

# Ramadan Kareem



## ‘Proud And Historic’: Two Hijab-Wearing Women Sworn In As Judges In NJ

*By: Hannan Adely*

Nadia Kahf, a hijab-wearing attorney from Wayne, drew a standing-room crowd at the Passaic County Courthouse last Tuesday, as she was sworn in as a state Superior Court judge, in an event that sparked international headlines describing her as a trailblazer.

That barrier was broken again the very next day when Dalya Youssef, a family law attorney who also wears the Islamic headscarf, was sworn in to the Superior Court bench in Somerset County.

For Muslim women, who



have long faced harmful stereotypes about their religion and their role in it, having two women who outwardly show

their faith in such prominent positions is deeply meaningful.

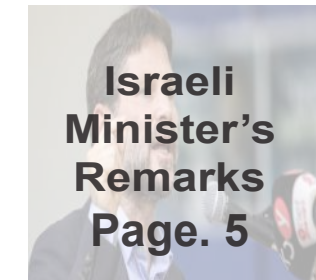
“It brings a lot of pride

and a lot of inspiration to my heart knowing they can practice their faith openly without compro-

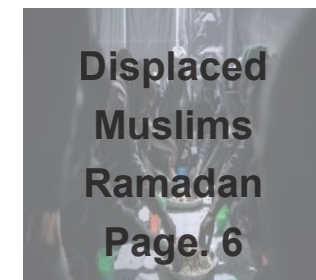
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## Humza Yousaf Becomes First Minister Of Scotland And First Muslim Leader Of A Western Nation

*By Yousuf Ali*

On Monday March 27th, the Scottish National party announced the results of their leadership election. Humza Yousaf won with 52% of the vote on the second ballot, defeating Kate Forbes and Ash Regan. Because the SNP is the ruling party in Scotland,



the leadership contest was by extension an election for the post of First Minister of the nation with this being formalized the next day. As The Scottish Greens had previously indicated they

would maintain their coalition with the SNP, Yousaf's confirmation as first minister was all but guaranteed upon his winning the leadership contest.

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## ‘How Is Ramadan For Muslim Inmates?’ Religious Leader Visits Inmates During Holy Month




*By: Neshmia Malik*  
*Reposted from WGN9*

As Muslims around the world embrace

the spiritual month of Ramadan, a North-suburban religious leader in

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# Op Ed: The Spirit Of Fasting In The Month Of Ramadan



by **M. Basheer Ahmed M.D.**

Ramadan is indeed an exceptional month of fasting for Muslims around the world. It is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, during which Muslims fast (refrain from eating and drinking) from dawn until sunset. The fast is observed as a form of worship and is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

The blessed month of Ramadan (fasting) starts this year on March 23rd and ends on April 21st, 2023. This month, the Quran, the holy book of Islam, was revealed to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in 610 AD. Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan. It is an act of worship that helps Muslims to feel closer to Allah and strengthens their faith. It also helps to resist temptation and avoid sinful behavior. They do this through fasting, praying, reciting the Quran, making their actions purposeful and selfless, and refraining from lying, gossiping, and fighting.

I remember during my childhood, the excitement we experienced sighting a new moon at the beginning of the month of fasting-Ramazan. Adults and children look forward to Ramazan for fasting, tarweeh prayers at night in Masjid, socialization with family and friends, and celebrating the major Eid festival at the end of the month of Ramadan.

God says in Quran you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, so that you

may attain Taqwa." (2:183) Taqwa (restraining oneself from bad behavior) simply means to protect oneself from the Anger of Allah (swt) and His Punishment. The Muttaqun are those who believe in Allah and are involved in the affairs of humanity and avoid God's displeasure. Fasting prepares Muslims to transform spiritually, focusing on attachment to Allah and, by the consciousness of behavior, avoiding activities that are prohibited during fasting. This results in achieving peace and tranquility.

Islamic faith is composed of unique rituals to bring discipline to human life. Fasting is one of the five key rituals that Muslims around the world observe. The essence of fasting is to become humble, simple, and free from ill will, anger, meanness, and hatred. Fasting is regarded as an annual training, requiring one to abstain from food, drink, and intimacy, but also to avoid ill actions such as backbiting, and hurting the feelings of others from dawn to dusk, every day for a month.

Habits are difficult to change, especially if they have been a part of your life for a very long time. During Ramadan, our experience of self-control gives us confidence that we can change our habits. If you can refrain from food, and negative and inappropriate thoughts, this will give you the strength and self-confidence to kick all your bad habits. If we do not discipline ourselves and control our bad habits, we are not

getting the benefits of fasting

True fasting is self-purification, which leads to the development of human values such as generosity, patience, kindness, forgiveness, mercy, justice, and empathy — that are necessary for the success of self and the community.

