

APPOINTMENT OF IMAMS, MUEZZINS AND TEACHERS OF ISLAMIC DEEN

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent changes in the political, social landscape and most importantly, a need to aspire towards sound Islamic principles, values and ideals have called for an assessment as to how Imams, Muezzins and Teachers of Islamic Deen ("the individuals") are treated and acknowledged.

2. MOTIVATING FACTORS

The dire need for a formal discussion document recording the relationship has been motivated by the following factors:

- Notwithstanding that it is an honour and privilege to hold the above positions, the majority of the individuals holding these positions consider these positions as the sole cause for making their livelihood and as a means of sustenance for them and their families. Whilst some of these individuals perform the tasks for non-monetary reasons and *Alhamdulillah*, may Allah reward them for this, majority consider these functions to be the sole cause of income to support their families.
- Unfair and racist practices have taken place against Imams, Muezzins and teachers of Islamic knowledge.
- The South African Labour Laws require every individual to be provided with certain written particulars of employment on commencement of employment.
- These individuals play a key role in the education of children, our, society, as a whole and the smooth and effective functioning of our *Masâjid* and *Madâris* and it is important to recognise this.
- It is tragic that these individuals are not recognised or adequately rewarded.
- Most of them are treated in a rude and abrupt manner by parents, pupils and other individuals.
- Failure to deduct and pay over income tax in respect of South African Tax Laws is also widespread.
- Failure to register for Unemployment Insurance Contribution also results in tremendous hardships on individuals whose -employment is terminated.

- Failure to provide for an agreed and credible basis of dispute resolution results in individuals who contest that the termination of their services as unfair referring such disputes to Government- created bodies where the likelihood of the dispute being arbitrated by non-Muslims is great.

3. THE WAY FORWARD

- 3.1 It would therefore be advisable to, over a period of time, introduce certain minimum conditions of service and salaries, for the individuals to reflect the communities, appreciation and acknowledgement. This can be done by, *inter alia*,
- 3.1.1 to remunerate them at a level that can be considered fair and equitable;
 - 3.1.2 to introduce a pension/provident fund;
 - 3.1.3 to introduce a standard 'handbook of rules and procedures or Acceptable conduct;
 - 3.1.4 to introduce a grievance procedure;
 - 3.1.5 to create a private dispute resolution body based on Islamic principles to preside over and arbitrate over any disputes;
 - 3.1.6 to make available a list of medical doctors, dentistry and pharmacists in various areas that, on a voluntary basis, or at a slightly reduced fee attend to the basic healthcare needs of the individuals and their immediate families;
 - 3.1.7 creating a separate or distinct bursary fund for the further- education and training of the individuals
- 3.2 it is, also acknowledged that various communities appoint the above individuals some localities may not be in a position to meet the new minimum standards.
- 3.3 It is accepted that certain communities cannot pay or remunerate the individuals at certain acceptable salaries. There is therefore a need to make up for the deficit in these circumstances by for example, make provision for members of the community to donate towards the salaries of the above individuals.

4. CONCLUSION

It is a disgrace and a blemish on us as a Muslim community if we cannot recognise and reward the efforts of those individuals who play such an important role in imparting Islamic knowledge.