



Muslims Across Europe Urged To Boycott Israeli Dates This Ramadan



Reposted via Arab News
Muslims across Europe are being encouraged to check fruit labels and avoid buying Israeli dates this Ramadan to make sure they are not breaking their fasts with the “taste of apartheid,” organizers of a new boycott said on Saturday. “By choosing not to buy Israeli dates this Rama-

dan, the Muslim community can send a clear and powerful message of condemnation of Israel’s illegal occupation and apartheid in Palestine,” said Shamiul Joarder of the UK-based Friends of Al-Aqsa (FOA), who have launched the campaign. “Israel is the world’s largest producer of Medjoul dates, with 50

percent of Israel’s dates exported to Europe, FOA said in a statement. “These dates are then sold in major supermarkets as well as local shops across the continent. FOA added that 50 percent of Israeli dates are exported to Europe, where the UK, Netherlands, France, Spain and

Italy import huge quantities of the dried fruit. In 2020 the UK imported over 3,000 tons of dates from Israel, worth roughly £7.5 million (\$8.9 million). It also noted that so far this year, Israel has killed at least 62 Palestinians including 13 children — the equivalent of

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Obituary: In Memory Of El Hajj Imam Abdullah

Reposted from Ever Loved
Imam Abdullah Bey El-Amin was born RasBerry Holland III in Little Rock, AR on October 31, 1944 to doting parents, RasBerry Holland II and Thelma De Loney Holland. He was the cherished third child born to this union. At the age of 7 years old, he moved to Detroit, MI.



He was educated in the Detroit Public School System and upon graduation from Central High School, served his country in the United States

Army. Upon returning home from the army, Imam Abdullah entered Shaw

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The Spirit Of Fasting In The Month Of Ramadan



By: M. Basheer Ahmed M.D.
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‘Stop Praying Now’: Bonne Terre Prison Guards Beat, Pepper-Spray Muslim Inmates, Lawsuit Alleges



by *Osama Ayyad*

Reposted from NBC News Affiliate KSDK News

BONNE TERRE, Mo. — At a Missouri Department of Corrections facility in Bonne Terre, nine inmates stood shoulder to shoulder, preparing to kneel, prostrate, and praise God — an act of worship they’ve done hundreds of times before.

After having prepared for the prayer service by ceremoniously washing, an obligatory step for Muslims before praying, the men lined up in the housing unit, facing east as best as they could, and began praying — not unlike any other time they met for one of the five daily prayers.

According to a lawsuit filed last week, a prison guard ordered the men to stop praying immediately, and two of the nine men abruptly stopped their prayers and stepped away. The other seven did not.

Unlike many Americans who may be accustomed to stopping midway through a prayer, Muslims are encouraged to complete a prayer once it has begun. That’s perhaps why the other seven men praying tried to finish quickly.

According to the lawsuit, the inmates adhere to Islamic teachings regarding prayer, praying Islam’s five daily prayers, each lasting as little

as a few minutes.

Five of the seven men who continued to pray were pepper sprayed and one was viciously beaten for nothing more than praying, according to the lawsuit.

Those are the allegations of a lawsuit filed against officials with the Missouri Department of Corrections on behalf of the inmates who were at the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center in Bonne Terre.

“Viewing Muslims as nothing more than a gang, more than a dozen guards participated in this violent episode,” the lawsuit said. “The brutality began as an effort to disrupt Muslims praying together but morphed into a protracted effort to punish those who prayed—dispersing Plaintiffs throughout the state via transfers and otherwise retaliating against them.”

According to the lawsuit, video cameras at the facility captured everything that happened. Lt. Michelle Basham was the shift commander on duty at ERDCC.

“Defendant Basham saw the men making preparations to pray as she made her rounds through the unit, but she walked on as ERDCC guards had done hundreds of times before,” the lawsuit said. “The Plaintiffs took her approval for

granted, as they had prayed together in the housing unit’s common space several times each day since the prison locked down their chapel in response to the COVID-19 pandemic — and, indeed, had prayed together three separate times earlier that very day.”

Shortly after the men began praying together, the prison guard shift commander ordered them to stop, saying: “Stop praying now. There’s no praying outside the chapel.”

“Attempting to quickly complete the prayer, as his sincerely held religious beliefs required him to do, Plaintiff Stafford sped up the prayer in an effort to resolve Defendant Basham’s concern. Other Plaintiffs followed,” the lawsuit said. “When Plaintiffs did not instantly cease their prayer, Defendant Basham flew into a rage, shouting an officer in distress call—code 10-5—and a directive to “get me 10 beds ready in 2 House” (one of the housing units used for segregated custody) into her radio. Code 10-5 is typically reserved for guards who are being assaulted or otherwise attacked by a group of incarcerated.”

Moments later, up to 20 additional guards responded. Several guards sprayed pepper spray onto the seven remaining

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Israeli Settlers Go On Deadly Rampage Against Palestinians In Occupied West Bank

By Yousuf Ali

On February 27, Israeli settlers backed by their country's military went on a deadly rampage involving hundreds of arson attacks in the West Bank. One Palestinian man, 37 year old Samih al-Aqtash, was killed. The settlers were protected by the Israeli army during their rampage.

According to Al Jazeera, "At least 390 Palestinians were injured in the settler rampage across the villages of Huwara, Zaatara, Burin and Asira al-Qibliya – all south of Nablus, the Palestinian Red Crescent said, adding that the majority were wounded from tear gas fired by the Israeli army." Furthermore the Palestinian health ministry reported stabbings

and beatings against Palestinian civilians. Witnesses of this rampage maintain that the Israeli army was coordinating with the rioters.

