram. Politics were hyper-localized by activists or mosques who may have held voter drives.

“(Muslims were) not con-

nected as a political entity nationally,” he said. He said when it came to Syria, Kashmiri, India, Iraq, or Palestine... “the community had issues of mutual distrust and suspicion of working together.”

Alzayat said Emgage is made up of three organizations: the foundation 501(c)(3), which is the core doing voter registration, sending out mailers, and creating digital campaigns; Emgage Action 501(c)(4), which lobbies on the state, federal and foreign issues; and Emgage PAC which vets, endorses, and supports candidates, to “strengthen the Muslim community.”

He said Emgage took off in 2017 after opening the

Washington D.C. headquarters to streamline communication, improve branding and processes with a national team to make chapters more cohesive.

The organization is grassroots and grass-tops, he said. “We have the engagement at the top level, gov officials or elected officials advocating on high-level policies but also through chapter models partners to get out the vote.”

Recently Emgage and their staff came under scrutiny for allegedly supporting Zionist organizations in this open letter. Alzayat was one of the listed people. He said Emgage’s position on Palestine is clear – and the work speaks for itself.

The company put out a statement in response to reaffirming its stance with the Palestinian community.

“We, as a national community organization, obviously have a responsibility to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of the community. This work is not easy. Getting the job done while also being accommodating to all our various communities is a challenge, but we do our best to make sure we stay true to our roles and them. This controversy has taken some legitimate concerns and misused them for various reasons.”

He says Emgage could have done a better job and will take more outstanding care when it ap-

proaches Palestine. “Our track record as an org that we support Palestinian rights to equality and freedom.”

He said the attacks seem to be personal attacks before the election. Stay focused on the polls, he says.

“We want to transform the Muslim American voter’s perception. From a voter scapegoated, demonized, and shunned in some circles to the court-ed one. That is needed by those who want to either get elected or to enact policies rather than avoid us or demonize us; they will come to us seek our help, our input, and our contributions,” he said.

Nargis Rahman is a freelance writer.

Cont. from page 6.
Ms. Petronin’s

may have been a painful shocker for Mr. Macron and a most unfortunate experience, to say the least.

Therefrom, media cameras gradually went off, the breaking, the exclusive, and the big news story was played down, blacked out, and all Macron’s marketing plans were ultimately devastated. He never expected in his wildest dream that was going to happen with Petronin’s spicy story. He went to gain; he lost; it was unplanned and unexpected by all means.

He might take that negatively in his heart, and within days he announced that he is going to ban Muslim women’s headscarves in France, reason – “democracy,” “freedom,” and “values” of the West. He said he is going to change Islamic narratives because it is in “crises”.

We know Mr. Macron, you are in pain, things are hard for you to digest – but we can’t help. This was an accident for you, and things went wrong. But you can’t punish your whole Muslim population and abuse the whole Islamic

world because you are angry for no mistake of 70-year-old Ms Maryam Petronin. Her conversion was her choice and that’s the freedom her French Constitution provides.

Following this recent uncalled for series of wrongs in France, the state’s head would generally try to keep cool and bring the situation under control. Macron, on the contrary, fueled it further, threw his poisons out in public. He put those highly objectionable cartoons with big screens over public buildings and locked

masjids in Paris. He Made a fresh series of inflammatory and too objectionable statements about Islam, Muslims, and their Prophet (saws). This was the fourth and most gruesome blunder that you can imagine from the head of a democratic secular state!

Muslims cannot endorse all these wrongs and remain silent over one person’s gross injustice and fanaticism. Macron can’t fool people in the name of “freedom” and keep spitting his poison to make this world a hell for all to live.

Enough is enough. Every

human life is valuable; every human deserves a free, peaceful, and respectable life. Every culture, race, colour, gender, language, and religion is respectable to its respective people. Nobody should interfere in other’s domain. Live and let live. Give respect, take respect. There is no way out other than this, and we all need to understand it.

This write-up was primarily addressed to Ms. Elena Baliotti, London, UK while replying to her comments over one of my earlier Facebook posts.

