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# The Friday Bulletin

The Weekly Muslim News Update



## Engagement best way to solve Muslim concerns-Sheikh Hammad



The managing director of Takaful Insurance of Africa Hassan Bashir presents a laptop to Maawi Muadh Muhammad the best student in last year's KSCSE examinations at WAMY High School during the prize giving day event on Saturday. On the left is the chairman of the school board Ahmed Hussein and looking on is the WAMY director Irshad Ibrahim

### Nairobi to host counter extremism conference

An international conference on countering terrorism and extremism is set to be held on June 25 in Nairobi. Addressing non-governmental organizations on Tuesday, Interior Principal Secretary Ambassador Monica Juma said the four-day event will be attended by over 300 regional and global participants.

She noted that the conference will focus on equipping and readying the country to develop improved strategies and responses to counter the threat of extremism that has gripped the country in the recent years. With the threat of terrorism and changing dynamics of extremist groups, she said it is imperative to effectively engage affected communities, the private sector, and media in the war against terrorism and radicalization.

"We intend that this meeting gives us good focus on our country Kenya and hope that we will have takeaways as people who are deal-

ing with this phenomenon. It will also help us strategies of engagement or responses to a phenomenon that we must deal with in order to secure this country," she said during a breakfast meeting organized by NGOs Coordination Board and Interior Ministry at a Nairobi hotel.

She said the recent finger pointing between the government and civil society is not helping in countering extremism and called for concerted efforts between the two. The conference similar to the White House Summit held early this year, among other things aims at addressing the drivers of extremism, narratives and counter narratives of extremism and developing community based programmes to counter extremism approaches.

Commenting on the surge of insecurity in North Eastern Kenya, the principal secre-

As a minority, Muslims do experience a myriad of challenges but through constant engagements with the government, these concerns can adequately be addressed.

The former Chief Kadhi Sheikh Hammad Muhammad Kassim stressed that while Muslims are aggrieved by some unwarranted actions from the government, he made it clear that there are better and acceptable approaches to address these issues rather than resorting to unjustified actions of violence as this is contrary to the guidelines from the Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.

"While it is true that Muslims have faced mistreatment on the basis of religion, there is no justification whatsoever to resort to illegal and unwarranted methods to address these grievances," he said during the prize giving day event at WAMY High School.

"We are Kenyans like other communities, if you have been discriminated against because of your religion, there are better ways to address these issues as the constitution does not discriminate Kenyans on the basis of religion or tribe," he added.

He strongly condemned those who chose the path of violence saying that such actions only serve to taint the image of Islam.

"Islam is not spread or defended by slaughtering innocent people. For ten years the Prophet peace be upon lived in Makkah and even during this period of intense oppression, he never taught Muslims to engage in wanton acts of violence," Sheikh Hammad explained.

At the same time, he said that it was important for the government to address the concerns of injustice and discrimination against Muslims saying that as citizens, their rights should as well be safeguarded and respected.

In his advice to the students, Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome who is a member of

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## Sincere actions needed in terror fight

In his Madaraka Day address to the nation, President Uhuru Kenyatta came close to admitting that the present strategy to contain terrorism has not brought the desired results. The head of state instead talked of another approach which will involve the government to work closely with parents, religious and community leaders in a de-radicalization programme aimed at dissuading young people to embrace ideologies which encourage hatred and violence.

The move by the head of state is laudable as it falls in tandem with the persistent calls from Muslim leaders about a better approach to fight the menace of terrorism, far different from the brutal actions which have been employed by state security agencies.

Disregarding rule of the law, extra judicial killings and disappearances, profiling and collective punishment have over the years been synonymous with the war on terrorism and these unconstitutional actions have only helped to build anger, resentment and mistrust towards the government among Muslims particularly young people who see a deliberate policy of victimization of the community.

The recent images which circulated over the social media where policemen were seen humiliating and whipping a group of youth in Yumbis area of Garissa district

are dastardly reminders of the policy of collective punishment of a community for the crimes carried out by a few rogue elements.

The state should move away from its heavy handedness approach and embrace engagement with local communities and put in place robust polices to bridge the existing culture of mistrust between the Muslim community and security agencies.

Addressing these problems requires sincere approaches which will reassure the community that the government is ready to open a new chapter of mutual relationship different from the policy of collective punishment where Muslims have come to feel that there are second class citizens.

The recent clamp down against two prominent Mombasa based human rights lobby groups however, sends out a worrying signal that the state is bent on pursuing the same unconstitutional approaches in the war on terror.

Haki Africa and the Muslim for Human Rights (MUHURI) have won a lot of admiration and respect especially in the Muslim community for their zealous efforts to speak out against the injustices perpetrated against citizens by law enforcement agencies.

Long before the government mooted plans for de-radicalisation programmes, the two organisations had already initiated such

plans and had been working closely with local political, religious and security leaders towards this programme to dissuade the minds of young people from wrong ideologies. It therefore, came as a disbelief that for their noble societal efforts, they were instead accused of having close links with terrorist networks. A sequence of actions followed which culminated in their licences of operation to be revoked by the Muhammad Fazul led NGO Coordination Board. Strangely, in the series of this drama, not a single piece of evidence even remotely linking the two organizations with terrorism was brought forward by the government. But the government still went ahead to manufacture other reasons to ensure that their activities were curtailed.