One of the purposes of religion is to develop the highest moral standards through the purification of self, beliefs, and behavior. Fasting gives us an opportunity to attain piety and purification of self. During the state of fasting, one experiences hunger and thirst. It teaches Muslims to be more empathetic towards those who are less fortunate and appreciate the blessings that they have in their lives and develop a sense of mercy for those who are less fortunate. Ramadan is also a time to share one's wealth with the needy- it is a charity called Zakat, the 4th pillar of Islam. It is a religious duty that every Muslim family take out 2.5% of the value of their assets and pass it on to the needy people in community, deserving family members, deserving Muslims and non-Muslims.

Muslims take advice from the Prophet, who said, "If one slanders you or aggresses against you, say I am fasting." This is the best way to control your anger and negative emotions.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) once said: "There are so many of fasting people who do not

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# Muslim Women's Day: Throwing A Spotlight On Muslim Women's Rights



**Reposted from Pass-Blue.com**

Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari opposes the general perception that Islam represses women while ignoring various negative indices regarding women in his own country. "Islam was the first religion to give rights to women," he declared in a session on "Women in Islam," held at the United Nations and led by Zardari as chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Council of Foreign Ministers. "Islam forbids injustice against women."

The Pakistan event was held during the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, running from March 6 to 17; its theme is using innovation and technology to promote gender equality. Many countries have been adopting the theme in events they are holding during the conference to reflect what is happening in their region or back home. The Pakistan forum occurred on March 8, International Women's Day, just as a debate on Afghanistan, its neighbor, took place in the Security Council down the hall. In that

chamber, diplomats and others aired serious worries about the status of women and girls in the country, as their rights are being slashed by the Taliban-headed government.

Nevertheless, Pakistan aimed to bridge the perception-reality gap on the rights of women in Islam throughout the world. Speaking on the efforts of Pakistan, an Islamic republic, to advance women's equality, Zardari said that its "digital policy framework" is training girls in computing so they can earn a living some day. "We continue to incentivize women-owned and women-run start-ups in Pakistan's IT sector," he said. "Computer labs have been established in girls' schools through collaboration with the private sector."

He also said that part of his "political and personal mission" is to address "misconceptions about Islam and advance the cause of women empowerment that was so boldly espoused by my mother as a living example."

His mother, Benazir Bhutto, a former prime minister, also repre-

sented Pakistan at the groundbreaking Beijing women's conference in 1995, he said. Quoting her, he added: "As the first woman ever elected to head an Islamic nation, I feel a special responsibility towards women's issues and towards all women. And as a Muslim woman, I feel a special responsibility to counter the propaganda of a handful that Islam gives women a second-class status." (She was assassinated in 2007.)

Yet a survey by the Thomson Reuters Foundation ranked Pakistan the sixth most-dangerous country in the world

for women. (Another neighbor, India, ranked No. 1.) The survey also revealed how sexual violence, domestic abuse, acid attacks and honor killings characterize Pakistani society.

UN Women says that women continue to remain underrepresented in leadership roles in Pakistan and are restricted from jobs in the political/public sphere because of systemic challenges stemming from patriarchy. According to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), an independent body that organizes and conducts federal elections, it calculates a gender gap

of around 12.5 million in the electoral rolls. According to UN Women, at the current rate of progress, gender parity in the national legislature will not be achieved before 2063.

But speaking at the conference, the prime minister said that "the issue of perception that Muslim women are oppressed and discriminated against is misplaced," adding that it was crucial to distinguish between Islamic principles and law and social practices espoused by some patriarchal societies.

Muslim women have

*Cont. on page 13*



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# Israeli Minister's Remarks Denying Palestinian Peoplehood Draw Condemnation

By Yousuf Ali

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich made remarks where he denied the Palestinian peoplehood to delegitimize their claim to Palestine on March 20. He claimed that he was a true Palestinian and to be a 13th generation Jerusalemite despite the fact that his own ancestors were in Ukraine far sooner than that. He made the remarks in Paris for a gathering of far-right Zionists who were commemorating the death of a Likud activist in 2021.

According to Al Jazeera, "Smotrich is well-known for making inflammatory statements against Palestinians, as well as Palestinian citizens of Israel, and is a staunch opponent of the establishment of a Palestinian state. On March 1, he triggered international outrage by saying the Palestinian village of Huwara in the West



Bank should be wiped out following a rampage by Israeli settlers. These comments were slammed as "repugnant" and "disgusting" by the United States Department of State and prompted the French government to boycott him during his visit to Paris."

