

official organ of the national muslim prison board sa

# islam

OUR HOPE

MUHARRAM 1438/OCTOBER 2016



## NMPB VISIT TO MAPUTO

A delegation of the National Muslim Prison consisting of Mufti Siraj Desai (Ameer), Moulana Shabbeer Ahmed Asmal (Secretary General), Moulana Mohamed Azeem Khatieb (National Advisor), and Moulana Ahmed Namutamba (Deputy Ameer) visited Maputo in September this year. The delegation departed on Wednesday 28 September and was welcomed at the Airport by Mufti Imtiaz Ebrahim Sahib of the Darul Ifta Wal Irshaad, Maputo and Ml. Rafeek.

The purpose of the visit was chiefly to conduct workshops on Spiritual Care Work and to address the Ulema on challenges in this field as well as general da'wah. We also conducted Juma and public programs in various masaajid. Alhamdu lillah The Ulema of Maputo went out of their way to welcome us and make our stay a pleasant one. We visited and met with all the main organizations engaged in Deeni and Da'wah efforts in that region of the country.

On our first day in Maputo we met with **C.A.M. (The Associao Comissao De Apoio as Makatibs Mocambique)**: Run by Moulana Taqdeer sahib, a graduate of Darul-Uloom Zakariya.

This organization operates about 100 Maktabs in Mozambique with approximately 5000 students. They have 150 Teachers and includes adult classes. All the funding that they receive is from businesses in Maputo

Some villages where Maktabs are conducted are located about 800 km's outside Maputo. They have annually a whole week workshop in an area called Gaza. The Mualims and Mualimah's are regularly trained. Much focus is on the Halal standards of the country. They also operate a small network inside the prisons to cater for Muslim inmates. The same syllabus of the maktabs is also used in the prisons. From them we learnt that the main causes of crime in the country are unemployment, poverty, and drugs. Hijackings and kidnappings have now taken center stage in Mozambique. Other personal who were part of the meeting was Mln. Mohamed, Mln. Ahmad and Mln. Tarmohamed. We had discussed our objectives for coming to Maputo and brief activities of the NMPB were explained. The meeting concluded with a positive note of forming a Muslim Prison Board in Maputo.

After Eshaa (8.00 pm) the whole delegation was present at a program presented by Mufti Siraj Desai at Masjid Taqwa. Mufti Siraj gave some insight on the NMPB -SA. All talks were translated from English to Portuguese. He also spoke on Taqwa and Imaan. A big crowd attended the lecture.

The next day we had a meeting with the Darul Ifta Ummati organization, headed by Mufti Hussain Ali Essa. With him were his colleagues, Ml Arsheed Ismail and Ml Al-Faizel. We were accompanied by Mufti Imtiaz and his brother Hafiz Irfaan and Mln. Abu Saeed. Mln Shabeer Asmal and I gave a short background on the formation of the NMPB-SA. Mufti Siraj spoke about the structure of the NMPB-SA and after-care of offenders. Mufti Hussain Eesa the Ameer of the CHM the Mozambique Halal authority gave a broad outline of their functions.

After Magrib that same day we had a meeting with the Muslim Solidarity Civil Society –This is a community organization, working in the field of Zakah, Iftaar, Qurbani, Flood Victims and emergency relief. Mufti Siraj explained the functions of the NMPB (SA) and how our model could assist the Civil Society. Farouk Jassat, one

of the members of the Civil Society expounded the vision of his organization and how it benefits the people of Mozambique. They also coordinate the funding of bursaries of potential students. They would like to arrange with the prison authorities of Maputu to arranged Skills programs in the prisons such as welding, computer literacy, and carpentry. They support the idea of a Muslim Prison Board in Maputo and will attend the workshop at Masjid Ebrahim on Saturday In-Sha-Allah.

