

Monday May 11th, 2020

Attention: Chief Medical Officer of Health, All Provinces and Territories of Canada

Subject: Enquiry regarding reopening and restrictions during Ramadan and Eid

Dear Doctor:

Thank you and thanks to all the members of the Provincial Emergency Operation Centre for your hard work and leadership during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

The [Canadian Muslim COVID-19 Task Force](#) was forged on March 12, 2020 as a collaborative platform to unify responses of 25 Muslim spiritual, medical and community service organizations across Canada to the COVID-19 pandemic. Led by the [Canadian Council of Imams](#) and the [Muslim Medical Association of Canada](#), the Task Force made the difficult decision to call for the complete suspension of Friday congregational prayers of any size for Muslims well before any provincial emergency announcements.

Several provinces have laid out plans for a graded relaxation of work and social restrictions. The impact of such measures will undoubtedly be closely monitored and continually evaluated. While recognizing that this is a dynamic situation and in anticipation that relaxation of restrictions may extend to houses of worship, **we are concerned that forthcoming guidance and recommendations for all houses of worship may not be uniform within each province.** As a lesson learned from the recommendation to suspend Friday congregational prayers, clear and consistent provincial guidance will help mitigate the additional challenge of any proposed relaxation of restrictions coinciding with Ramadan and Eid.

More than one million Canadian Muslims are diligently observing the holy month of Ramadan from their homes, a time when mosques are usually packed with worshippers for several congregational prayers throughout the day and night, and with special drives to provide food and essential provisions to those in need. Muslims are expected to celebrate **Eid ul Fitr** on **Sunday May 24, 2020** to mark the end of Ramadan. Eid typically starts with a morning prayer with thousands of Muslims of all ages gathered in close proximity in large indoor venues or parks, followed by numerous social gatherings including visiting the homes of friends and family members.

To help us proactively prepare Muslim houses of worship, organizations and community members and most importantly, safeguard the health of all Canadians, we are enquiring:

1. What, if any, are the current plans for the timing of reopening houses of worship and/or loosening restrictions on public gatherings including in parks, and with what limitations?
2. How likely are any plans affecting houses of worship to occur on or before May 24th, 2020?

We would like to discuss this matter along with the various considerations and implications in more detail at your convenience. We look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Dr. M. Hashim Khan MBBS FRCPC**

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