He also said that Palestinians have only existed for 100 years as a way to deny Jews their rightful claim to the land of

Israel. These remarks were widely condemned as racist by allies and opponents of Israel alike.

According to Palestinian officials, Smotrich's remarks are evidence of the racist nature of Israeli policy against Palestinians. These come as Israel is further entrenching its illegal occupation of the West Bank and engaging in repeated deadly raids. Additionally Smotrich

had made remarks supporting of the destruction of a Palestinian village after settlers went on a murderous rampage against it. Even allies of Israel like Jordan condemned the remarks. This was also provoked by Smotrich standing next to a map that showed Jordan as under Israeli control.

According to Al Jazeera, "A Jordanian official told Reuters news agency on

Tuesday that Israel had reassured the kingdom that Smotrich's behaviour, which included standing at a podium adorned with a map of an Israeli flag that included Jordan and the Palestinian territories, did not represent its position. On Monday, Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said he had been told by Israel's national security adviser that Israel respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbour."

Jordan established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1994. Additionally Smotrich was not welcomed by any French government officials despite the country generally having good relations with Israel. Additionally, despite the normalization, Israel still occupies Palestinian territory in the West Bank.

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# For Displaced Muslims In DRC, Little Food To Break Ramadan Fast



*The following story is a story done by Al Jazeera on the approximately 500 Muslims displaced by the violence in eastern DR Congo, which have little water and food to break their Ramadan fast.*

It is a difficult Ramadan for hundreds of Muslims displaced by the deadly violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Some 500 Muslims are cramped together in makeshift huts in the displaced persons' camp in the town of Munigi. Most of them have little access to food and water. They are among nearly one million people displaced since fighting between M23 rebels and government forces erupted last year.

The mosque, a small clapboard building, serves many of the worshippers who break their Ramadan fast in

the camp, situated on a lava-strewn field just 10km (6 miles) from the front lines.

"The first ones arrived nearly a year ago," said Ali Assani Mukamba, the local imam, speaking of Muslim displaced people.

Walking through the mass of tiny huts built hastily on the field of volcanic rock, he explains that one of the biggest problems is a lack of fresh water.

"To wash before prayer, we're sometimes forced to rub ourselves with dust or mud," Mukamba said.

As night falls, Muslim worshippers pass around a platter of rice and beans while a pale bulb comes on to light up their mosque.

'Killed by the M23'

Abda Juma Buranga, one of the Muslim elders in the camp, said they are only able to eat their if-

tar meal — which breaks the fast — because of charitable donations.

He fled his native village of Kibumba, less than 20km (12 miles) from the camp, when M23 fighters launched an attack last November.

"I lost 25 members of my family, cousins, aunts, nephews," the 65-year-old said.

"They were all killed by the M23".

The Muslim community in Munigi makes up a tiny part of the huge number of people who have fled the M23 in the DRC's North Kivu province.

This month, the International Organization for Migration said the crisis has displaced almost 900,000 people.

The M23 first came to international prominence when it briefly captured North Kivu's capital Goma in 2012 before being driven out.

The rebels took up arms again in late 2021 after years of dormancy on claims that the government had ignored a pledge to integrate its fighters into the military.

The M23 has since captured swathes of territory in North Kivu and is now threatening to cut off the roads leading to Goma, a trade hub of more than one million people.

'We're suffering'

"In 2012, I didn't flee when the M23 arrived," said Aisha Furaha, sitting on a rock in Munigi camp with her head bent low.

The M23 returned "with more brutality" during its second campaign, according to the 40-year-old woman.

The rebels had threatened to loot and kill, Furaha said, adding that she and her 10 children had fled their home under a hail of gunfire.

Now, Furaha and her family sleep on the ground in a hut in Munigi, where she said there is not enough room for everyone.

M23 fighters are still in position across North Kivu and on hilltops near Goma.

According to reports by independent experts for the UN Security Council, Rwanda is backing and equipping the rebels. Kigali denies the claim.

Abda Juma, the Muslim elder in Munigi, said he wanted the international community to force Rwandan President Paul Kagame to withdraw the M23.

"We're suffering a lot," he said.

Picture credit: Alexis Huguet/AFP

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# At Least 2 Dead, Several Injured After Stabbing At Muslim Center In Portugal

by **Rehan Qamar**

A man killed two women and injured several other people at an Ismaili Muslim center in Lisbon, Portugal Tuesday. Portuguese authorities said they were investigating Tuesday's stabbing attack as a possible terror act.

