




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Algester Electorate, Ramadan

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (7.11 pm): Last Saturday night I was afforded the great privilege of being invited to a large Iftar dinner hosted by the Bangladesh Association in Brisbane. Iftar, of course, is the sunset meal to break fasting every day of Ramadan.

Ramadan, for those who are unfamiliar, is recognised as one of the most significant and holy times in the Islamic calendar. It is a month of spiritual reflection and self-improvement and, for those observing Ramadan, eating and drinking is refrained from between sunrise and sunset for the month. It is this daily fasting that is broken by the Iftar that brings family and friends together to celebrate, pray and reflect. Ramadan and Iftar is a practice that has taken place for thousands of years and remains very much an important part of many families' lives across my electorate of Algester and across Queensland.

The Iftar I attended last Saturday was the first for this year and the first I have attended since the shocking events of Gaza became part of the world's everyday news feeds. I spoke to guests whose families and friends have been impacted by the conflict and I heard their pain and despair for others during this holy month of Ramadan. I was mostly struck by the words of the Iman, who when he delivered the Dua, the Iftar prayer recited at the time of ending the fast, spoke of gratitude that the congregation could meet, pray and break fast together at the Iftar. He spoke of thanks that everyone could observe the spiritual practices in relative peace. He spoke of the ability of all in attendance to celebrate without fear. But it was the Iman's reflection of the observance of Ramadan in other parts of the world that were particularly moving.

He talked of his great despair for those in Gaza—those who may be unable to observe the holy month, the many women, children and families who are unable to secure food and water, medical assistance or safe shelter. His words were choked with tears as he said, 'But what of the people of Gaza?' I felt my tears too—the images of children against the backdrop of a devastating war zone flashing in my mind.

I have no doubt that there are many from across the Algester electorate who, in observing Ramadan, are thinking of family and friends in Gaza, but I also have no doubt that there are many Queenslanders like me who are seeing the images of conflict and are also asking, 'What of the people of Gaza?' It is this question that binds us from a humanitarian perspective and it is this question that compels me and many others to support an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

I want to acknowledge all of the organisers of the Iftar dinner that I was able to attend and I acknowledge the Bangladesh Association in Brisbane for their efforts.