



# PRESS RELEASE



## **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty: MJC (SA)**

**Wednesday, 16 October 2019**

In a world with unprecedented levels of economic development, technological advancements and financial resources, it is woefully unacceptable that people are still living in extreme poverty. Very often poverty is categorised as merely an economic issue. Rather it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that encompasses a lack of both income and the capabilities to live in dignity.

The innate dignity conferred by God on every man, woman and child is at the centre of Islamic teachings on development. God unambiguously declares in the Glorious Qur'an:

*"We have bestowed dignity on the progeny of Adam and borne them over land and sea, and provided for them sustenance out of the good things of life, and favoured them far above most of Our creation" al-Isra, 17:70*

Thus, everyone has the right to live a life worthy of dignity and respect simply by virtue of being human; regardless of race, religion, gender, ability, age or economic status.

The Islamic principle at the core of preserving the dignity of human beings is justice. This is evidenced from the Qur'anic injunction:

*"O you who believe, be persistently standing firm for God as witnesses of divine justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear God; indeed, God is Acquainted with what you do." al-Ma'idah, 5:8*

Human rights are a means to achieve justice and preserve human dignity. It is God who bestowed dignity on humankind as He elucidates in Al - Qur'an 17:70. It is He who makes it unacceptable for anyone to violate human rights and take away a person's dignity. This is evidenced in Hadith Al-Qudsi:

*Abu Dharr (RA) narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him), who intern narrated from God Almighty who said, "O my devotees, Indeed I forbade oppression upon Myself, and I have forbidden it amongst yourselves. So do not oppress each other..." Recorded by Imam Muslim.*

Therefore, when undertaking the onerous task of poverty eradication, we need to understand that the presence of abject poverty in various communities robs people of the innate human dignity conferred to them by God.

Moreover, the belief that God is the source of human rights leads to the conceptualisation of the rights of others as obligations on all believers.

Therefore, as we mark International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, we need to collectively reflect on our role as civil society, to ensure that we cooperatively work towards the eradication of abject or extreme poverty.

Poverty is more than just the lack of income and resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to quality education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion. This multi-dimensional view reveals a world in which poverty is a much broader, more entrenched problem.

The Muslim Judicial Council (SA) therefore calls for a re-commitment to the project of eradicating abject poverty in our country through a cross-sectoral approach led by Government. As a religious body, we also encourage all those who have the means, to donate their time, resources, skills or money, to ensure that in our lifetime, we can substantially reduce the number of people living below the poverty line.

**Issued by Shaykh Isgaak Taliep**

**MJC Secretary-General**

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