The move against the two organizations is a work of mischief and witch-hunt meant to silence the voices of Muslims to speak out against the arbitrary abuse of the rights of citizens.

These actions of finger pointing and blame game will not help in countering the problem of terrorism. What is needed is sincere and collaborative efforts on the part of the government to work closely with all stakeholders in addressing this problem which on an important note, should also involve taking a critical look at the causes of this problem.

## Engagement will solve Muslim concerns

Continued From Page 1

the Jamia Mosque Committee urged them to zealously guard the school's image and exhibit exemplary behavior while outside the school compound. "WAMY High School has established itself as model school of academic excellence in the country and it is your responsibility to protect its reputation by being good ambassadors of the school," he told the alumni and the current students.

In his remarks, senior presidential advisor Abdikadir Muhammad Hussein who was the chief guest said those promoting hatred and violence aimed at creating a wedge between Kenyans and urged the country to shun their insidious agenda by remaining united. "How can someone justify that it is right to kill innocent students who have done no harm to anyone," he asked while referring to the April 2 massacre of 147 people many of them students at Garissa University College.

He urged students to aspire at becoming good and responsible citizens who will positively transform the country. "Aspire to be doctors, lawyers, engineers and professionals who will work to uplift the society. This is the jihad we want," he said.

Speaking at the event, the director of World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) Irshad Ibrahim called for Muslims to invest more in education saying that this will further help the growth of education in the Muslim community. He said the organization was ready to partner with entrepreneurs in establishing and running schools which provide quality education. "This is an ibadah (act of worship) and also a business," he said.

During last year's, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations, WAMY High School topped the national charts in the ranking of Muslim schools. For the last two years, it has emerged the best performing school in Biology. For the last nine years it has consistently featured among the best performing schools in the country.



Sheikh Hammad Kassim

## FCB scoops regional bank prize

Shariah compliant financial institution First Community Bank (FCB) was voted as the leading Islamic bank in East Africa by the Dubai Based financial magazine Banker Africa. In the awards that were dominated by banks and financial institutions from Kenya, FCB was named as the Best Islamic Commercial Bank in East Africa.

More than 7,000 votes were cast across the 26 categories in the Banker Africa East Africa Awards 2015 by the readers of the magazine and the registered users of the financial website [www.cpifinancial.net](http://www.cpifinancial.net). The Banker Africa East Africa Awards, now in their second year seeks to promote excellence and best practice in financial services.

"The 26 Awards winners were chosen from some 220 nominations across all the categories by their peers in the banking and financial services sector. The winners of the Banker Africa East Africa Awards 2015 are, therefore, recognized not by a small jury but by the industry itself as being leaders in their fields. As such, their performance stands out in an increasingly competitive and exciting market-place," said Robin Amlôt, Chief Executive Officer of CPI Financial.

"The Banker Africa East Africa Awards are designed to reward excellence in financial services, identifying the key players working to help create a prosperous diversified future for all of the region's people, businesses and economies," he added.

Among other winners were KCB Bank and Faisal Islamic Bank of Sudan.

Last year, First Community Bank was recognized as the best Islamic finance institution by the New York based Global Finance Magazine and nominated as the best SME bank in Kenya 2014 by London based Capital Finance International.

## Preparing new Muslims for their first Ramadhan

**Nourdeen Wildeman**

With two weeks remaining till the first day of the Ramadhan, the entire worldwide Islamic community is preparing itself for the best month of the year.

### First Ramadhan as a Muslim

Even though the month of Ramadhan is not the beginning or end of the Islamic lunar calendar, for many of us it is the best time to have an annual moment of reflection: Where am I today compared to the end of last Ramadhan? For some of us, we look back at changes in our personal life; we've switched jobs, got married, had the joy of the birth of new life or the mourning of the loss of our loved ones.

For most of us, we look back at our development in regards to practicing Islam; did we read the Quran regularly, did we memorize more, did we intensify our prayers or did we spend more time in the mosque? But some of us don't compare this year's Ramadhan with that of the previous year. They look back at the day on which they accepted Islam by declaring the Islamic testimony of faith. They are looking forward to their very first Ramadhan as a Muslim!

It is our duty as a faith community not only to welcome new Muslims but also to support them to perform their acts of worship, of which the fasting during the month Ramadhan is one. However, we don't always live up to our responsibilities to do so on a correct way, either because we fully neglect our responsibility or because with the best intentions we don't do the right thing.

### Don't overemphasize on 'how' we fast

One of the easiest and most common made mistakes when it comes to preparing a new Muslim for his or her first Ramadhan is to spend a lot of time on explaining 'how' we fast.

Don't be shocked; I'm not saying that understanding the rulings of practicing Ramadhan are not relevant! They are, without a doubt. But with the quality of books, leaflets, instruction video's and websites such as OnIslam.net available, any new Muslim is most likely able to get at least 95% of that correct by himself or herself. If there are any questions left, those will surface in a natural way and can be addressed by the person who also handles any other question any other month of the year.

As we practice Islam, we aim to follow in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as much as we can. We aim to always remain within the limits set by our Islamic jurisprudence. Basically, we want to color within the lines. But when we want to support a new Muslim, we must make sure we also focus in our conversations on the color, and not only on the lines.