Cont. from page 1.
Joe Biden, President

derstand the disappointment tonight. I’ve lost a couple of times myself. But now, let’s give each other a chance,” Biden said. “This is the time to heal in America.”

Biden’s victory also makes history with his running mate being California Sen. Kamala Harris. Not only will Harris be the first woman vice president but the first Black person and the first person of South Asian descent to become vice president. “While I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last, because every little girl watching tonight sees that this is a country of possibilities,” Harris said Saturday.

Despite Biden’s win



Tump stays in denial and shows no indication that he intends to concede. “I WON THIS ELECTION, BY A LOT!” he wrote on Twitter.

Biden’s win followed Pennsylvania flipping from red to blue on Friday morning. The flip came after more than 30,000 votes from the Philadelphia area were counted. While Trump lead the race on election night Tuesday as mail in ballots continued to be

counted, things shifted into Biden’s factor. As states flipped in Biden’s favor Trump supporters attempted to intimidate poll counters by demanding the count be stopped. Additionally, Trump and his team have filed lawsuits in multiple states including Pennsylvania to challenge how votes were counted. Trump will stop to no ends to deny his defeat.

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CONTINUED STORY

**Cont. from page 2.
Chicago Bus**

Because of the campaign's success, other cities in the US and Canada have asked the group to help start similar projects.

A recent US survey revealed that the majority of Americans know very little about Islam and do not see any common grounds between the Muslim faith and their own Christian beliefs.

Mentoring "We want to create a channel through the website so people can interact with us and work out the commonalities, to get to know each other better," Sabeel Ahmed, Director of GainPeace, said.

GainPeace role does not end with educating people about Islam.

When a person embraces Islam, the group appoints a Big Brother or Big Sister, who becomes a mentor for the

new Muslim, providing information, support and advice.

"The mentor is like a guardian angel," says Ahmed.

The mentor and the new Muslim meet face-to-face and stay in touch with mails and phone calls.

Toole, who has chosen Ilyas as his new Muslim name, is very grateful to his mentor.

"He's been very helpful. He's provided me with

tons of books to move me forward."

GainPeace also provides the new Muslim with a Shahadah package, which includes: A How to Pray DVD, a Help Yourself in Reading the Quran book, and brochures on various topics about Islam.

It also offers online classes once a week for new Muslims, which Toole is looking forward to joining. "I'll be able to learn everything from

Muslims' lifestyle, the prayer practices, and the Arabic language."

Toole says that the more he knows about his new religion, the more confident he feels that he has made the right decision. "It's definitely perfect for me.

It's hard to explain because when you know something is right,

it's just a deep-rooted feeling inside of you that you found home."

**Cont. from page 1.
Texas teen**

from middle school just won an award of \$25,000 for research related to a potential cure for COVID-19.

Indian American Anika Chebrolu, from Frisco, Texas, won the prestigious 3M Young Scientist Challenge for her efforts to develop a novel antiviral drug as a cure for the coronavirus pandemic. According to the 3M Young Scientist Challenge website, Chebrolu did this by using an in-silico methodology to develop a lead molecule that selectively binds to the Spike protein on the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The challenge created by 3M in partnership with Discovery Communications aspires to create a new generation of problem-solvers by encouraging students in grades 5-8 to share their discoveries.

"I developed this molecule that can bind to a certain protein on the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This protein by binding to it will stop the function of the protein" said Chebrolu, who hopes to one day be a medical researcher and professor.

She used a number of computer programs to identify how and where the molecule would bind to the virus.

While Chebrolu initially began her project to find a cure for winter influenza, she changed the direction amid the COVID-19 pandemic. "I was drawn towards finding effective cures for influenza disease after a severe bout of the infection last year," Chebrolu said. "I would like to learn more from 3M scientists to pursue my drug development and with their help, would like to conduct in-vitro and in-vivo testing of my lead drug candidate."