The women were Portuguese staff members at the center, Ismaili community leader Narzim Ahmad told Portuguese TV channel SIC. Local Afghan community representatives and Portuguese authorities described the man as a refugee from Afghanistan who was receiving help from the Ismaili Community.

Officers dispatched to the center late Tuesday morning encountered a man armed with a knife, according to a police statement. The officers ordered him to surrender and he was shot when he advanced toward them, the statement said.

A suspect was in police custody at a Lisbon hospital. Investigators were looking into terrorism as a possible motive. Several other people were wounded, according to the statement, which provided no further details.

Millions of Afghans have fled violence and poverty in their country, often risking their lives to get to Europe.

The suspect is a "young man" who arrived in Portugal through a European Union program that transfers asylum-seekers to member countries to help relieve pressure on Mediterranean nations such as Greece and Italy, Portuguese Interior Minister José Luis Carneiro said.

The minister said the man's wife died in a refugee camp in Greece, leaving him to care alone for three children, ages 9, 7 and 4. Authorities had no information indicating he had been violent in the past, Carneiro said.

"From what we know, he

*Cont. on page 13*





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# Imran Khan Arrest Warrant



**By Mahvish Akhtar**

On Tuesday, March 14, 2023, the Lahore High Court issued an arrest warrant for Imran Khan, the chairman of PTI. The process did not go as smoothly as it should have. Khan refused to leave his home, declaring he feared for his life. In a video message on Tuesday, the leader called on his supporters to “fight with or without him,” as he said he could be “jailed or even killed.”

Inspector General of Punjab Police, Usman Anwar, said that more than 300 policemen were sent to Khan’s residence in Lahore because they anticipated resistance from his supporters.

“We did not send any armed policemen, only an anti-riot force, as we were only trying to execute a warrant issued by a court and not carrying out a police operation,” Anwar said. Khan’s supporters attacked the officers. Khan, who issued statements through video messages and tweets, called the attempts to arrest him a “mere drama” orchestrated by his successor, PM Shehbaz Shariff. “Clearly ‘arrest’ claim was mere drama because the real intent is to abduct and assassinate. From tear gas and water cannons,

they have now resorted to live fire,” he tweeted.

Whether it was the call to stand by Imran Khan or the need to protect whatever hope the PTI supporters have left being delivered from what is happening in this country, they find this man is the answer. They show up when he calls. They fight whoever he says is the enemy.

“They pelted [us with] stones, beat us with sticks, threw petrol bombs, attacked rangers’ [paramilitary] vehicles, and set fire to our water cannons,” Usman Anwar told ARY news channel.

Hours into the alleged standoff and both sides blaming one another, the Lahore Court took the arrest order back, maintaining that it was causing too much damage and chaos and was not worth people getting hurt.

March 17, 2023, around 2 PM, Imran Khan came to Lahore High Court as asked by the court for his hearing. It took the PTI leader two hours to cover the distance that would typically take 10-15 minutes. His supporters and workers followed him and stayed by him throughout the journey.

Right after the Lahore hearing, Imran Khan left

for Islamabad to attend the hearing on the Toshakhana case in the capital of Pakistan on Saturday.

Allegedly, the police raided Imran Khan’s Lahore mansion at Zaman Park hours after he left for Islamabad. The police claim they recovered assault rifles and a cache of bullets from the PTI Chairman’s house in that search operation. The police also detained over 60 members of the party accused of being hostiles and obstructing the law.

IGP Usman Anwar said in a Press Conference, “police had finished the search and cleanup operation in Zaman Park and confiscated AK-47 assault rifles and a large number of bullets from Imran Khan’s mansion in Lahore”. In answer to a separate question, he said whether the weapons were licensed is being evaluated.

In Islamabad, at the Islamabad Judicial Complex, the court suspended Khan’s non-bailable warrants in the Toshakhana case after an hours-long hearing. The next hearing date is set for March 30th, 2023.

If convicted in the case, Khan faces being barred from public office, a significant setback to his ambition of running as

prime minister again.

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Saturday barred television channels from live coverage of rallies or public gatherings, explaining that “today, a ban has been imposed on coverage of any party, person, or organization.” According to PEMRA, the prohibition order includes a ban on any procession or rally being staged today at the judicial complex in Islamabad — where the PTI Chairman Imran Khan was set to appear.

In an advisory issued today titled “Prohibition order on live coverage under Section 27 of PEMRA Ordinance 2001”, the electronic media regulator stated that it has been observed with concern that satellite TV channels are showing live footage and images of, ‘violent mob, attacks on police and law enforcing agencies’.

