



**PRESS RELEASE
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AL Jama-ah's webinar puts the ineffective Maintenance laws under the spotlight

The Al Jama-ah party will highlight the flaws in the provisions in Maintenance Act which fails to deliver justice to women, children, and the elderly.

The concerns were raised on Al Jama-ah's webinar on Saturday 14 August 2021 in honor of Women's Day under the theme, "Maintenance – Is the SA government failing women, children and the elderly." The webinar also forms part of Constituency work done by Al Jama-ah's leader and Member of Parliament, Honourable Ganief Hendricks.

Several social justice activists for the rights of women have called for amendments to be made to the Maintenance Act which will speed up the process of applications and deliver a fair and just rulings to especially women and children. Several issues raised include but not limited to:

- Courts are clogged with maintenance applications.
- Government's failure to respond or act on the unequal and ineffective Maintenance system.
- Lack of resources, staff shortages and proper investigation and application of maintenance matters.
- Lack of compassion and empathy towards applicants of maintenance
- Failure to fill up positions in maintenance offices
- Lack of and limited access to maintenance courts especially in rural areas.
- Magistrates and prosecutors are occupied with criminal matters and hence in attendance of maintenance matters
- Women are not receiving the necessary assistance from maintenance staff when making applications and are being bullied into accepting pittance for maintenance
- Lengthy delays and constant postponements of matters
- No time periods in place to ensure effective applications of maintenance.
- Transport fees and relief paid to men to attend court hearings but working women must pay their own transport fees and face losing a day's pay.
- Loss of jobs and income suffered by Applicants having to attend maintenance matters
- Children having reached maturity and maintenance still owing.





The party will submit a report on how the Maintenance Act is failing women seeking maintenance from men to the caucus of Women's Parliament and parliament. "We will ask the Women's Parliament to support the Constituency office research papers on the matter and hope this will lead to the much-needed amendments on provisions in the Act. It will be the first time during the country's 6 parliaments that a Parliamentary Constituency office has embarked on taking steps to amend hardships faced by women," he says.

Hendricks will also submit a question to Minister of Social Development Ms Lindiwe Zulu and the Presidency for immediate steps to be taken to speed up enquiries at the Maintenance Court and implementation of a timeline for complaints. "We will be urge government to develop a policy on maintenance while it is still busy with a policy on marriages. We further urge the sixth parliaments not to fail on this as in the case of the previous five parliaments," Hendricks adds.

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