The broader context of the recent events is the illegal military occupation by Israel of the West Bank since 1967. According to International law both the West Bank and Gaza rightfully belong to Palestinians. Furthermore, Israel has allowed and encouraged its own citizens to settle on this land effectively stealing Palestinian Land. In that sense, Israel is always facilitating settler violence against Palestinians because its occupation is anything but peaceful. Palestinian witnesses say that they were even more active than usual on the 27.



According to Al Jazeera, "In a statement on December 15, the United Nations said, "2022 is the sixth year of consecutive annual increase in the number of Israeli settler attacks in the occupied West Bank." "Disturbing evidence of Israeli forces frequently facilitating, supporting and participating in settler attacks, makes

it difficult to discern between Israeli settler and state violence.

Armed and masked Israeli settlers are attacking Palestinians in their homes, attacking children on their way to school, destroying property and burning olive groves, and terrorising entire communities with complete impunity," the statement said. In

recent weeks, matters on the ground have become particularly tense after Israel carried out several large-scale raids in Palestinian cities, killing dozens of Palestinians."

Days before, Israel carried out one of its deadliest raids killing 11 Palestinians wounding 100 with live ammunition.

Islamabad High Court Upholds Death Penalty In Noor Mukadam Murder Case

by Rehan Qamar

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) in Pakistan announced its decision on the appeal challenging the conviction of Zahir Jaffer and others in the infamous Noor Muqaddam murder case on Monday. The court ruled that capital punishment of the primary suspect will remain in place. Jaffer's conviction of life in prison after murdering 27-year-old Muqaddam was changed to capital punishment on Dec. 21.

A two-member bench of the divisional bench, comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, issued the verdict after an appeal was filed against the punishment. The court's decision for the double death sentence came after evidence revealed Jaffer both raped and murdered Muqaddam.

He had previously received a 25-year imprisonment sentence with hard labour and a fine of Rs0.2 million after the rape was proven. Others were also implicated in

the crime including Jan Muhammad and Muhammad Iftikhar — the gardener and security guard at Jaffer's house — who were awarded 10 years of imprisonment.

Muqaddam's case made national headlines after the 27-year-old woman was found dead at the residence of the primary suspect, Jaffer in July 2021. Several protests and other calls for justice ensued when details of the case revealed not only incidents of domestic violence but sexual assault.

According to the victims father, Jaffer killed Noor with a sharp instrument and severed her head.

After a first information report (FIR) was registered under Section 302 (premeditated murder) of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) on behalf of Muqaddam's father — former Pakistani ambassador Shaukat Ali Mukadam — Jaffer was arrested with a murder weapon and bloodstained clothes from the crime scene on the day of the killing.



The trial occurred over the period of four months. The court ac-

quitted other suspects including Jaffer's parents, Zakir Jaffer and

Ismat Adamjee, who had previously been connected to the murder.



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Death Toll Rises Above 50,000 After Turkey, Syria Earthquakes

The number of people killed by the earthquakes that struck Turkey and Syria earlier this month has now passed 50,000, according to the latest figures from both countries.

In Turkey alone, 44,218 people died as a result of the earthquakes, the country's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) said on Friday, while the latest announced death toll in Syria was 5,914.

The first earthquake on February 6 that hit southeastern Turkey and northern Syria measured a magnitude of 7.7 and a second, a little later, measured 7.6. The region has been rocked by more than 9,000 aftershocks since, according to the AFAD.

Nearly 240,000 rescue workers, including volunteers, continue to work in the 11 quake-hit provinces in Turkey. Some of the areas affected by



the quakes were initially difficult to access but recovery efforts continue and casualty numbers are rising as they progress.

There have been no reports of survivors being rescued in recent days. Nearly 530,000 people have been evacuated from the disaster area

in Turkey alone and the Turkish government has said that 173,000 buildings have so far been recorded as collapsed or severely damaged, with

more than 1.9 million people taking refuge in temporary shelters or hotels and public facilities.

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In Groundbreaking Ruling, Middle Eastern Islamic Council Declares 'Fatwa' Against Hamas

By Ruth Marks Eglash
| from Fox News

In a groundbreaking ruling, an official Islamic legislative body based in the Arab world declared a "fatwa," or a legal opinion, against the Islamist militant group Hamas Thursday, calling its treatment of millions of Palestinians living under its rule in the Gaza Strip "inhumane" and urging the terrorist organization and its followers to immediately give up arms, sit down and make peace.

The unprecedented declaration, published by the Islamic Fatwa Council, a non-government body of Shiite, Sunni and Sufi clerics headquartered in the Iraqi spiritual capital of Najaf, states that Hamas, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, "bears responsibility for its own reign of corruption and terror against Palestinian civilians within Gaza" and deems "it prohibited to pray for, join, support, finance or fight on behalf of Hamas."

"As an Islamic legal body, we take note of the condition of the oppressed all over the world," Muhammad Ali Al-Maqdisi, a cleric for the council, said in a video statement shared with Fox News Digital.

"We have seen what Gaza has been subjected to under Hamas' rule. We have also seen the atrocities which, in our view, have been perpetrated against Palestinians — faithful and unarmed civilians — who have neither strength nor recourse. And, so, we believed it was our Islamic obligation to aid the oppressed."