Arif Noor, a political analyst and columnist for a Pakistani newspaper, says that by attempting to arrest Khan, the government is trying to distract him from the upcoming elections. “To some extent, the government, does want to arrest him – they want to be able to control his movements, but it is also

a way to try to keep him distracted, and this is not the first time such tactics have been used.”

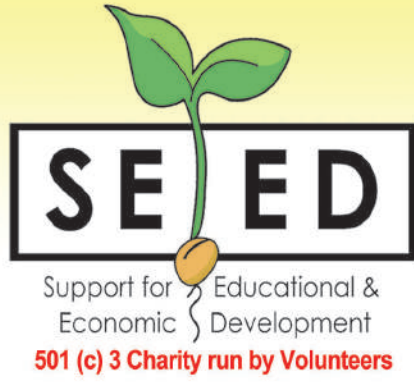
Finally in a tweet Imran wrote that he had no issue with taking any initiative that served the country’s interests. He added that he was prepared to render any sacrifice for “Pakistan’s development, interests and democracy”. This is a frame of mind that has not been witnessed from the headstrong former PM who believes that the opposing side is making attempts on his life.

Around the time of Imran’s tweet, PM Shehbaz invited “the political leadership” to come together to get the country out of the challenges, stressing that mutual differences would have to be put aside for economic reforms, austerity and other key issues.

However, on Sunday’s address to the public of Pakistan Imran Khan announced a large public gathering at Minar-e-Pakistan on March 22nd 2023, to protest the alleged “London Plan” and the “illegal” search of his Zaman Park residence a day earlier.

The rest remains to be seen.





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## Ramadan Appeal – For urgent family assistance.

By Dawood Zwink, former TMO staff member

If you save the life of even one person, it will be as if you have saved the life of all of humanity.” Qur’an 5:32

Update: As events have progressed, we are able to add information. We now have confirmation that the family’s mother and father are both Muslims. So, by responding to this humanitarian appeal, we are able to help recover separated family members.

Original story: This is a story, or more accurately a saga or journey. It started in October of 2022. I was shopping for groceries at a local outlet when I was approached by a young lady who asked for some assistance. She was shopping with her sister for

food, clothes and some medicine for their children who had come down with flu symptoms. Alhamdulillah, I cautiously agreed to help.

They contacted me again in December seeking additional help after receiving an unexpected call from back home. They said they did not know anyone else to ask for help. Their father had suffered a heart attack and needed emergency lifesaving surgery in Bucharest, Romania.

So, the sisters took a hard decision. The youngest would return with her sister’s 14-year-old son, and her 4 younger children to take care of their father’s recovery, in sha Allah. May Allah bless her. This was an extremely tough decision after she had struggled so hard to get to Canada. Again, I personally covered the travel money for the trip back with the children including a 5-month-old daughter, and \$3,100 US for home repairs.

The family home is in Suceava which is close to the border of Moldova and Ukraine. It was in poor repair, without heat, water, indoor toilet or shower facilities.

The oldest son also needed dental surgery.

He was living in constant pain because of exposed roots. He could not stay in Canada long enough to have immigration help here in GTA. The family had already successfully made application for refugee status, but Allah had other plans. When requested, brothers from the Mississauga Muslim community helped gather the \$5,000 USD needed for the dental work.

The family made the trip back and the father’s surgery was successfully completed at the Bucharest Hospital. Regarding his post op care, their first option was to rent a place in Bucharest and pay for nursing care. That expense would have been higher than either the family or I could afford.

So, he needed to return to the family home in Suceava, Romania, to survive the winter months. To give him support, the family group traveled back to Romania while the oldest sister remained behind with her other two children to maintain a toehold in Canada.

In Romania, the youngest daughter took care of nursing her father’s recovery, home repairs, the dental work, and did home cleaning for a neighbor to buy diapers and food for her baby because of the high cost of those items.

Then, while doing the cleaning, she lifted something heavy which caused a herniated disc in her spine. In excruciating pain, she went to the doctor who informed

her that she needed urgent lifesaving surgery. I covered the costs for her personally, along with her extended recovery time in the hospital. She is back home now.

Then a new crisis arose. Romania is one of the poorest countries in Europe. The extended family consists of the two sisters approximately 31 and 28 years of age who have three children and four children respectively. They are estranged members of one of the ethnic minority groups in Romania that have endured persecution and slavery in Europe for hundreds of years and were targeted for extermination by Hitler in World War II.