### Inner change: The objective of Ramadhan

Every time I see or hear a Muslim saying that we fast during the month of Ramadhan because this makes us feel compassion for those who have less fortune in their lives, my heart breaks a little. When I hear a new

Muslim giving this explanation, it breaks a little more. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with feeling compassion for those who live in hardship, but this is not the objective of Ramadhan.

The reason why Allah makes us fast the entire month is not to motivate us to improve the lives of others but to help us improve ourselves. It is the inner process of purification, focus and growth that is addressed by combining the physical fasting with the spiritual acts of worship, such as the prayer of taraweeh, the extra supplication, the reading of the Quran and - when feasible - staying in the Mosque for a few days in the last third of the month.

Whenever you are supporting a new Muslim who is about to perform his or her first Ramadhan, put a lot of emphasis on the inner process of purification of the soul. Read the Quran together, especially 2: 183, 185 where Allah explains that Ramadhan should lead to more Allah consciousness and an increase of gratitude. Have an open dialogue on self-assessment of character and personal obstacles and how to address these challenges.

Never forget that Umar ibn Al-Khattab did not change from being a terrible suppressive person to one of the greatest leaders of the Islamic community simply because he started to strictly follow the rules of Islam. It was the supplication of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asking Allah to soften his heart, that made him the best person he could be. It is the inner change, not the checklist. The rulings are the preconditions of fasting, not the objective.

### Eat together during Ramadhan

Another advice is as easy as obvious but often forgotten. Your support to new Muslims should not be limited to theological advice, answering questions or praying together. You have invited them to Islam and they have accepted it. Now, it's time to invite them to the dinner table.

In my personal experience, the only thing worse than breaking your fasting all alone some of the days is to get used to breaking your fasting all alone most of the days. I am aware of the fact that more and more organizations which are active in the field of dawah are also organizing iftars in mosques and community centers for new or single Muslims, to make sure no-one breaks their fasting alone. This is good and these initiatives should continue and expand.

However, to sit in someone's house with his family, having personal conversations and really getting to know one another is much better and will make a much more profound impact in someone's life than to gather in larger groups. I wish each and every one who intends to perform the fasting of Ramadhan this year a blessed month. May your worship be sincere, accepted and rewarded.

**Nourdeen Wildeman is a revert from Netherlands**

## Muslim girls urged to aspire for higher education goals

Female Muslim students have been urged to work hard and excel in national examinations as this will open up opportunities to further their education and careers. Addressing students at Mumias Muslim Girls Secondary School in Kakamega county, Nawal Ali who emerged the top student at Pangani Girls Secondary School in last year's Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) advised Muslim girls to take education seriously and focus on attaining good grades as this will open up prospects to join higher institutions of learning.

"Work hard and aspire for higher grades as this will improve your chances of joining tertiary institutions and universities and will enhance on your career growth," she said during a motivational talk at the school.

She further urged the students to have self-confidence, aspire for higher educational goals and live by Islamic values so as to excel and build a better spiritual and academic future.

The top achiever who plans to study civil engineering at university said the Muslim community requires professions in various fields and students should have a visionary mindset of becoming future professionals and leaders. Nawal further underscored the importance of hijab stressing that it safeguards the dignity of women and contrary to some claims, it has never been a hurdle for academic progress.

She made a passionate appeal to Muslim leaders to be at the forefront in protecting the rights of the girls-child especially in accessing education.

Together with her former schoolmate, Shamim Muhammad Ibrahim whom they shared the top position during the KCSE examinations, the two students visited various schools in the county for motivational talks aimed at encouraging the students to excel in academic performance.

### Reverts' Basic 6-Months Course

The above programme has already commenced. All those who wish to join should do so today.

Venue: Jamia Multi-Purpose Hall (MPH)

Time: 5.00 pm. All are welcome to join.

### SATURDAY LECTURE

Lecturer: Sheikh Badru Jaffar  
Topic: The Concept of Economic System in Islam part 2

Date: 6th June 2015

Time: 2.00 - 4.00 pm

Venue: Jamia Multi-Purpose Hall

### SUNDAY LECTURE

Namna ya kukaribisha Ramadhan  
7th June 2014

Time: 9 am - 4.00 pm

Venue: Mchanganyiko Kibra  
Ladies only

## Are your children ready for Ramadhan?: Tips for Muslim Parents

Ramadhan is always a very special time for Muslims all over the globe.

It's a time for closeness to our Creator, for spiritual healing, for asking for forgiveness and seeking Allah's content with us.

But sometimes we don't really know how to make our children feel the uniqueness of this holy month; some other times it is even difficult to make them accept the rituals of Ramadhan and understand the real meaning behind it.

We consult the advice of a range of counselors on this issue and they provided a wealth of ideas which we can all share.

To begin with, it is important for children to understand what Ramadhan is all about and how it fits into the overall life of a Muslim. That's why parents should sit with their children and have a talk about Ramadhan.

1- Choose a relaxed time with your child before Ramadhan, and introduce Ramadhan so that he can understand. Think of a friend or family member who is dear to your child's heart. Ask him how he would feel if this person comes to visit you for a short while with all the presents and sweets he or she brings along. Would this visit make him happy? Why?