Palestinian members of the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Hamas movement, take part in a gathering Jan. 31, 2016, in Gaza City to pay tribute to fellow militants who died after a tunnel collapsed in the Gaza Strip. (Mahmud Hams/AFP via Getty Images)

Al-Maqdisi, who also serves as the council's official spokesman,



added, "This is what our religion commands of us. Our faith, in its wisdom, enjoins us to be the enemy of the oppressor and an aid to the oppressed. That is why the fatwa was issued against Hamas."

According to the council, the decision to issue the legal ruling, which while being non-binding is considered highly influential in the Muslim world, came after the publication of a series of video testimonies from ordinary civilians in Gaza published last month by the U.S.-based Center for Peace Communications.

The series, "Whispered In Gaza," which used animation and voice-altering technology to protect the identity of the Gaza-based speakers, offered a rare and unfiltered glimpse into life in the poverty-stricken, embattled Palestinian enclave and highlighted the anger and fears ordinary people there have toward their autocratic Hamas rulers.

Hamas, a designated terrorist organization according to the U.S., EU and Israel, has maintained an iron-clad grip on Gaza since violently taking over the territory in 2007 after Israel unilaterally withdrew in 2005. The group, which receives funding and training from Iran, imposes a strict Islamic code on its 2 million-plus residents as it continues to engage in fighting Israel, including firing

endless rounds of rockets and incendiary devices into Israeli territory and mass protests along the border fence.

Israel, together with Egypt on its southern border, continues to maintain a tight civilian and military blockade over the area, controlling the flow of goods and humans in and out of the Strip and responding to attacks perpetrated by Hamas and other militant Palestinian groups.

Joseph Braude, founder and president of the Center for Peace Communications, which created some 25 video testimonies, told Fox News Digital a member of the council's unit reached out to his organization for confirmation on the authenticity of the digitalized accounts.

"We responded, as we had done with several of our partnering media outlets, by organizing a secure private screening of the original footage for the researchers," Braude told Fox News Digital.

Grand Ayatollah Fadhil al-Budairi, one of the three chairmen of the Fatwa Council, said in a separate video statement that, after seeing the evidence, the "Islamic authority stands with the oppressed Palestinian people."

"We do not accept that any harm be done to them, whether it comes from Israel or from Palestinian governing elements, whether

they be from Hamas or others," he said. "The Palestinian people have suffered enough, and we do not accept that this oppression continues. We implore the Islamic and humanitarian organizations to aid in the preservation and protection of human rights in the Palestinian context."

While the fatwa marks the first time any accredited Islamic legislative body has explicitly declared Hamas to be illegitimate from the vantage point of Islamic law, it follows similar rulings by the UAE Fatwa Council and the Council of Senior Scholars of Saudi Arabia against the Muslim Brotherhood movement and all of its branches, declaring them terrorist organizations "that defame Islam and operate in opposition to mainstream Islamic unity, theology and jurisprudence."

For Hamas, a Sunni Muslim organization, the ruling by a council led by a Sunni mufti of stature — Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdullah al-Dheeban — could have deep consequences, and the fact the council also includes al-Budairi, a Shiite cleric, is a severe blow to Hamas' main backer Iran.

"As Hamas is an organization that defines itself along religious Islamic lines, this fatwa represents a direct challenge to Hamas' legitimacy and undermines its claim to represent

Islam," Ghaith al-Omari, the senior Palestinian affairs expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said of the significance of the fatwa from a political standpoint.

"It may not immediately impact its rule over Gaza since it maintains this rule by force. But in the longer term, such a pronouncement represents a serious challenge to Hamas' narrative," he said.

Al-Maqdisi said the council was hopeful Muslims worldwide would embrace its position and put support for the ordinary citizens who live in Gaza above its rulers.

Members of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Palestinian Hamas Islamist movement in the Gaza Strip, take part in a rally to commemorate the martyrs of the last battle between Hamas and Israel May 24, 2021. (Mohammed Talatene/picture alliance via Getty Images)

"We are used to everyone appearing to support Hamas, but in reality, many ordinary people do not support Hamas' actions," he said in his statement. "Perhaps some governments support it because they have political interests, but we are not politicians, and we do not tie our judgments to political interests. What matters to us is supporting the oppressed in Gaza."

Al-Maqdisi added that it was time for Hamas to lay down its arms and seek peace.

"To Hamas and its followers, I say, you have taken up arms since 1948 — nearly 75 years. In that time, thousands of innocents have been killed," he said. "My advice now is why not take up the weapons of peace and sit at the table of dialogue. ... Seek peace and urge those who support you to earn the embrace of your fellow citizens and end this senseless killing."

Countries Cut Aid To UN Agency Assisting Rohingya After Fire Further Displaces Thousands

By Yousuf Ali

On March 7, the World Food Program announced that it was going to decrease food aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, a country where hundreds of thousands of refugees are. Rohingya are an ethnic group native to the Rakhine State in Myanmar who have had to flee genocide in their own country enabled the by the country's military and perpetrated in the name of Buddhism. The cuts are due to decreases in aid by countries which were previously helping to keep the program growing. This is despite please by the organization itself and the Bangladeshi government.

According to Al Jazeera, "More than one million Rohingya refugees live in camps in Cox's Bazar, most having fled a military-led crackdown in Myanmar in 2017. The United Nations and the Bangladesh government on Tuesday called for more international aid to help the Rohingya in what has turned into the world's largest refugee camp. "The response plan that has been launched today is asking for \$883m from the international community," Shahariar Sadat, an academic at Dhaka's BRAC University.' Furthermore Doctors Without Borders warned that the cut would risk the health of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya. Furthermore, the aid cut comes despite a fire which left thousands homeless further adding to the plight of these refugees.