Under the guidance of 3M Scientist Dr. Mahfuz Ali, another woman of color, Chebrolu was able to perfect her ideas through the scientific method. Chebrolu gained the opportunity to work with Dr. Ali after being awarded an exclusive mentorship for being one of the 10 finalists of the challenge. "With the help of my mentor Dr. Mahfuz Ali, I switched topics and targeted the SARS-CoV-2 virus because of the immense impact it's made in the world in less

than a year," Chebrolu said in an interview with Judy Shaw, of the New York Stock Exchange.

Chebrolu's drive and potential for finding a cure impressed not only Dr. Ali, who called her enthusiasm and tenacity "amazing," but also Dr. Cindy Moss, a judge for the challenge. Chebrolu said she was inspired to find potential cures to viruses after learning about the 1918 flu pandemic and finding out how many people die every year in the United States despite annual vaccinations and anti-influenza drugs on the market.

"Anika has an inquisitive mind and used her curiosity to ask questions about a vaccine for COVID-19," Moss told CNN. "Her work was comprehensive and examined numerous databases. She also developed an understanding of the innovation process and is a masterful communicator. Her willingness to use her time and talent to help make the world a better place gives us all hope."

Upon winning the award, the young scientist told CNN that her research

and discovered method "reflects [the] collective hopes to end this pandemic" as individuals like herself hope to go back to their normal lives and that while winning this award is an honor, her work is not done. Chebrolu shared that her next goal is to work alongside scientists and researchers to "control the morbidity and mortality" of the pandemic by developing her findings into an actual cure for the virus. "My effort to find a lead compound to bind to the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus this summer may appear to be a drop in the ocean, but still adds to all these efforts," she said. "How I develop this molecule further with the help of virologists and drug development specialists will determine the success of these efforts."

When asked about the reward money and what she plans to do with it, Chebrolu said that she will contribute some of it toward a nonprofit she created called "Academy Aid," which helps other young students pursue STEM research. The rest of the money, she explained, would be used

to continue her research in creating an effective anti-viral drug.

But of course, while passionate about science Chebrolu does find time to live a "normal" life like other teens. The 14-year-old also partakes in classical Indian dance and other forms of art. As a role model in the community, Chebrolu's achievement is not only making headlines but is being added to the list of successful South Asians brown parents love to compare their children to. Her discovery and success is a win for not only Indian Americans but other minorities who are working to dismantle the model minority myth in addition to representation of youth in science.

As of this report, the coronavirus has killed more than 1.1 million people worldwide. In the U.S. alone there have been over 8.2 million cases of COVID-19 and at least 220,000 deaths as a result, according to The New York Times database.

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**Cont. from page 3.
Macron Played Makar**

ings] whom they invoke instead of God lest they revile God out of spite, in ignorance. For, goodly indeed have We made their doings appear unto every community In time, [however,] unto their Sustainer they must return: and then He will make them [truly] understand all that they were doing. (6:108)

Muslims recognize that it is not a part of God's plan to make everyone a

follower of Islam. Every human in his program has free will. He did not appoint Muslims as guardians over others or responsible for their conduct. Muslims do believe that follow the truth, and polytheism is false. But it does not give them the right to denounce the belief systems of others and ridicule them. Others adhere to their beliefs because they seem fair to them. The nature of their ideas and actions will become apparent to them on the Day of Reckoning.

The Quranic message does not leave any room for hatred or ridicule of other faiths. When the Quran says for you is your faith and for me is mine, it clarifies that Muslims must show respect to others' beliefs even at an individual level. Islam focuses on personal responsibility to follow religion.

There is no coercion in religion (Quran{2:256}) means that an organization or state cannot impose faith upon people and dictate what is right

or wrong. They can educate or even formulate laws for the greater good of people. The statutes and education is the prerogative of organization members of citizens of the state.

The fight that Macron initiated under his Islamophobia is a false conflict. It would hurt France and Europe. It would revive crusade ideas and pitch religions and against religions. It would not remain confined to France; the whole world feels it. He can play a leader-

ship role by sitting with Muslim intellectuals and leaders to allay his fears he spread through his statements.

If you want to write for TMO, Please email: editor@muslimobserver.com



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