Link this to the arrival of the holy month, which comes only once a year with a lot of sweets too, this time from Allah Most High. 2- Prepare a simple action plan to get ready together for the arrival of the dear guest. How would you plan for your guest? Put the action plan together for preparing the house and yourselves for the arrival of the holy month.

3- Talking to your child about the doors of Paradise being open in this holy month is highly recommended. You can even make a tour every night into Paradise and take a closer look at what Allah, the Most High, has prepared for those who obey Him in this holy month.

Remember also to help the children make the most of Ramadhan by getting them excited about the fasting and the breaking of the fast.

4- Take the children with you to the masjid. 5- Get your children help-prepare of the suhur and iftar meals.

6- Get them to give in charity so that they realize all of the blessings of Ramadhan. Teach the kids to make du'aa'. Let them know they can ask for anything they want. Teach them to ask for things for others as well as for themselves.

Ramadhan in non-Muslim countries

Ramadhan for children in non-Muslim countries can be a challenge. Children in general have a natural need to belong, to belong to a family, a school or to a group of friends.

To be able to fit in and belong in a certain place or to a certain group, one feels he/she has to be the same, the same in attitudes, in habits, etc. During Ramadhan, children cannot help but be different and this can be difficult.

The challenge lies in the fact that children may feel they will be risking rejection by being different. The challenge is also mag-

nified when other children in the class start asking questions about the reason for fasting, and thus highlighting this difference and making Muslim children feel self-conscious and sometimes embarrassed.

Questions non-Muslim children ask Muslim ones may be about the reasons for fasting and whether the purpose behind fasting can still be achieved while eating some sweets or drinking a cup of water only or not.

They may also ask questions on whether Muslim children feel tired or exhausted due to fasting and show feelings of being sorry for them. It is not easy for children to cope with such feelings and remarks, such situations can be challenging to young adults as well, not just children.

The question is how can we equip our children to help them deal with this difference?

1- Build Confidence: Confidence is a child's best defense against peer pressure. When we arm our children with a sense of self worth, by highlighting their strength and determination to choose fasting and to continue fasting, we help them cope with outside pressures.

2-Encouragement: It is important to continually remind your child of how proud you are of his fasting and how Allah will reward him. This way we are teaching our children that self worth and strength comes from the inside not the outside. This confidence will be a safeguard against peer pressure in general and will greatly help in Ramadhan.

3- Direct the Child as to Whom We Should Please: The child must know that in our life we only seek Allah's love and our deeds should please Allah, and when Allah is pleased then people will accept you ISA.

4-We need to teach our children that people are different and that it is normal to be different.

Allah has created us with much difference and diversity and us as human beings should accept each other and respect differences between us.

5- Involve them with Muslims : Being together will give them the support and strength.

And now is your child ready to fast?

Talking to your child about it all will help you see how he or she feels, and to give the child a chance to make decisions. Involving children in deciding whether to fast or not helps give them a lot of pride in their action when they fast, as well as a lot of stamina to continue fasting, because they made the decision.

- The years before fasting is obligatory should be used properly to give children confidence in their physical capabilities to fast, as well as confidence in their decision-making abilities.

- It should always be stressed however that there is a choice because they have not reached the age when fasting is compulsory, and how merciful Allah is in that.

- It should also be stressed that the time will come when there will no longer be a choice because Allah knows best that then it will be within their capabilities. Physical

capabilities and age are the main factors in deciding whether your child can have physical activities while fasting or not. Whether the child can have an exam while fasting or not is a different issue.

- If your child is physically able to go to school every day and concentrate, then exams shouldn't be a problem. On the contrary, you can encourage the child to fast during exam times based on the fact that Allah will bless the day and effort because he or she is fasting. As for feeling of hunger, once again, it really depends on your child's capabilities and choices.

- If it is only a short time until iftar, then you should encourage the child to go on fasting. Perhaps your child feels hungry because he or she did not have a filling suhur. So, try to make sure that your child gets a good amount of food during suhur.

- Finally, remember always that we, parents, are the models for our children. If we raise our iman and succeed in that, we will give the needed example to our children. And remember also that we ourselves took some time to internalize the real value of Ramadhan.

May Allah link our hearts and the hearts of our children to Iman (faith) and grant us, and them his mercy and forgiveness and accept our fast and good deeds. Amen.

### Counter extremism conference

Continued From Page 1

tary said the government is addressing the issue of insecurity not only in the region but also across the country and urged Kenyans to compliment the efforts of the government. She dismissed claims that the government has abandoned the region is under siege by militants groups pointing out that the region is vulnerable to militant infiltration due to its porous borders.

Speaking to the media, the chairman of NGO Coordination Board Fazul Muhammad defended his action of deregistering two Mombasa Muslim based human rights organizations on alleged links with terrorist groups. The action against Muslim for Human Rights (MUHURI) and Haki Africa has generated criticism from civil society groups about a deliberate policy of witch-hunt against the two entities for their vehement criticism of human rights abuses and extra judicial killings by state security agencies.

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**TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY**

## How prepared are you for this Ramadhan?

**Abdulhafidh Abdallah**

Ramadhan is here again! It doesn't matter whether you were reminded about its arrival or you waited till Rajab (and probably Sha'aban) to catch up with the counting or you consciously monitored the counting from last year, the most important thing is that you're now aware.