They filed for refugee status in Canada. But to originally bring the

whole family group, their only option was to take a private loan of \$40,000 US from a neighbor in Romania. She now demanded repayment in full, plus \$10,000 interest. I have helped with the payment of \$20,000. The \$10,000 interest claim has been dropped. Now we are under extreme pressure and urgently looking for funds to pay the remaining \$20,000 as soon as possible, to avoid unpleasant consequences.

Here are additional important details. Their mother was a Muslim of Pakistani origin. She died very shortly after the birth of her second daughter, who still agonizes over the loss. All of the family members have

*Cont. on page 12*

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*We have been publishing The Muslim Observer for the last 22 years, and we thank you for your support. You have supported us because we offered viewpoints that no other news media would offer. Aware that our community and especially our youth get inspired by seeing the positive news about the community and learning about fresh thinking and accountable leadership.*

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**Cont. from page 3.  
Spirit Of Fasting**

get anything out of fasting except thirst and hunger. These are the people who fast but do not refrain from bad behavior.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said "God has no need for the hunger or thirst of someone who hurts others, violates their dignity or usurps their rights."

Fasting has been associated with several potential physical benefits, such as reduction in calorie intake, which can lead to weight loss. Fasting has been found to improve insulin sensitivity, which can help with blood sugar control. Some studies have shown that fasting can help lower blood

pressure, reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease. Fasting has been associated with improved immunity, and a reduction in inflammation, which is linked to several chronic diseases such as arthritis, cancer, and heart disease. Some studies have suggested that fasting can improve cognitive function and may even reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's. It's important to note that the physical benefits of fasting may vary depending on the individual and the type of fasting, and fasting should always be done under the guidance of a healthcare professional.

It must be emphasized that one must not fast just as a ritual, and consume excessive food

at night for self-pleasure. God says in Quran "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness – to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend wealth, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for setting the slaves free; to establish prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient in tribulation and adversity, and in times of panic (or stress). Such are the people of truth and they are al-Muttaqun. (2:177)

In Ramadan, fasting brings Muslims together as a community, with

shared experiences of fasting and breaking the fast together. It creates a sense of unity and brotherhood as Muslims come together to worship and share meals.

For fasting to be truly universal, its benefits of strengthening human relations must be extended beyond the ties with Muslims to people of all faiths. Fasting is meant to promote a sense of what it means to be truly human, and its universality is reflected by extending cordial relationship to Muslims of all sects and people of all faiths. That is indeed the wisdom expressed in Quran, Al-Hujra, Surah 49:13: "O mankind! We have created you male and female and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know

one another. The noblest of you, in sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Allah Knows and is Aware."

Overall, fasting in Ramadan is an act of worship that offers spiritual benefits that go beyond just abstaining from food and drink. It is a time for self-reflection, purification, and spiritual growth that can have a profound impact on a Muslim's faith and life.

Dr. Ahmed is the former Professor of Psychiatry at Southwestern Medical School, chairman emeritus MCC for Human Services, and president, the Institute of Medieval and Post Medieval studies. He can be reached at mbahmed05@yahoo.com.

**Cont. from page 4.  
Muslim Women's Day**

played outstanding roles in all walks of life, including education, business, economics, politics and governance, Zardari said, listing successes. That includes the first woman president of Indonesia, the first prime ministers of Tunisia and Türkiye and the youngest Muslim girl to win the Nobel Peace Prize, Malala Yousafzai. She was shot in the face by the Taliban in Paki-

stan while riding in a school bus.

The Pakistan forum drew numerous other speakers, but the spokesperson for the Pakistan mission to the UN said it was not inspired by a proposal voiced by Amina Mohammed, the UN's deputy secretary-general, in late January, after she and other UN officials traveled to Afghanistan to talk to the Taliban, that the UN and the OIC should hold an international confer-

ence in March on women in the Muslim world. (Mohammed spoke at the Pakistan event in a pre-recorded message.) — DAMILOLA BANJO

Other quotes from speakers:

Mohamed Shihab, minister for gender, family and social services, Maldives: "The right to education for every child in the Maldives without discrimination is enshrined within the child rights protection act and the Education Act of

2020."

Wafa Bani Mustafa, minister of social development, Jordan: Jordan has granted particular importance to refugees, specifically refugee women, by "guaranteeing them a dignified life on the basis of the humanist messages of Islam and the moral values of all Jordanian people."

Amal Hamad, minister of women's affairs, Palestine: Education is mandatory for all Palestinian children.

Noura AlKaabi, minister of state, United Arab Emirates: "Extremism distorts Islam as a means of justifying discriminatory practices and misogynistic policies against women and girls. Islamophobia instrumentalizes the status of women in Islam in a cynical effort to vilify and otherize Islam and Muslims."

