

# Fast-food chain caught in tug of war

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Nando's has been drawn into a long-standing feud between rival Muslim halaal accreditation organisations.

The South African National Halaal Authority (SANHA) and the National Independent Halaal Trust (NIHT) have for many years been at odds over which is the recognised authority in the country, particularly after SANHA members quit to join the NIHT seven years ago.

In the latest development, SANHA last week posted an “urgent announcement” on its website stating that it had not accredited any of the Nando's outlets, menus or advertising material.

SANHA said further that some stores were displaying its logo “fraudulently”.

SANHA spokesman Ebi Lockhat said, “Our problem lies in the fact that our logo has been used without our knowledge or authorisation on a few occasions, which we regard in a very serious light.

“Once again, a store has used our logo, allegedly in error, which resulted in queries to our office on the halaal status of that store.

“In keeping with our mission to our membership, we issued the notice, which does not call into question the halaal status or Muslim ownership of Nando's stores. Rather, it is a general cautionary for consumers to be wary of the fraudulent use of our logo.”

Lockhat said Nando's chose to certify with other organisations locally and abroad, “some of whom allow the consumption of alcohol, which we disapprove of”.

He added that SANHA did not approach companies for certification, “as it did not wish to be seen touting for business or competing with other bodies”.

Nando's director Ahmed Mookadam said, “We don't believe that any of our outlets are using the SANHA logo. Our halaal body, the NIHT, has written to SANHA requesting them to supply the names of the outlets allegedly using their logo. We have received no response from them. Until they respond, we can't investigate.”

The NIHT says on its website, “The fact that SANHA states that they do not give any approval to any Nando's store is of no consequence to the Muslim ummah (community).

“The NIHT, an Islamic body of recognised and responsible ulama (a community of legal scholars of Islam), has undertaken the task of certifying the stores mentioned as halaal.”

Mookadam said Nando's did use the SANHA logo on one of its newly launched range of potato crisps. “The SANHA logo was placed on the packaging because the manufacturing plant is SANHA-approved.”

However, he said Nando's would withdraw the logo on new packing, as it understood that confusion may arise over the certification.

Source: *Sunday Times*

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