Nobody prays to ever miss it. Even those who are incapacitated due to health reasons always pray for a time when they can join the over 2 billion Muslims across the globe to observe it. This is due to the tripartite benefits of spiritual elevation, health fortification and societal transformation everyone derives from it.

As Muslims await its arrival from all boundaries of the world with enthusiasm, we can only ask ourselves if we are truly prepared for it.

Come to think of it; no serious-minded student sits for an exam without preparation. It is also impossible for an athlete to compete in a sporting event without adequate preparation. Therefore, if the student cannot get good grades, and the athlete cannot win laurels without preparation, how then can it be possible for a Muslim not to prepare for Ramadhan, which is a sure pass to his goal-paradise?

If you ponder deeply, you would discover that every act of worship in Islam requires adequate preparation. You don't just approach acts of worship in a hurried manner.

Look at the salah; it is preceded by intention, purification, ablution, adhan and iqamah. What about hajj? Intending pilgrims must be ready both financially and physically for the spiritual journey. They must make provision for their ihram, sacrifice and ultimately, taqwa.

To pay Zakat, you must value your assets and then calculate what is due from them before you can go ahead to pay it. That's pretty much preparation. So why won't you prepare for Ramadhan?

Lack of preparation has nailed many a fasting. It has deprived many a Muslim the fruits of their month-long labour. Therefore, in order to have a fulfilling Ramadhan, the question of how, what, and when to prepare must be answered. But before anything, you must clearly define your goals for this Ramadhan. Set realistic targets before the commencement date, and devise viable ways of meeting them. Your Ramadhan goals for this year must be better compared to last year's.

If you are a worker, you must be able to adjust your work schedule to fit into your Ramadhan plan. This is necessary to create a balance between your time at work and out of work. Students must also create this balance to avoid being overwhelmed by academic engagements. Your preparation must take care of areas such as ibadah, feeding, resting, etc, and it must be timed.

The following will serve as quick guide to a fulfilling and rewarding Ramadhan:

### Set your goals

What do you want to achieve this Ramadhan? How many times do you wish to recite the Holy Quran this Ramadhan? What portion of Quran do you wish to memorize this Ramadhan? How do you plan to improve on your acts of charity this Ramadhan? Do you wish to improve on your social interactions this Ramadhan? All these must be in your list.

### Read books

You should read books too. Books touching on aspects of fasting such as etiquettes, Islamic

rulings and benefits of fasting will prepare you intellectually for fasting.

### Make a list of activities

This should be designed according to your set goals. Developing a time chart for the activities will help you achieve your goals easily. Time for sleeping, waking, observing tahajjud, making supplications, reciting the Quran, attending lectures, reading, eating, cleaning, must be well defined in your list.

### Make your provisions ready

Do not wait until Ramadhan starts before you get the food and clothing items you need. You do not want to waste precious time on shopping during this period. You can also do your Eid shopping before Ramadhan; it assists a lot.

### Plan for l'tikaf

Although, you may argue that l'tikaf is still far away, it should be part of your pre-Ramadhan plans since it takes one-third of the whole exercise. Don't forget to add the cost of l'tikaf to your initial budget. If you do not have a desired mosque yet, you can make enquiry about mosques in your locality. Note that some mosques now open registration before l'tikaf and they do not take more than the required capacity.

So I urge you to take advantage of the few days ahead to prepare for a fruitful and rewarding Ramadhan. The practical insights shared in this article are enough to propel you towards the most productive Ramadhan ever.

## Mosque open day at Park Road Mosque



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Park Road Mosque Youth Group in conjunction with the South 'C' based Da'wah Centre on Monday organised a Mosque open day which featured guided tour of the mosque, discussions about Islam with non-Muslims and multi-media presentations on Islam.

1. A Nairobi da'ee Ramadhan Kuria with the deputy Chief Kadhi Sheikh Rashid Ali Omar explains aspects of Islamic beliefs to non-Muslim visitors. 2. A visitor is taken through the Qur'an

3. Sisters engage a passerby in a discussion outside the mosque

4. Enjoying delicious snacks after the mosque tour. 5. "For 65 years I have been yearning for an opportunity to step inside a mosque." This elderly visitor expressed his feelings to Sheikh Abdulkadir Hassan

## Mr President, North Eastern region deserves your attention

**Billow Kerrow**

My apologies Mr President. I seek your leave to pen this open letter to apprise you of the grave situation of insecurity in the former North Eastern Province. Ordinary folks like me don't get an opportunity to meet you in person because of your many commitments. The terrorist threats have isolated the already desolate region from the rest of the country, and created fear and despondency among residents.

The situation has deteriorated to levels worse than during the infamous Shifta war, amid feelings of rising resentment and hopelessness among sections of the youth, with your government's actions such as curtailing freedoms and issue of identity cards exacerbat-

ing the situation.

Mr President, you have not visited this region since you were elected into office, even after hundreds of Kenyans were brutally massacred by terrorists. I salute our security forces for their efforts to contain the situation despite challenges. Mr President, the socio-economic situation in the region has deteriorated rapidly, and the livelihoods of many residents have been destroyed. Businesses have shut down, and some markets and villages abandoned due to insecurity. Many upcountry businessmen have altogether left the region. Terrorists have defiantly camped in parts of Mandera and Garissa counties, hoisting their flags and preaching radical summons. Movement of the residents have

been inconvenienced, as buses and other PSVs have to move only in convoys or with police escorts.