The dense and congested nature of the camps makes them vulnerable to serious damage if a fire starts enabling it to spread quickly before being put out. The fire was in Southeastern Bangladesh and left 12,000 refugees homeless and destroyed 2,000 shelters. As of writing, the precise cause is not known and is being investigated.

According to Al Jazeera, "Fires often break out in the crowded camp with makeshift structures. A massive blaze in March

2021 killed at least 15 refugees and destroyed more than 10,000 homes. Resident Shafiur Rahman, 24, urged the authorities to provide better facilities. "Our homes were torched in Myanmar. Now we are going through the same here," he said. Amnesty International also called on the Bangladesh government to provide safer accommodation for the refugees. "The government should recognise the danger of keeping



large communities in unsafe, over-crowded

conditions and take steps to provide adequate and safe housing to the Rohingya community," Yasasmin Kaviratne, the organisation's South Asia regional campaigner, said."

Meanwhile, Myanmar is now under military rule with no prospects of improving treatment of the Rohingya. For that reason, it's unlikely they will be able to return to Myanmar any time soon.



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It's Time To Stop Erasing Black Muslim Americans From The Story Of Islam In The US

By Salima Suswell

Reposted from Religion News Service

Ninety-seven years ago, Carter G. Woodson began his campaign to initiate Negro History Week, which would later become Black History Month, to celebrate the rich history of African Americans' contribution to this country. But even then, the legacy of Black Muslim Americans was at times intentionally left out.

Islam was largely introduced to the United States during the trans-Atlantic slave trade as West African captives were brought to the shores of the Carolinas and Virginia to be sold as chattel for free labor. As their feet, shackled, settled in the dirt of an unknown land, they struggled not only to keep their human dignity intact in a slavery system that was developed to destroy it, they struggled to hold onto their layered identities. Their tribal identity, their language, their traditions — and, for many, their worship and their practice of Islam — was taken away in order to make them docile and obedient to inhumane treatment.

I have said often that the silencing of Islam from the historical narrative of Africans and Afro-descendants in America today is irresponsible and dangerous. This is especially troubling since it was the Black struggle for freedom in America that opened up its borders to our brothers and sisters from abroad. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which guaranteed equal treatment in society to African Americans, directly led to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that vastly expanded immigration to America from Muslim-majority countries.

African American Muslims make up approximately 20% to 25% of the Muslim American population, often leading the way for all Muslims in the area of civil activism and the pursuit of justice for all. Following



Emgage Michigan workers organize before knocking on doors in Detroit suburbs before August 2022 primaries. Photo courtesy of Emgage



Minnesota state Rep. Ilhan Omar, center, celebrates after her congressional 5th District primary victory on Aug. 14, 2018, in Minneapolis. (Mark Vancleave/Star Tribune via AP)

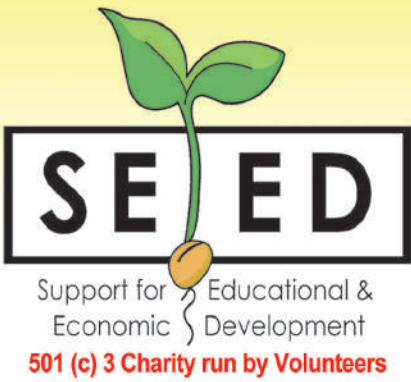
9/11, African American Muslim communities calmed the fears of their

immigrant brothers and sisters who had never experienced such discrimi-

nation and hatred, teaching them how to survive what African Americans,

both Muslim and of other

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Terror Law In India Haunts Muslims Jailed Since 2020 For Delhi Riots

By Hanan Zaffar and Danish Pandit

Al Jazeera

Saima Saleem, 27, has been waiting for hours on a bench outside a court of law in New Delhi, her eyes glued to a corridor as she waits for her father, Mohammad Saleem Khan, to appear.

Khan, 49, was arrested three years ago for rioting and murder during the religious riots in the Indian capital, in which 53 people – most of them Muslims – were killed. The courts provided him bail in both the cases.

But Khan continues to languish in jail as he has not been able to secure bail in a case under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), a controversial anti-terror law that has been used against Khan and several other Muslims accused of allegedly “pre-planning” the riots.

“My father is innocent. He was a prominent social worker in the community who helped people and he was targeted for that,” Saima told Al Jazeera while waiting for her father to arrive at the Karkardooma court.

“People now treat us like terrorists even though everyone knows all these charges are politically and communally motivated,” she said.

Police photograph burnt-out property owned by Muslims in Delhi, India.

Police in New Delhi photograph burnt out properties owned by Muslims in a riot-hit area [File: Danish Siddiqui/Reuters]

UAPA, termed by critics and rights groups as a draconian legislation, was amended in 2019 by the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government to allow authorities to declare an individual a “terrorist” and detain them without trial for months, sometimes years. Previously, the “terrorist” tag was reserved only for groups or organisations.

The government last year informed the parliament that nearly 4,700 people were arrested under the

law between 2018 and 2020, but only 149 were found guilty – a conviction rate of nearly 3 percent.

Police booked at least 18 Muslims, including student leaders and activists such as Khalid Saifi, Umar Khalid and Miran Haider, under the UAPA, alleging a “larger conspiracy” to create religious tensions – a claim rubbished by legal and rights experts.

