



PRESS RELEASE NO EMBARGO

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AL JAMA-AH calls on the Airports Company South Africa to stop employing security tactics targeting Muslim women wearing headscarves at ‘security’ checkpoints:

Al Jama-ah strongly condemns the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) victimization of Muslim women passengers who are wearing the headscarves (*hijab*) and veiling of the face (*niqab*). For Muslim women, these garments are essential jurisprudentially and theologically; they symbolize their religious commitment to act modestly in public and in private.

The party views ACSA’s actions as a form of disrespect and a direct infringement on the ‘Rights of Muslim women.’ With regards to this discriminatory policy, let us not forget that their dignity has, for centuries, been harmed.

ACSA generated this self-made law in our democracy where ‘freedom of religion’ has been safeguarded. Despite this, it chose to force these women to take off their headscarves and, at the same time, undermine their self-respect and self-worth.

“We vow to vehemently oppose such discriminatory practices, it’s against the grain of our Constitution. Al Jama-ah is aware that there are certain forces aimed at stigmatizing Muslims for all the wrongdoings. Targeting Muslim women at airports is unacceptable especially in a country whose Constitution outlines the freedom of religious practices. It is detestable that ACSA views hijab-wearing women as a security threat,” says MP Advocate Shameemah Salie.

While the party has no objection to the usual security searches, it does not condone these methods; ones that force these women to observe discriminatory ‘security’ protocols. These are not only deplorable, but totally unacceptable! Our questions are: Is this another practice of Islamophobia within our democratic public spaces? Why has ACSA adopted such a demeaning approach?

It seems that they have mimicked the habits of European security outfits where Islamophobia has been rife. There they willfully humiliate rather than respect them and overlooking the fact that these women try to conform to their religious tradition. Another Question: have these security officers ever force a Christian nun to take off her ‘habit?’

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The answer is NO!

Let us be clear: Al Jama-ah abhors these double standards and will not allow these Muslim women (or any other) to be unfairly targeted. Such acts are direct attacks on Islam's noble practices! The party respectfully calls on ACSA to end its farcical practices immediately!

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