Mr President, the region risks losing a generation of its youth as hundreds of schools shut down for lack of teachers. The only university, Garissa University College, has been closed, and perhaps permanently. The Ministry of Education seeks to transfer the lecturers and staff, and all the funding to Moi University. Other tertiary institutions face similar fate. We have abandoned our children and youth in their hour of need due to fear of terrorists. It is unprecedented, and if unabated will provide fodder for radicalisation. Other public services have equally been hit by exodus of workers. Development projects have stalled for lack of professionals willing to travel to the region. Mr President, residents feel abandoned and left to their fate. They have cooperated with our security agencies when necessary, and volunteered information on suspected terrorists and their sympathisers. Al Shabaab is reportedly recruiting our youth, not just in mosques and madrassas, but more so in our universities, sports fields and corporate institutions.

Mr President, after extensive consultation with the residents, the leaders from the region have shared with you their preferred approach to the handling of the Al Shabaab threats. Many Kenyans see Al Shabaab as a Somali community problem, and North Eastern as their playground. If that be the case, we proposed solutions which if fully implemented would eliminate these threats. You agreed to and endorsed these proposals for immediate action, after extensive consultations, and involvement of your security officials. Regrettably, despite the urgency of the situation, little has been effected since, except for appointment of the regional commissioner. An officer at your Harambee House office has reportedly sabotaged the process. Mr President, the unnecessary delays in the release of finances such as the quarterly AIE for police in the region has demoralised them. They traverse the harsh terrain to prevent terrorists crisscrossing our borders at will, without food and water at times; yet Parliament voted over Sh175 billion for security this year alone.

Mr President, kindly spare a moment for the people of North Eastern who are under siege. They are Kenyans and deserve your attention like the rest.

**Billow Kerrow is the Mandera Senator and a member of the Jamia Mosque Committee.**

### Riyadha trustee dismisses waqf misappropriation claims

A trustee of the Lamu based Riyadha Mosque and Islamic Centre has refuted claims that he is the cause of the present wrangles at the oldest Islamic education institution in the country. Sheikh Swaleh Muhammad Sayyid Ali also dismissed suggestions that he has misappropriated waqf (endowment) properties and used them for his personal benefit and instead pointed fingers at individuals who he said were running the affairs of mosque and the education centre without involving other stakeholders.

"The main source of the problem is not the waqf properties as it has been alleged but individuals who want to run the facilities without involving other important stakeholders," he told The Friday Bulletin. "They have even left out elders who are descendants of the founders of the institution," he added in his reactions to reports carried in last week's Friday Bulletin that he is at the center of the problem.

Sheikh Bahsan as he is popularly known in Lamu, said the waqf properties were registered in his name alongside others as trustees and they were being administered in a professional and transparent manner. "My role as a trustee is to ensure that the properties serve the interests of mosque, the education centre and the community. The bank accounts are in the names of five people, it is absurd to suggest that I am the only person who can access the funds from the said properties," he said.

At the same time, he stressed his optimism on the arbitration moves but added that the issues of involving stakeholders in the running of the mosque and the centre need also to be addressed. "As it is mandated in Islam, solving our problems in an amicable manner is the ideal situation and it is a better approach than taking the matter to the courts," he said.

The wrangles had found their way to the courts which instead constituted an arbitration committee to resolve the issues through community initiatives. Members of the committee are drawn from the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK) and local elders.

### Use mimbar to fight AIDS, Imams told

Muslim religious leaders have been urged to proactively participate in the war against the spread of HIV/AIDS among young children and youth.

The leaders were also asked to use their influence and positions to provide religious guidance and sensitize their congregations and communities against stigmatization, denial and discrimination associated with the scourge.

Speaking at a one day workshop that brought together Imams and madrasa teachers in Nairobi on Wednesday, an official from Family Resource Centre Musa Mwale spoke on the influential role held by religious leaders in the society and urged them to use their influence in sensitizing the population the challenges posed by the disease.

Mwale noted that for too long Muslim leaders and Imams have either maintained silence about sexuality issues, stressing that there was need for Muslim leaders to openly speak about need to embrace Islamic moral values as a means of reducing the risk of spreading the disease.

He further stressed that Imams, community leaders and parents must find ways to integrate accurate information about sexuality within the context of Quran teachings to provide proper tarbiyyah to the youth and children in the Muslim community for them to live holistically.

An official from education ministry Mwaura Wanjohi disclosed that the ministry has revised the Education Sector Policy on HIV and AIDS in response to the emerging issues and concerns of learners living with HIV and AIDS.

He said the revised policy has also been aligned to international commitments such as Education for All, the Millennium Development Goals, National legal and policy documents and the Constitution of Kenya on Reforming Education and Training sectors.

The officer further noted that the Education Sector Policy on HIV and AIDS, 2013 provides a framework for prevention, treatment, care and support as well as the management of response within the education sector all levels.

The theme of the workshop was "Involvement of Inter-Religious leaders in the Age Appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education Discourse" The event was organized by I Choose life-Africa in collaboration with Family Resource Centre and attracted over 60 Imams drawn from various mosques within Nairobi and its environ.

