

The role of Muslim businessmen in the development of the community and advancement of Islam in Southern Africa is well known, fruits of which we are reaping today.

Institutions and services have been established in all fields of endeavour which have benefited through the success and generosity of these businessmen. These include the building of Masaajid, the establishment of religious schools, culture and welfare organisations, medical and educational fields, manufacturing and retail sectors and many others.

Butchers and wholesalers in particular have played the additional role of supplying Halaal meat products and many of the descendants of those pioneer generations still hold the reins of those businesses today.

Through the difficult colonial era of business restrictions, to the Apartheid past of difficult dealing through meat boards and municipal abattoirs, the Group Areas Act and consumer demands of changing lifestyles, they have been the bastion for the community's needs. Whether it is supply of product for relief aid, religious functions, Haleem for Ramadaan or hampers for the poor; they have come to the fore in cash and kind.

Many of these establishments also played a pivotal role in the field of Halaal regulation by endorsing the efforts of Halaal certifiers to ensure that abattoirs submit to regulatory processes for Halaal assurance and have chosen to be certified themselves.

Therefore, it is abhorrent in the extreme and an insult to the integrity of these businessmen when the Eastern Cape tabloid, the Majlis, supported by its agent "Jamiat" of De Deur, Gauteng province, pronounce that the products sold by them are Haraam. According to the Majlis **"all processed chicken"** are Haraam and **"the meat (lamb/beef) of all non-muslim abattoirs is Haraam"**.

Every industry has its share of deviations that need to be addressed. SANHA has been in the forefront of exposing and resolving issues such as inadequate Muslim supervision at non-Muslim abattoirs, sausage casings, contamination during transportation, etc. but to blanketly aver that butchers and retailers have been supplying their community with Haraam for years is too ludicrous to even suggest or contemplate.

This detestable action by the Majlis tabloid which is unfortunately based on factual inaccuracies appears hell-bent on extracting more than a pound of flesh and must be rejected outright by all South Africans. Other certifiers who have been silent up to now or lack the courage to fend off unwarranted and unjust attacks are doing a disservice to their certified plants and the Muslim consumer public.

Your constructive comments, criticism and feedback is truly appreciated

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