“The reason why these people are still in jail in spite of charges being dismissed on so many grounds is that they have been booked under a draconian law like UAPA which calls itself an anti-terror law but has always been used to suppress dissent,” rights activist Kavita Krishnan told Al Jazeera.

“Under this law, it is difficult to get bail so the police just need to charge people under UAPA and delay the trial by saying that they are investigating and so you are likely to remain in prison for many years,” she said.

Police ‘selectively targeting’ Muslims

Saleem’s allegation that the police investigation into the Delhi riots is being conducted on religious lines is not an isolated voice.

Critics and several international rights groups have accused the Indian authorities of framing members of the Muslim community for instigating the violence, which erupted after right-wing Hindu groups targeted peaceful sit-in protests against a recently-introduced citizenship law.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) allowed non-Muslims from India’s neighbouring countries to secure Indian citizenship if they arrived in India before December 2014. Critics said the law violated India’s secular constitution and the United Nations experts called it “fundamentally discriminatory”.

The passage of the law triggered unprecedented protests by India’s Muslims, with a mainly



Police in New Delhi photograph burnt out properties owned by Muslims in a riot-hit area [File: Danish Siddiqui/Reuters]



In this February 27, 2020 photo, a boy stands inside a mosque torched during Delhi riots [File: Altaf Qadri/AP]

women-led sit-in at New Delhi’s Shaheen Bagh being the epicentre. Meanwhile, several BJP leaders made inflammatory speeches – even threatening violence – and called to forcefully

disperse the protesters. The riots that followed – which many government critics termed as an anti-Muslim pogrom – led to the widespread destruction of property and displacement of

thousands of people, mostly Muslims, in the northeastern part of the Indian capital. Mosques, homes and businesses were burned and looted.

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Terror Law In India

“The people who actually gave hate speeches and instigated the riots, that include BJP leaders, are still free. They have not spent a single day in prison. Those imprisoned are Muslims who were involved in peaceful sit-ins against a law which threatened to disenfranchise them,” activist Krishnan told Al Jazeera.

Al Jazeera reached out to a senior BJP spokesman in New Delhi, but he refused to comment on the story.

In a report on the Delhi riots, the United States-based Human Rights Watch said last year the police investigations into the violence were “marked by bias, delays, inaccuracy, lack of proper evidence, and failure to follow proper procedures”.

Delhi riots

In this February 27, 2020 photo, a boy stands inside a mosque torched during Delhi riots [File: Altaf Qadri/AP]

Moreover, the Delhi

Police, controlled by the federal government, were also accused of inaction and selective targeting of Muslims during the violence. In one glaring instance, police officers were seen throwing stones towards Muslims along with the Hindu mobs during the riots.

“The police were leading the mobs in throwing stones at Muslims and also vandalising properties,” Muslim activist Aasif Mujtaba, who has worked on the rehabilitation of the survivors of the riots, told Al Jazeera. “During the violence, police were at the back protecting the rioters who were rampaging at the front.”

Many rioters confessed to the media that the police helped them attack Muslims during the violence. “We did not have enough stones here, so the police brought some and told us to throw them,” a man told BBC in a recent documentary on the aftermath of the violence.

When asked about the allegations, Suman Nalwa, deputy commissioner of police for public relations

in New Delhi, told Al Jazeera, “I can’t comment on the issue. Everything is in public domain. You can check the news reports.”

But the courts have also termed police investigations in many Delhi violence cases as “far-cical” and “callous”. In September 2021, a Delhi court released Muslim men in a case of rioting for lack of evidence and “failure of the investigating authorities to conduct a proper investigation”. A month later, the judge who gave the verdict was transferred for unreported reasons.

‘Government wants us to be silent’

Syed Tasneef Hussain, 58, is unsure when his 30-year-old daughter Gulfishan Fatima would be out of prison. Following the Delhi riots, Fatima was charged with multiple allegations, including rioting, murder and inciting communal violence.

However, her parents say she was targeted for leading a peaceful women-led protest against the CAA in Jaffarabad,

a mainly Muslim neighbourhood in northeast Delhi.

“It has been three years since she has not been home. I wish she is back soon,” Hussain told Al Jazeera at his residence. “They [government] want us to be silent and devoid of any voice. We are being harassed and intimidated for no reason. What is our mistake? That we are Muslims?”

Like Khan, Fatima has also received bail in multiple cases but continues to be in jail under the UAPA. Activists say protesters such as Fatima and Khan are being punished for merely opposing the government’s policies.

“We have very fine young people in prisons under UAPA for years without their trials beginning. People who clearly instigated the hate despite our intervention in the highest courts of the land haven’t been arrested. On the other hand, they created flimsy charges against people who were prominent in the anti-CAA protests,” prominent rights activist

Harsh Mander told Al Jazeera.

MR Shamshad, a lawyer in India’s Supreme Court who has taken up several Delhi riots cases, said many people were charged without evidence.

“To initiate criminal trials, you need substantive evidence but in most of these cases those substantive evidences are missing,” he told Al Jazeera.

Shamshad said the UAPA is a “draconian law which should be applied sparingly in very exceptional circumstances”. “But it appears that in Delhi riots cases, it has been unreasonably imposed upon many people,” he added.

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Erasing Black Muslim

faith traditions, have lived with since the end of the Civil War.