## NE leaders slam police brutality

Leaders from North Eastern have condemned the ongoing police brutality and swoops carried out in the region in the aftermath of a series of attacks witnessed in the area.

This is after images of a policeman whipping a group of young men in Garissa surfaced on the social media.

A Facebook account by the name Michael Orita posted photos showing a police man brutally whipping young Somali men with the caption, "These Somali young men came to Garissa for a purpose but little did they know we're smarter than them."

The images and comments by Orita who was identified as a police officer attached in the area were taken down after an outcry by Kenyans on social media.

The victims are said to have been rounded up during a police swoop by police officers in Yumbis area that was recently attacked by Al Shabaab militants where a police officer lost his life.

The Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA) said it will probe the incident after the photos are fully verified to determine their authenticity.

Last month local leaders and residents expressed concern over extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances after several people were reported missing in Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Lamu counties.

A mass grave of 11 bodies was also found in Lanbiib Wajir County in May this year with residents expressing fears that it could be holding bodies of disappeared persons.

Reacting to the images, the Wajir Governor Ahmed Abullahi strongly condemned the incident and called on security forces to respect the rule of law.

"The Wagalla massacre and other atrocities committed by security agents in Wajir are still fresh in the minds of the people. We do not want further actions that will make our people symbolize our security agents as the perpetrators of terror and inhumane acts," said the governor during Madaraka day celebrations in Wajir town.

The governor reiterated that the role of communities in the fight against violent extremism cannot be overlooked and time is right to do away with strategies that brutalize the youth and embark on strategies that will win them.

The Mbalambala Member of Parliament Abdikadir Aden termed the incident as clear violation of the country's constitution by those tasked with protecting Kenyans. He said the continued police brutality has dented the efforts and roles played by communities in fighting the threat of terrorism and radicalization adding that it is such actions that breeds disconnect between security forces and area residents.

"The war on terror cannot be won by threatening, intimidating and humiliating the people of North Eastern. Blanket punishment and harassment is not a solution to fighting terrorism," he said.

The MP urged security forces to positively target the youth and establish a cordial relationship with them with the intent of winning the hearts and minds of the affected communities.

In a series of tweets MP Wajir West Abdikadir Ahmed expressed his anger saying instead of keeping Al Shabaab militants at bay, Kenyan security forces are flogging innocent citizens.

## Proposal to introduce Arabic in primary schools

The Ministry of education is considering a proposal to introduce the learning of Arabic language in primary schools. Currently, the subject is being taught in secondary schools as an optional subject but if the proposal is adopted, pupils especially in predominantly Muslims will be taught the language as part of the school course work.

This was disclosed by Muhammad Abdi Kheir an official from the education Ministry who said the development will further contribute to the growth of Arabic learning in the country.

"There is no doubt that Arabic is one of the main international languages and also an important language for communication among Muslims," he said during the graduation event of Arabic language teachers at Maarifa College, Nairobi South 'C' campus.

The event also involved the signing of a memorandum of understanding for technical cooperation between Maarifa College and the Sudan based Khartoum International Institute of Arabic Language.

Abdi Kheir said there was a need for furthering the growth of Arabic language in the country noting that thousands of Kenyans travel to Arab countries for work and business and knowledge of the language will contribute in promoting economic ties between Kenya and the Arab world.

He further commended the Sudanese government for its support towards the education sector observing that hundreds of Kenyan students have been supported with scholarship opportunities to study in the North African country in various disciplines.

On his part, the Muslim Education Council executive director Munawar Khan urged students to embrace teaching studies saying that this will help address the existing problem of shortage of teachers in the Muslim community. "North Eastern region is experiencing an education crisis due to lack of local teachers. It is important that strategies are put in place to encourage Form Four graduates to embrace the teaching profession," he said.

The legislator said the local communities have been ignored in the war on terrorism and police brutality is the reason why locals have not been "cooperating" with security forces.

"Forces in NEP are terrorizing the locals to fight foreign terror. Many Somalis have been killed, maimed and disappeared at the hands of government security forces and the trend continues," Abdikadir posted on his twitter account.



The ambassador of the Arab League to Kenya Abdul Naim Mabrouk presents a diploma award to a graduand of Maarifa College. On the left is the Rector of Khartoum International Institute of Arabic Language Prof. Ali Abdallah Naim and Abdinoor Shill from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.

In his remarks, Wajir West MP Abdikadir Ore Ahmed termed it unfair moves to target Muslims and link the community and the faith to terrorism. "It is unfortunate that Muslims are increasingly becoming a target for what that they have not done. The people who are killing innocent people are going against Islamic teachings and Muslims should not be blamed for their errant actions," he said as he appealed to Muslims to showcase the correct teachings of Islam so as to demystify the misconception and promote a better understanding of Islam among non-Muslims.

