



**PRESS RELEASE  
NO EMBARGO**

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### **AL JAMA-AH says women Muslim scholars must head local Shari'ah Courts**

The Al Jama-ah party has called on the United Ulema Council of South Africa (UUCSA) to allow for women Muslim scholars to 'head up' Shari'ah courts.

The party's leader and Member of Parliament Hon. Ganief Hendricks was addressing members of UUCSA at its Annual General Meeting held at the CTIEC (Cape Town Islamic Educational Centre) in Pelikan Park earlier today. The UUCSA members consists of: Muslim Judicial Council (MJC); Jamiatul Ulama KZN; Sunni Jamiatul Ulama; Sunni Ulama Council; Cape Town Ulama Board; Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre, Jamiatul Ulama South Africa; Council of Ulama Eastern Cape and the Northern Cape Ulama Council.

On Women's Day, 09 August 2022 the party launched its Interim Marriage Bill at Sandvlei in Macassar, Western Cape and the second launch will take place in Atteridgeville in Gauteng which will be attended by 150 African Muslim women.

Since the party won a seat in Parliament in 2019, Hendricks has been fighting to restore the dignity of Muslim women in South Africa through submitting three Muslim marital bills to the National Assembly. Should these bills become law, the Nikah (Islamic marriage ceremony) certificate when taken to the Department of Home Affairs will be validated with an accompanying SA Marriage Certificate.

With the recognition of the Nikah, a Muslim spouse will no longer be registered as "never married" on a death certificate; should the amendments to the Maintenance Act be approved, it will ensure that men should financially support their wives; it also guarantees that children will be granted financial security and all women will receive 'Travelling and Subsistence Allowance' to attend Maintenance Court hearings where they have the right to address unsettled matters; and in addition, the divorced women who contributed to the Third Estate, would qualify to benefit.

The party is of the view that our democratically elected government has dismally failed to address the concerns of our Muslim women. "Even though the latter participated in public events along with various stake holders such as UUCSA, the appointed officials did not satisfy anyone to solve this matter and everyone witnessed the Muslim Marriages Bill that should have restored the women's dignity; this, alas, was not to be," says Hendricks.

Apart from a Bill for interim arrangements the party will be setting up a pro bona desk to assist women. "The party wants to see the establishment of a Shari'ah Court managed by women Islamic scholars under the supervision of a bench of Qadis (Muslim judges)," he adds.

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