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THE AFRICA FEDERATION CHAIRMAN & OFFICE BEARERS OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE ZANZIBAR ISLAND – A PROMISING BRIGHT FUTURE

Before the Zanzibar revolution in January 1964, the K.S.I. community numbering to about 5,000 was the largest Jamaat of Khoja Ithna-Asheris in Africa. Our community members were reasonably well settled and somewhat contented in the Zanzibar Archipelago which lies in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Tanzania. Some of our people held high ranking positions in the Government Institutions and private companies in Zanibar, whilst others were mainly shop keepers, employees in the Civil Service, some with the international companies and others with the local frames while there were also export and import traders, industrialists, and owners of clove and coconuts plantations and farms (Shamba).

In the aftermath of the revolution that followed nationalization of the buildings, properties, farms and industries, and the uncertainties of the future, most of the Asians and Arabs, including our community members left Zanzibar. Some moved to the mainland the then Tanganyika, while others migrated to Oman, UAE, England, India and Pakistan. The Zanzibar Island total population in 1964 was about 300,000, currently it is estimated about one million.

Presently there are still two Jamaats in Zanzibar, Kuwwatul Islam and Hujjatul Islam, with a population of only 200 people remaining in Zanzibar. They are mostly elderly and retired people and a few businessmen.



The minaret of Hujjatul Islam
Mosque built in 1905



Hujjatul Islam Jamaat
Mosque & Imambargha.

Following is a brief anecdote of the history of the two Jamaats in Zanzibar.

It was between 1870 and 1880 when our revered elders with a group of about 250 adherents branched away from the main Khoja stream in Zanzibar. The first Mosque and Imambargha was built in Kiponda between 1880/1882, and during the same time the Rahaleo Kabrastan was also acquired. In 1882, the K.S.I. Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat, commonly known as *Juni*, the first ever Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat in the world was formed. The Karachi Jamaat was formed in 1892 and Mumbai Jamaat in 1899.

The K.S.I. Hujjatul Islam Jamaat, commonly known as *Nai* was formed in 1890, the Nai Imambargha and Mosque built around the year 1900 with a small membership that grew steadily over the years. Kabrastan was also acquired across Mwembeladu. Part of the Kabrastan still exists, unfortunately is not protected and is not being looked after.



Mehrab in Kuwwatul Islam Mosque



Mehrab in Hujjatul Islam Mosque

Report of the visit to Zanzibar by AFED Chairman and Office Bearers

A Two-Day visit, from 13th to 14th November 2010 was made to Zanzibar, meeting the officials of the two Jamaats and the Bilal Muslim Mission, the AFED delegation also visited the Bilal Mosque at Mwanakwerekwe, Amani Schools and the Mwera Centre, where a small Madressah is situated.

Hujjatul Islam Jamaat – Brief report

The series of discussion covered several important issues and the future developments, including the status of the Jamaat Waqf properties. Other subjects covered were the Madressah, Health, Education and Economic upliftment of our members in Zanzibar. Presently there are 40 registered members of the Jamaat whose families comprise a total of 80 individuals. The Hon. Treasurer, Br. Shihab explained the efforts being made by the Jamaat to repossess the ground floor of the Imambargha presently under the Waqf Commission, unfortunately the ground floor is rented out as shops to individuals, with no income to the Jamaat.

The religious activities taking place presently include daily Namaz, Namaz-e-Jumaa, Madressah, Majlises on Thursdays and on Wafat/Khushalis and on special occasion like Eid-ul-Adha prayers.

Below photograph: Meeting with the KSI Hujjatul Islam Jamaat Vice Chairman, Alhaj Sajjad Tarmohamed, the Hon. Treasurer, Alhaj Shahab Taki with the Chairman of AFED, Alhaj Anwarali Dharamsi, Hon. Secretary, Alhaj Aunali Khalfan and the Hon. Treasurer, Alhaj Mohamed Hemani.



Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat – Brief report

Discussions dwelt on Education, Health, Welfare and Economic upliftment. There are some students from Zanzibar who are being supported by MAMAS and the AFED Education Board for higher education studies. Alhaj Mohamedraza appreciated AFED's support in educational assistance, and pledged that the Jamaat will put more emphasis on religious and secular education in Zanzibar.

The Jamaat is keen to rebuild School Feiz which is about 200 years old, as it stands now, it is not in a habitable condition. Alhaj Mohamedraza also highlighted the efforts made earlier to repossess about 60 Waqf properties; he assured the AFED Chairman that he will assist to pursue this matter. Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat has 34 registered members whose families total 120 individuals.

Alhaj Mohamedraza also pointed out the deteriorating condition of the Musafirkhana in Kiponda, urging for immediate action. Details of the Musafirkhana will be obtained from the current Trustees.



Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat
Imambargha, Kiponda



Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat
Mosque & School Feiz



Musafirkhana at Kiponda

Below photograph: Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat officials with AFED: From left: Hasnain Dharamsee, Mukhi of the Jamaat, Baker Dharamsee, Member of the Jamaat, Aunali Khalfan, Hon. Secretary of AFED, Anwarali Dharamsi, Chairman of AFED, Mohamedraza Hassan, President of the Jamaat, Mohamed Hemani, Hon. Treasurer of AFED, Gulamabbas Saleh, Hon. Treasurer of the Jamaat, Sajjad Virjee, Managing Committee Member of the Jamaat.



Visit to the Bilal Muslim Mission – Zanzibar Centres, Schools and Mosque

Meeting at Bilal Islamic Seminary with Treasurer of Bilal Zanzibar Alhaj Shihab Hassan Taki and Treasurer of AFED Alhaj Mohamed Hemani.

Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania in Zanzibar operates schools from Nursery to Secondary at Bilal Islamic Seminary at Amani in Zanzibar. There are total of 1,118 students. They also run Madressah in the afternoon, whereby about 70 boys and girls take part. The school premises have been donated by Alhaj Naushad Mohamed Suleiman which has a mosque in its compound used by the students.



Meeting at the Mwera Centre – AFED Office Bearers, Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania Chairman, Alhaj Shabbir Somji, Alhaj Shihab Hassan Taki and Maalim Hamisi, Ahmed Muraweej, who recently joined Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania as Economics Upliftment Project Coordinator.



There is a plan to start a pilot project at Mwera Centre (**pictured below**) for the economic upliftment of the local Shia community. The 5 acre farm which is owned by the late Fazel Master family is being earmarked for the pilot project. The Project Coordinator of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, Alhaj Ahmed Muraweej explained AFED office bearers on the plans. During the visit it was pointed out that there is an urgent need to protect the land from intrusion and squatters by erecting a wall fence around the property.

Alhaj Shabbir Somji is presently in contact with the Master family in Birmingham on this matter. The centre also has a Madressah which was built with donations from the Master family.



The AFED delegation also visited the Shia Ithna-Asheri Mosque at Mwanakwerekwe which is not in use since 2009 due to dispute with the neighbors and a court order which is still in force.

We wish to thank the Hujjatul Islam Jamaat and the Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat Office Bearers and Managing Committee members for their warm welcome and hospitality during the two days visit to Zanzibar. Our special thanks to Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania Chairman, Alhaj Shabbir Somji, Alhaj Shihab Hassan Taki and the project coordinator, Ahmed Muraweej for their time and hospitality.

Secretariat