Among those present at the event were the Rector of the Khartoum International Institute of Arabic Language Prof. Ali Abdallah Naim, Abdul Naim Mabrouk the ambassador of the Arab League, Usamah Abdulbary the deputy ambassador of Sudan to Kenya, Ahmed Salih Humeid the director of Munadhamat Da'wa al Islamiyya and the director of Maarifa College Abdisalaam Adan

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**Memon Hall South 'C' (Bilal Mosque)**  
**Date: Sunday 14th June 2015**  
**Time: 9.00 am 5.00 pm**  
**Topics**  
**1. Importance of Ramadhan in our lives**  
**2. Time Management in Ramadhan**  
**3. Mistakes and innovations in Ramadhan**  
**Plus special sessions on Q and A**  
**Brothers and Sisters Welcome**

## Islam hater changes heart after Mosque visit

When Jason Leger went to last Friday's rally against Islam outside Phoenix mosque in US, he did not imagine he would walk out as a new man with new thoughts about the religion he hates most. "Out of respect for the Islamic people, knowing what I know now, because I have talked to them and spoke to them, no I would not do that again, just because I don't want to offend or hurt those people," he told Fox News.

About 200 armed bikers gathered on Friday to attend the draw Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) cartoon event outside Islamic Community Center of Phoenix that was organized by Jon Ritzheimer, an Iraq war veteran.

Called "Freedom of Speech Rally Round II", the armed rally came in "response to the recent attack in Texas where 2 armed terrorist [sic], with ties to the so-called Islamic State (ISIL), attempted Jihad," the bikers group said.

Earlier this month, two gunmen were shot dead by police after attacking a similar draw Muhammad event in Garland, Texas. During Friday's rally, Leger, who was there with his uncle, wore profanity-laced t-shirts against Islam. Getting a chance to speak with a group of people who pray at the mosque, they invited him inside.

"When I took a second to actually sit down and listen to them, and actually enter their mosque, and go in and watch some of their prayers, it is a beautiful thing, and they answered some of the questions that I had," he said.

Leger and his uncle have been invited back to the mosque for more discussions. "We don't have to like everything that is free speech in this world, but we do have to let it happen, we have to let people wear what they want, say what they want," said Leger. "I feel that me and a few people like my uncle Paul, and the Muslim people, taking the time to talk to each other, feel that we changed the thoughts of some people, and they changed the thoughts of me." (Onislam).



## Soweto Mosque Project

The Kayole-Soweto Villages in the Embakasi division around Nairobi have an estimated population of more than 798,000. The majority of people living here earn less than a dollar a day.

These villages in the slum areas around Nairobi have long been used as a dumping site of all sorts of garbage which has contributed to the spread of disease in the community. Malaria, Typhoid, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS all pose major threats to the livelihood of the community as a whole.

The World Bank and other multi-national organizations have teamed to upgrade the slums and currently the water and sewerage program is under way. Electricity is also being improved to reach more households. The road network is under constructed to create accessibility that was impossible some few months back. In the interior of the slums we have the only Mosque (Masjid Nur) that was constructed by Shamsudin Parpiya a volunteer from Parklands who relocated to United Kingdom. His mosque was of timber and could only accommodate 20 to 30 Musalihs in which is now being used as the Imam's residence. Almutanda Alislami constructed the current Mosque that caters for about 200 Musalihs. With the growing population, the space is even becoming smaller and that is why efforts are being done by the Committee to improve and expand the prayer area for the men, renovate the current dilapidated classrooms that are not utilized. They have a population of about 100 students and they take their lessons in the Mosque. The space is quite adequate for expansion and improvements. They only need funding to accomplish these renovations and make the place a learning centre.

The Mosque Committee had approached Ummah Foundation to help upgrade the mosque, Madrassah and the Imams and teachers residence. We paid a courtesy call to ascertain the dire need that the Muslims in this area are facing to see to their spiritual growth and Daawah developments. We resolved to start the renovation and rehabilitation work on Soweto Mosque and Madrassah. Currently, work is in progress and the Project will take a new shape in the coming weeks Inshallah.

Now with the current road, water and sewerage constructions it will be very easy to access the village and more developments are expected to improve the people's lifestyles.

By all standards this is a viable project that draws the attention of any concerned Muslim and any kind of input that can be channelled towards the successful completion of the project will be of sublime benefits to the Muslim community in the area and its environs.

Contact us:

Ummah Foundation

Village Plaza, Ngara Rd, Nairobi

P.O. Box 58717- 00200

Tel;+254-202680610/13, 0734845277,

Email: info@ummahfoundation.net

Web: www.ummahfoundation.net

## JOB OPPORTUNITY

### SECURITY SUPERVISOR (LADIES SECTION)

Jamia Mosque Committee, Nairobi, invites female applicants for the position of a SECURITY SUPERVISOR for the ladies section. The candidate should have the following qualifications and skills:

1. Should have some police or security sector training.
2. At least 3 years' experience in a security supervisory role.
3. Should have at least a diploma in security studies, social studies or related field.
4. Should be a practicing Muslim with an upright character.
5. She will be in charge of security at the ladies section of the mosque and report to the Head of Security.

**Applicants' CV, application letter and relevant documents to reach the**

**Secretary General**

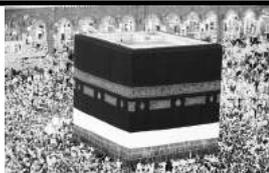
**Jamia Mosque Committee**

**P. O. Box 100786-00101**

**Nairobi**

**Or dropped at the Jamia Mosque Administration offices on or before 10th June 2015.**

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



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