If non-Black Muslim Americans could get over their anti-Blackness and sincerely understand that Islam has existed in America since the nation’s inception vis-a-vis enslaved West African Muslims, we would have much stronger arguments against policies like the Muslim Ban — which fallaciously perpetuate the idea that Muslims and Islam are new and foreign to America. Rather, Muslim Americans are an essential component of America; the contributions of enslaved Black Muslim Americans can be gleaned even through Blues music, which modern musicologists are now postulating may derive from the tune of the Islamic call to prayer, the adhan.

In this light, arguments in favor of policies like the Muslim Ban become even more absurd; Muslims and Islam cannot

be banned from this country because Islam is an inherently American religion.

Three years ago, I wrote an op-ed for the Philadelphia Tribune stating that Muslim Americans will never become as powerful as we can be until our communities learn to work better together. This means working with Black Muslim American communities and recognizing their value and their needs.

Emgage Michigan workers organize before knocking on doors in Detroit suburbs before August 2022 primaries. Photo courtesy of Emgage

Emgage Michigan workers organize before knocking on doors in Detroit suburbs before August 2022 primaries. Photo courtesy of Emgage

Over the past few years, we have seen strides in this area, such as Emgage’s Million Muslim Votes initiative, which helped turn out an unprecedented 1 million-plus Muslim

American voters. The Black Muslim American vote in Philadelphia largely contributed to President Biden’s victory in Pennsylvania, which helped him win the 2020 election. In 2022, during the midterm elections, once again Pennsylvanian Muslims helped to make history, endorsing John Fetterman for U.S. senator. The list goes on, too long to measure, as Black Muslim Americans continue to pave their own path as a powerful bloc.

These achievements are exciting but are just the beginning. It’s not enough to recognize that this unified community is possible: We have seen it is, and it is strong when it works together. We now have to go a step further. It’s not enough simply to acknowledge the power of the whole Muslim American community. We now must recognize the particular excellence of the Black Muslim American community. In this community is true excellence that should be celebrated through all communi-

ties, not just the Muslim American community.

This community has long been underrepresented and under-covered in the wider Muslim American community and deserves to be celebrated. The power of the community isn’t just in voting power. It touches all fields — education, health care, climate and environmental action, law, politics and more.

In education there is Dr. Khalid Mu’min, recently appointed secretary of education for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Sharif El-Mekki, founder of the Center for Black Educator Development who is paving the way for Black male educators and working to eradicate the issue of the school-to-prison pipeline. In health care, there is Dr. Safiyya Shabazz, owner and medical director of Fountain Medical Associates, and Dr. Noor Jihan Abdul-Haqq, a pediatrician celebrated for her outstanding work in service to low-income families in Oklahoma City. For climate/environment we have Dr.

Katera Moore, who was recently appointed as the state of Delaware’s first environmental justice coordinator. In law we have Raheemah Abdulaleem, who serves as the general counsel and special assistant to President Biden, and Intisar Rabb, professor of law at Harvard Law School.

Minnesota state Rep. Ilhan Omar, center, celebrates after her congressional 5th District primary victory on Aug. 14, 2018, in Minneapolis. Omar will be the first woman in U.S. Congress to wear a hijab.(Mark Vancleave/Star Tribune via AP)

Minnesota state Rep. Ilhan Omar, center, celebrates after her congressional 5th District primary victory on Aug. 14, 2018, in Minneapolis. (Mark Vancleave/Star Tribune via AP)

There are a number of history-making Black Muslim Americans who have been elected to public office, including Minnesota Attorney

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Month Of Ramadan

around the world. It is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, during which Muslims fast (refrain from eating and drinking) from dawn until sunset. The fast is observed as a form of worship and is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

The blessed month of Ramazan started this year on March 23rd and ends on April 21st,2023. This month, the Quran, the holy book of Islam, was revealed to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in 610 AD. Muslims fast during the month of Ramzan. It is an act of worship that helps Muslims to feel closer to Allah and strengthens their faith. It also helps to resist temptation and avoid sinful behavior. They do this through fasting, praying, reciting the Quran, making their actions purposeful and selfless, and refraining from lying, gossiping, and fighting.

I remember that during my childhood, the excitement we experienced was sighting a new moon at the beginning of the month of fasting-Ramazan. Adults and children look forward to Ramazan for fasting, tarweeh prayers at night in Masjid, socialization with family and friends, and celebrating the major Eid festival at the end of the month of Ramadan.

God says in Quran,” O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, so that you may attain Taqwa.” (2:183) Taqwa simply means to protect oneself from the Anger of Allah (swt) and His Punishment. The Muttaqun

are those who believe in Allah and are involved in the affairs of humanity and avoid God’s displeasure. Fasting prepares Muslims to transform spiritually, focusing on attachment to Allah and, by the consciousness of behavior, avoiding activities that are prohibited during fasting. This results in achieving peace and tranquility.

Islamic faith is composed of unique rituals to bring discipline to human life. Fasting is one of the five key rituals that Muslims around the world observe. The essence of fasting is to become humble, simple, and free from ill will, anger, meanness, and hatred. Fasting is regarded as an annual training requires one to abstain from food, drink, and intimacy, but also avoid ill actions such as backbiting, and hurting the feelings of others from dawn to dusk, every day for a month.