**On Thursday** Mufti Siraj Desai, in the company of Moulana Arsheed sahib visited the central prison of Maputo. Some of the interesting points that emerged from this visit were;

- 1) Due to lack of funds prisoners are not provided with uniforms. They wear whatever clothing they came with.
- 2) There were about 3,000 prisoners in that centre, clearly overcrowded. Again, lack of funding is the reason for this.
- 3) Most prisoners were imprisoned for theft, an indication of the prevalent poverty in the country.
- 4) In spite of the conditions and financial constraints, the offenders were productive. They attended computer classes, sewing classes, general schooling, carpentry, welding and other similar courses. They produced goods that were sold outside the prison
- 5) The prison has its own farm where it has so far, for the year 2016, produced 16 tons of tomatoes and 20 tons of cabbages, along with other smaller amounts of vegetables.
- 6) The Muslim inmates have their own musalla right inside the prison, and are able to offer at least 3 namaazes daily. They have one of their own as an Imam. Our delegation offered Zuhr salaah at this musalla behind this Imam, after which a short naseeha was rendered. There were about 30 Muslims in attendance, though the total Muslim population in that prison is about 100.
- 7) All food at this facility is halaal. They do not serve meat; only chicken, which is sourced from a Muslim supplier, beans and fish.
- 8) The officials we met were pleased that Muslim Scholars were going to pay regular visits to the centres in order to educate and rehabilitate offenders spiritually.

#### **DARUL-ULOOM ANAS BIN MALIK**

On Friday we went to Matola to visit Darul Uloom Anas bin Maalik, the Principal of which is Hazrat Moulana Nazier Loonat sahib. We were given a guided tour by Moulana M. Loonat, an Ustaad in the Darul-Uloom. Mufti sahib delivered a short Naseeha to students and Mualimeen.

#### **JUMU'AH PROGRAMS**

Moulana Khatieb sahib conducted Jumu'ah in a Mosque inside the Bohe Prison, another example of religious freedom granted to Muslim inmates. 40 Brothers attended the Jumu'ah, which was translated into Portuguese by Ml Arsheed. Ml Asmal conducted Jumu'ah at Musajid Babus Salaam with translation by Moulana Ilyas Seedat, and Mufti sahib conducted Jumu'ah at Musjid Bilaal with translation by Mufti Hussain Eesa.

Just before Asr we were taken on a tour of the girls madresa run by Mufti Imtiyaz sahib, where a short naseeha was given to the Talibaat – 4<sup>th</sup> year 10 students and 5<sup>th</sup> year 5 students.

#### **ROADSHOW**

The Muslim Prison Board Road-show took place at the Qubaa Mosque after Esha. Alhamdu lillah, the program was well attended and members of the Board addressed the audience explaining details of Spiritual Care Work, the need for this, and the function of the Prison Board. Some interesting questions were raised by the public.

#### **WORKSHOP**

Our workshop was conducted at the Ebrahim Mosque, where the Madresa of Darul-Irshaad is situated. 42 males attended and 35 Females including 2 Mozambique Correctional Services officials attended the workshop. A brief list of the programs that took place at the workshop

1. **Opening Qi'raat – Hafiz Ebrahim**
2. **Welcoming – Mufti Imtiaz Ebrahim our host**
3. **Mufti Siraj - Importance of Prison Dawah**
4. **MI Khatieb - Rehabilitation and Programmes**
5. **MI Ahmad - Taleem & Syllabus**
6. **MI Asmal - Tarbiyyah & Life Syllabus PowerPoint**
7. **Address by Sa Shiuan – Servisos De Pertencial Funcionamo – Ministro De Justice** His input: We are ready to work with all organizations – Rehabilitation and integration in society must be done. Central Prison Capacity is 880 but have currently 2000 to 3000 prisoners. The government has no finance and has given the responsibility to the Ministry of Justice. Spiritual Care gives hope to offenders and second phase is Rehabilitation. NGO's and Mosques must assist in up-skilling offenders with skills to equip them in the field of welding, electrical and plumbing etc. Transporting offenders to other areas is costly. We are ready to work with all. Come and motivate your plans for the future of our country. We regret that the NMPB (SA) could only visit two prisons. You must see the conditions of other Muslims. Muslims have a right to be treated as Muslims and the same for Christians. Please come and visit us again!
8. **Q & A**
9. **Zohar & Lunch 2.00pm**

