**BUDGET VOTE DEBATE: HOME AFFAIRS**

Thank You Honourable House Chair,

I must deeply commend our Hon Minister of Home Affairs who have opened his heart to listen to matters brought to him by Al Jama-ah. He indeed has the spirit of Ubuntu in him. The Minister will be leaving a legacy behind that he has started the process to restore the dignity of Muslim wives and children born out of the Nikah.

The Minister and his Department have now put processes in place that there are equity amongst all women in South Africa. One can, but only support this budget and we see that this started dramatic processes by the Department of Home Affairs. We also understand that the Department is keen to provide sensitivity training to their staff so they can better deal with the public. Al Jama-ah is confident that when this is done it will improve the image of South Africa, locally and internationally.

The Muslim community eagerly awaits immediate legal consequences for their Nikah and legislation to entrench this. Immediate relief has already started: the entry on death certificates of Muslims in a Nikah will now say ‘married’ and not the indignity of saying ‘never married’ even if they married for over 50 and 40 years. It cannot be that a community that has been in South Africa for over 350 years are discriminated against, even 29 years into our democracy.

Al Jama-ah applause the Constitutional Court, Parliament must not be in contempt of court. And we applaud the executive for interim arrangements to restore the dignity of Muslim wives. The founder of Islam in South Africa Shaykh Yusuf is a recipient of the companions of the Oliver Tambo medal in gold and Hajee Ozeer Ally, my grandmother’s dad gave the ANC its name; and Imam Abdullah Haron who was murdered while in detention for assisting resistance fighters of MK, PAC and Azapo. These national heroes’ struggles have not been in vain as their community’s dignity is set to be restored.

Al Jama-ah is grateful for the official opposition for their support of the Muslim Marriages Bill and for Hon Singh for his encouragement.

Al Jama-ah supports this budget as our women are getting back their dignity.

Thank You very much!

**MR M.G.E HENDRICKS**

**AL JAMA-AH LEADER IN PARLIAMENT**