Habits are a difficult thing to change, especially if they have been a part of your life for a very long time. During Ramadan, our experience of self-control gives us confidence that we can control ourselves and change our habits. If you can refrain from food, and negative and inappropriate thoughts, this will give you the strength and self-confidence to kick all your bad habits. If we do not discipline ourselves and control our bad habits we are not getting the benefits of fasting

True fasting is self-purification, which leads to the development of human values such as generosity, patience, kindness, forgiveness, mercy, justice, and empathy – that are neces-

sary for the success of self and the community. One of the purposes of religion is to develop the highest moral standards through the purification of self, beliefs, and behavior. Fasting gives us an opportunity to attain piety and purification of self. During the state of fasting, one experiences hunger and thirst. It teaches Muslims to be more empathetic towards those who are less fortunate and appreciate the blessings that they have in their lives, and develop a sense of mercy for those who are less fortunate. Ramzan is also a time to share one’s wealth with the needy- it is a charity called Zaka, the 4th pillar of Islam. It is a religious duty that very Muslim family takes out 2.5% of the value of their assets and passes it on to the needy people in community, deserving family members,deserving Muslims and non Muslims.

Muslims take advice from the Prophet, who said, “If one slanders you or aggresses against you, say I am fasting.” This is the best way to control your anger and negative emotions.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) once said.”There are so many of fasting people who do not get anything out of fasting except thirst and hunger. These are the people who fast but do not refrain from bad behavior

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said “God has no need for the hunger or thirst of someone who hurts others, violates their dignity or usurps their rights”

Fasting has been associated with several potential physical ben-

efits. Fasting can lead to a reduction in calorie intake, which can lead to weight loss. Fasting has been found to improve insulin sensitivity, which can help with blood sugar control. Some studies have shown that fasting can help lower blood pressure, reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease. Fasting has been associated with improved immunity, and a reduction in inflammation, which is linked to several chronic diseases such as arthritis, cancer, and heart disease. Some studies have suggested that fasting can improve cognitive function and may even reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s. It’s important to note that the physical benefits of fasting may vary depending on the individual and the type of fasting, and fasting should always be done under the guidance of a healthcare professional.

It must be emphasized that one must not fast just as a ritual. and consume excessive food at night for self-pleasure. God says in Quran “It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness – to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend wealth, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for setting the slaves free; to establish prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient in tribulation and adversity, and in times of panic (or stress). Such are the peo-

ple of truth and they are al-muttaqoon. (2:177)

In Ramadan, fasting brings Muslims together as a community, with shared experiences of fasting and breaking the fast together. It creates a sense of unity and brotherhood as Muslims come together to worship and share meals.

For fasting to be truly universal, its benefits of strengthening human relations must be extended beyond the ties with Muslims to people of all faiths. Fasting is meant to promote a sense of what it means to be truly human, and its universality is reflected by extending cordial relationship to Muslims of all sects and people of all faiths. That is indeed the wisdom expressed in Qur’aan, Al-Hujurat, Surah 49:13: “O mankind! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. The noblest of you, in sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Allah Knows and is Aware.”

Overall, fasting in Ramadan is an act of worship that offers spiritual benefits that go beyond just abstaining from food and drink. It is a time for self-reflection, purification, and spiritual growth that can have a profound impact on a Muslim’s faith and life.

Dr. Ahmed is the former Professor of Psychiatry at South Western Medical school, chairman emeritus MCC for Human Services, and president Institute of Medieval and Post Medieval studies. He can be reached at mbahmed05@yahoo.com.

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Muslim Inmates

men in prayer.

The lawsuit said, Sgt. Carl Hart — a prison guard who told Muslim prisoners he had PTSD from having been “trained to kill Muslims in Afghanistan,” — told officers to use violence and mace to stop the men from praying.

One inmate was kneeling with eyes closed trying to finish his prayer was

picked up and slammed into the wall, the lawsuit alleges. Other inmates were also slammed into walls and doors as they were taken to the medical bay, where inmate names and numbers were taken.

The inmates were denied any medical evaluation or treatment.

The corrections department did not immediately return a request seeking comment from the Associated Press on

Friday.

Praying without shoes as required by their faith, the inmates were barefoot or in socks when they were forced to walk through snow and mud instead of allowing them to follow the paved sidewalk.

Some of the inmates were forcibly stripped down to their underwear according to the lawsuit. One inmate was allowed to take off his own clothes. Two inmates were al-

lowed to keep wearing their pepper-spray-saturated clothes.

The inmates were told they had each been charged with a disciplinary infraction for “acts of organized disobedience” by three or more offenders, a major conduct violation usually reserved for riot organizers.

Those charges would eventually be reduced after each of the inmates involved was called into a

cursory hearing.

Two days after the incident, ERDCC Deputy Warden Matt Raymond spoke to more than 70 Muslim inmates to address the violent incident.

“[Rayomnd] confirmed that the guards’ actions were wrong and claimed that the guards would be punished,” the lawsuit said.

Cont. from page 1.
Boycott Israeli Dates

one child every five days. “The Israeli government is increasing home demolitions at an alarming rate and has promised to expand illegal settlements at an unprecedented level,” it added. FOA stressed that international leading human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, “have said that Israel is committing the crime of apartheid, but European states are

failing to impose sanctions on Israel and uphold international law.” Joarder said: “It’s time to renew our commitment to BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) this Ramadan. We must remember that as a community we are powerful — we can make our voices heard through the simple act of putting Israeli dates back on the shelf.” He added: “All we need to do is #CheckTheLabel and not buy dates from apartheid Israel.” A Day of Action to



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Ramadan is a month away!

Imagine if, by the end of #Ramadan, all dates from Israel were left on shelves across the UK and Europe 🇬🇧🇪🇺

It would send a powerful message of strength and unity against Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people.