**Cont. from page 7.  
Muslim Center In Portugal**

was a calm person who had received help from the Ismaili community in terms of knowledge of languages, knowledge, food care, care for younger children," he said.

Omer Taeri, president of the Association of the Afghan Community

in Portugal, told CNN Portugal the suspect arrived in the country last year. He said the alleged attacker suffered from "psychological trauma" after the death of his wife and was worried about his children.

Taeri asked for people to not "judge an entire community by one incident."

Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa said

police shot the suspect and told reporters the attack was "a criminal act."

"Everything points to this being an isolated incident," Costa said, without elaborating.

Armed police from a special operations unit could formed a perimeter outside the building following the incident.

The Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, generally known as the Ismailis, belong to the Shia branch of Islam. The Ismaili Muslims are a culturally diverse community living in more than 25 countries around the world.

The incident comes as a shock as Portugal is rare to report incidents of violence towards the

Islamic community.

"The Ismaili community is shocked and saddened by this incident and is providing support to the families of the victims," the Ismaili Community said in a statement. Neither police nor the community identified the women who died.

**Cont. from page 11.  
Ramadan Appeal**

endured constant racial prejudice and discrimination. There are probably more damaging details that I am unaware of, however I know that the youngest sister was bullied and threatened with sexual violence in the sixth grade. And now, her 9-year-old daughter has just experienced bullying at school and

doesn't want to continue her studies in Suceava.

The family's objective is to avoid trafficking, especially of the three youngest daughters, and to survive dire circumstances in Romania long enough to save money for the air tickets back to Canada for a second time. Their dream is to eventually have a business of their own here in the Greater Toronto Area.

We are requesting your urgent assistance in meeting this need for \$20,000 USD to immediately pay off the loan. (Update: with the start of Ramadan, we have received \$2,050 CN of the \$20,000 US needed.) The neighbor lady who made the critical loan is now under heavy pressure from her husband to secure immediate full payment. The Canadian based sister is receiving

demanding calls and enduring intense pressure. Ramadan generosity and kindness is this family's greatest hope.

They meet the requirements needed to be zakat eligible at this auspicious time of the year in four categories: 1. Poor and indigent, 2. The needy, 3. Bringing the heart close to Islam, and 4. Those in debt. We ask for your prayers

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### Cont. from page 1. Judges In NJ

mise and continue to serve our community in such an honorable way," said Rana Sabagh, a social services manager at a Paterson mosque, calling it a "proud and historic moment."

Kahf and Youssef were not the first Muslim women to become state judges. Sharifa Salaam and Kalimah Ahmad serve as Superior Court judges in Essex and Hudson counties, respectively. Three Muslim men also are state judges, Sohail Mohammed in Passaic County, Rahat Babar in Mercer County, and Hany Mawla in the Appellate Division.

But the images of Kahf, wearing a hijab, swearing her oath on the Quran and getting a standing ovation, struck a chord with the public and

were widely shared on social media. The swearing-in was in front of her children, parents and husband and a crowd of supporters so large some were in overflow rooms. For her oath, she used a vintage Quran that had been handwritten by her great-grandmother in the 1880s.

Headlines captured her accomplishment on news sites in Morocco, India and Turkey. "Nadia Kahf becomes New Jersey's first hijabi judge," wrote Sinar Daily, a news site in Malaysia.

"I'm very proud to represent the Muslim and Arab communities of New Jersey and the United States," Kahf said at the swearing-in ceremony. "I want the younger generation to see that they can practice their religion without fear. That they can be who they are. Diver-

sity is our strength. It is not our weakness."

Youssef was sworn in the next day at the Somerset County courthouse, while a larger, official swearing-in ceremony is being planned in her honor in several weeks.

Neither responded to requests for comment.

The elevation of these women to the New Jersey Superior Court comes as some women have faced prejudice and measures to restrict use of the hijab in France and India.

Common stereotypes are rooted in falsehoods, said Dalia Fahmy, a professor of political science at Long Island University. In the U.S., Muslim women are the second-most-highly educated religious minority group, said Fahmy. In the past two elections, nearly 200 Muslim

women ran for office, with many winning their elections, Fahmy added. In New Jersey, the first two Muslims to serve in the state Legislature, Shama Haider and Sadaf Jaffer, are female.

"Muslim women throughout history have achieved the highest levels of occupation and power," Fahy said. "That's not reflected in what we see in popular culture and popular media."

In New Jersey, the communities that Kahf and Youssef call home have known these two women as leaders, since long before they became judges.

Kahf, a family law and immigration attorney in Haledon, has served as chair of the New Jersey chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Muslim civil rights organization. She is also chairwoman of the

Islamic Center of Passaic County, one of the largest mosques in the state.