#### **Ulama Programme 2.35 pm**

**Mufti Imtiaz – Introduction**

**Mufti Siraj - Naseehah (Increase your knowledge – Serve Deen – Spiritual leadership – you must be multi-trained – be united and honour your seniors)**

**MI Asmal - Hilaal Presentation; importance of this aspect.**

**A resolution was taken there would be follow up training of Ulema on Spiritual Care Work**

The workshop concluded with a Dua by Mufti Siraj

#### **ROLE OF THE ULEMA IN REHABILITATION**

In our address to the local Ulema it was emphasized that work of this nature is in essence Deen; it is Da'wah and quite significantly so. On this basis, it is imperative that the Ulema be in the forefront of spearheading and coordinating such work. The following are some reasons why we believe Ulema should be taking the lead in prison da'wah work and the moral regeneration of offenders:

- 1) **Imparting Islamic Education:** The domain of Ulema is provision of Islamic Education. Such a domain requires expert Ilm or Knowledge of Deen, and who better than Ulema to provide this service
- 2) **Protecting Aqaaid of offenders:** Prisoners have very little knowledge of Deen, and for the most part they are left to their own devices. They will, therefore, latch onto any literature that comes their way, be it correct or false. They are, therefore, easy prey for false sects and misguided elements. Combating this phenomenon is also the domain of Ulema only. In some instances Ahle Bid'ah have introduced their books and literature to offenders, as well as the Shiah. They target even non-Muslim offenders with the hope of converting them to their false Schools of Thought. This challenge can only met by the Ulema.
- 3) **GUIDANCE ON ISLAMIC MATTERS:** Muslim inmates have a variety of questions to ask. Some of these queries are very intelligent ones. Matters pertaining to nikah and divorce of inmates who are already married or who intend getting married, also need to be regulated. Sometimes it is the warders and officials who have questions on Islam. Muslim offenders are constantly in need of spiritual counseling and tarbiya. For all this and more, the guidance of the Ulema is vital.
- 4) **JUMU'AH SALAAH INSIDE JAILS:** In some Correctional Centres permission is granted to conduct

Jumu'ah prayers. Ulema are required to render the Jumu'ah talk and khutbah.

- 5) **REHABILITATIVE PROGRAMS:** For those who have been released or granted parole, the process of rehabilitation and moral reformation must continue. In fact, even more so in order to avoid recidivism (sliding back into crime). Part of this process is to link up the ex-offender with Ulema in his locality.
- 6) **ISLAMIC INSTITUTES:** Islamic institutes of learning also play a key role in providing post-release educational programs for ex-offenders. Of course, these institutes are managed by Ulema.
- 7) **PUBLIC AWARENESS:** Public awareness is also important, even as a crime-preventing factor. Lecturing to people on crime and its consequences, as well as invoking sympathy from people for the plight of those incarcerated. Ulema need to identify elements in their communities, as well as areas of potential crime, and direct their efforts tazikya and taribiya accordingly.
- 8) **CREATING ISLAMIC PROGRAMS:** A key factor in the rehabilitation of prisoners is the provision of life orientation programs that can assist them in their quest for moral regeneration. In this regard, the DCS has co-opted individuals and organizations like psychologists, Churches, researchers, etc, to prepare such programs. As a result we have programs such as Anger Management, Heart Lines, Family Values, Reading for Redemption, Restorative Justice, just to mention a few. These programs help in restoring to the prisoner his moral and humane values. However, most of these programs are Christian orientated and comprise Biblical quotations. The challenge for the Muslim Prison Board is to convert these same programs by instilling into them an Islamic flavor and theme. For this we need the help and cooperation of Ulema AND Muslim professionals in the field of psychology, drug and substance abuse, AIDs/HIV programs, etc. Should we succeed in rolling out a good number of these programs, not only will be contributing to the rehabilitation of prisoners, the Muslim community will be making its mark in the entire country as an important role player in serving the needs of civil society.