➡️ Boycott Israeli dates

encourage Muslims to “check the label” has been called at UK mosques on March 17,

the last Friday before Ramadan. There will also be an online awareness drive on the final

weekend before the holy month.

Cont. from page 1.
El Hajj Imam Abdullah El-Amin

College of Detroit and in 1979, he received a BS degree in Biology and Chemistry. He began his professional career as a Medical Technologist and worked 20 years in this field in various laboratories and hospitals in the Detroit area. Imam Abdullah was born a Christian and served as an acolyte at Plymouth United Church of Christ under Rev. Nicholas Hood Sr.. In 1976, he converted to Islam and joined the Masjid Wali Muhammad community, under the leadership of Imam Warith Deen Muhammad. He also maintained a relationship with Plymouth Church during his lifetime. In 1983, along with his

wife Dr. Cheryl El-Amin, and other members of the community, Imam Abdullah co-founded the Muslim Center of Detroit, his second home. The Masjid was formed as a center for religious and outreach ministries. Imam Abdullah is well known for his focus on interfaith activities and community activism. He was frequently called upon to connect and engage communities around the world. He served as a delegate for various projects in Tanzania, Zanzibar, Palestine and the Philippines. Imam Abdullah made Hajj in 1991. In his role as Imam of the Muslim Center, meaningful relationships were formed with different faiths throughout Metro-Detroit. He served as the first executive

director of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Michigan (CIOM), now known as the Michigan Muslim Community Council (MMCC). He was a long-standing columnist in the Muslim Observer Newspaper and had a following of thousands of readers. This led to publishing his book, The Spiritual Adam: Your Guide to Power and Serenity. He founded Crescent Janazah Funeral Services after recognizing the need for end-of-life quality care for Muslims in the Metro-Detroit area. In this capacity, he assisted hundreds, if not thousands, of families of all nationalities in their time of need. In addition to leadership roles in religious areas, Imam El-Amin was a regular participant in

civic engagement. He was active in leadership roles in the Detroit political arena beginning in 1994. He served as a Neighborhood City Hall Manager under Mayor Dennis Archer. In 2009, he ran for Detroit City Council. Although he did not win his election, his campaign successfully brought political attention to the Muslim community. Even throughout his illness, he continued to advocate for the continued success and improvement of the Muslim Center. His beloved wife of 41 years, Dr. Cheryl El-Amin, and his sister, Sonja Holland-Allen preceded him in death. Left to cherish his memory are his children; Maurice Tariq El-Amin (Sheila), Zarinah Iman El-Amin, Dr. Idris Bilal El-Amin

(Colette); grandchildren, Asya Ziyad, Sufyan Naeem, Isa Naeem, Isra Naeem, Joshua Holland El-Amin, Amir El-Amin; his sister, Caroline Holland-Pruitt (Benjamin) and her children, Benjamin (Skip) Leon Pruitt (Michelle) and Paunice Irene Savage (Patrick); nephew, Christopher Charles Allen (Yolanda); his aunt, Betty De Loney Shead; his cousin, Marvin Garland (Pat); and many cousins, friends, and spiritual family. A heartfelt thank you to the loving caregivers who served him with devotion and compassion; special recognition is given to those who provided comfort in his last days: Love Rose, Hamza Ballard, Bari Beyah-Alwan and Linda Carroll.

Cont. from page 12.
Erasing Black Muslim

General Keith Ellison; Pennsylvania State Senator Sharif Street, who is also chairman of the PA Democratic Party; Congresswoman Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.); Congressman André Carson (D-Ind.); State Representative Mauree Turner (D-Okla.); State Representative Madinah Wilson-Anton (D-Del.); and Judge Fatima El-Amin (Ga.), who was recently appointed as chief judge of the Dekalb County Juvenile Court. This list is not

exhaustive but includes a small fraction of the talent represented within the Black Muslim community. Make no mistake: We can create an America that is more conducive to Black Muslim American excellence and inclusivity. Emgage, where I work, is one organization doing meaningful work to bridge the gap. Throughout Black History Month, we have made it a point to celebrate Black Muslim history makers and hosted a town hall to honor the legacy of Black

Muslims, as well as a private luncheon in D.C. with members of Congress and Black Muslim leaders from across the nation. Beyond Black History Month, Emgage will continue to develop our African American Policy Advisory Group, a collective of African American influencers, academics, policy experts and community organizers convened for the purpose of forming a policy platform of important issues to the African American community by the African

American community. Salima Suswell. Photo courtesy of Emgage Salima Suswell. Photo courtesy of Emgage Let’s take this Black History Month to truly celebrate Black Muslim American excellence and commit ourselves to celebrating and supporting these individuals, particularly as they demonstrate their power in the years to come (including during the 2024 election). Let’s work to cultivate a society that supports and uplifts Black Muslim

communities and condemns anti-Blackness everywhere. (Salima Suswell serves as national senior organizing advisor and Pennsylvania executive director for Emgage, the nation’s largest Muslim American civic engagement organization. She is a nationally renowned leader in advocacy and policy initiatives. The views expressed in this commentary do not necessarily reflect those of Religion News Service.)

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TURKEY & SYRIA

EARTHQUAKE DONATION APPEAL



On Monday 6th February 2023, two earthquakes of 7.8 and 7.5 magnitudes struck South East Türkiye (Turkey) & North West Syria. Almost 4,500 people have been confirmed dead so far, with the number rising by the hour.

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