Kahf, who came to the U.S. from Syria at age 2, also served as legal adviser to Wafa House, a nonprofit domestic violence and social services agency based in Clifton.

Youssef was a founding member and past president of the New Jersey Muslim Lawyers Association. As supervising attorney at Central Jersey Legal Services, a nonprofit law firm, she provided legal assistance to low-income individuals.

Youssef is also a member of the Supreme Court Committee on Women in the Courts and the New Jersey State Bar Association's Diversity and Pro Bono committees. She is also on the board of the Rutgers Center for Race, Rights and Security.

### Cont. from page 1. Humza Yousaf

On March 28, this was confirmed with the Scottish Parliament formally selecting Yousaf as the first Minister of Scotland. According to Sky News, "Opposition parties were able to put themselves forward in the process, but with the backing of the Greens – as well as his own SNP members – Mr Yousaf successfully saw off challenges from Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross, Scottish Labour leader

Anas Sawar and Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton.

It means Mr Yousaf's name will now be submitted to the King, with a formal session to swear him in expected at the Court of Session in Edinburgh on Wednesday." Yousaf went on to say: "I will never shy away from tackling the big issues our country faces. I will lead a government that listens carefully and respects the views of all MSPs." In addition to a personal achieve-

ment, Yousaf's election represents a significant milestone in that he is the first ethnic minority to be First Minister of Scotland and Muslim to be the leader of any Western Nation.

Yousaf's election was hailed as a great accomplishment in that it's the first time a Muslim will be leading a western nation, and if he achieves independence, western country. Yousaf's parents came to Scotland with his Father being from Pakistan and his mother

coming from Kenya and being of South Asian descent. Additionally, it should be noted that the end of the leadership contest was done while Yousaf was fasting for Ramadan. Yousaf committed in his speech to leading the generation which would achieve Independence as well as serving the people of Scotland generally.

According to Click on Detroit, "Yousaf joined the pro-independence SNP in 2005, inspired partly by its then-leader Alex

Salmond's opposition to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, which the U.K. under Prime Minister Tony Blair had joined. Yousaf said he felt independence from the U.K. was the only way to ensure Scotland would not become embroiled in another illegal war."

In addition to Yousaf, the leader of Scottish Labour, Anas Sarwar, is also a Muslim of South Asian heritage.

### Cont. from page 1. Muslim Inmates

Illinois makes it a point to share grace with those spending the special time of year away from loved ones.

"Mosques across the world are packed in these blessed nights. The community is standing shoulder to shoulder in prayer, breaking their fasts together, there is a lot of joy. But the Muslim community often forgets to ask, 'How is Ramadan for Muslim Inmates?'" Im?m Azfar Uddin said.

Im?m Uddin, a religious guide to the Islamic

Foundation North community in Libertyville, wants to provide Muslim inmates the community that they are often stripped of when they enter the system.

He visits the Lake County Jail once a month to provide a Friday sermon to Muslim inmates. Once the pandemic hit, Im?m Uddin was limited to only speaking to them through a glass wall — a barrier that turned to a bridge.

"When I was first told about our new arrangements, I was upset. But I realized I was able to connect to them on a deeper level. They were

able to be more vulnerable," he said.

During these one-on-one conversations, Im?m Uddin shared he was able to listen to their goals in life from being a better father to career paths once their time is up. "Society looks at them as criminals first but when you take the time to listen to their stories and look at them eye to eye, you will realize this is a person just like me," he said.

When Im?m Uddin visited the inmates in February, he was pleased to see the group establishing goals for the sacred month, from managing

depression to establishing plans for when they are released.

Many of them gained wisdom from reading the Quran as well.

"Despite being separated from community, they have always seemed hopeful," he said.

There were approximately 25 Muslim inmates at the Lake County Jail with limited spiritual support, an issue that is exacerbated during a community-focused month like Ramadan.

Im?m Uddin said that instead of fasting the usual 14-15 hours, inmates in the U.S. fast longer, up

to 20 hours even, if their eating times were not accommodated for.

Despite the binding circumstances that many faith-practicing inmates have faced, Im?m Uddin is moved by their level of gratitude.

"A lot of times I visited the jail with the intention of helping people who have been neglected by society at large yet it is they who have taught me to become a more grateful person." Im?m Uddin said.

Im?m Uddin plans to deliver his second Friday sermon in three years on April 7.

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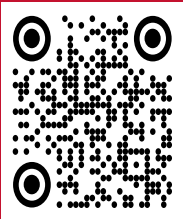
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