



COUNCIL OF IMAMS OF OTTAWA–GATINEAU CONSEIL DES IMAMS D'OTTAWA-GATINEAU

مجلس الأئمة في منطقة أوتاوا-جاتنو

Saturday, Sha'baan 20, 1442

April 3, 2021

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent and the Most Merciful

Preparing for Ramadan – Important Guidance to the Muslim Community

All praise belongs to Allah ﷻ, our Creator Whom alone we worship, and Whose protection only we seek. May the peace and blessings be upon Muhammad ﷺ, his rightly guided Companions ﷺ, and all those who follow them until the Final day.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam,

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

We hope and pray that you and your loved ones are all protected from the trial of our time in the form of the Covid-19 virus. The impact of this global pandemic hovering around for more than a year has re-affirmed our faith as to who is in real control of our destiny and situation. While the global humanity is trying to cope with the economic uncertainty and accompanying hardship, for the believers, this is the time to reflect and realign our priorities with the proper perspective.

Resumption of Prayers in *Masaajid*:

By the mercy of Allah ﷻ, the blessed month of Ramadan is just around the corner. Last year's Ramadan was very different and most of us missed our daily month-long attendance at our local masjid; especially *Iftar*, *Taraweeh*, and *Qiyaam* during the last ten days. Since the infection numbers are continuing to flare-up, we must be vigilant and do our part to meet the public health requirements. Some *Masaajid* are staggering the attendance while others are spreading the congregation into different quarters and floors. It will be important to minimize spot swapping during the prayers to reduce exposure. Therefore, the Council is asking the community to follow your local masjid's arrangement with full cooperation. Your efforts to minimize potential wider harm will be rewarded by Allah ﷻ in sha' Allah.

Issue of live streaming and praying in virtual *Jama'ah*:

Once again, the Council has been receiving numerous requests from within the community members on permission and validity of forming *Jama'ah* at home and virtually joining the *Imam* in a *Masjid* through live streaming of recitation. The Council has had deliberated this issue last year at length and also reviewed the opinions of well-known international scholars on the permissibility of such arrangements. Considering potential long-term implications of any such decision, the Council hereby is re-affirming its guidance to the community that



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virtual formation of *Jama'ah* is not valid under any jurisprudence. Consequently, any *Salaah* offered in a virtual set-up shall be invalid and required to be repeated.

Unified Ramadan time table for the Ottawa/Gatineau region:

With an expression of deep gratitude to Allah ﷻ, the Council is pleased to inform the community that once again we have a unified timetable formulated for the entire region. All times concerning fasting start/end as well as *Isha* prayer are synchronized, complying with all schools of jurisprudence. This is a very significant achievement and a huge blessing in the sense that it will eliminate all sorts of doubts in our most important *Ibadah*. The community is strongly advised to follow this timetable to avoid confusion and unnecessary debates. The next step is to develop a year-round timetable to unify our community.

Vaccination during Fasting:

As the plan for vaccine rollout in the region is firming up, the Council is advising our community that there are no religious implications on taking the vaccine. In fact, we are encouraged to take lead in any action that would allay the risk and enhance the quality of life of the general public. Taking vaccination while in the state of fasting will not cause any harm to your fast. The Council is asking the Muslim community to fully participate in the vaccination program as and when it becomes available to you.

The Community support to local *Masaajid*:

As a result of a very long pandemic, many community members have been suffering in their unique way. In sha' Allah, the situation will change before long. We must continue to engage with Allah ﷻ and put trust in Him. We must seek His protection from depression-like feelings and anxiety due to the prevalent uncertainty, loss of lives, and sad news all around us. We must have faith that there will surely be ease after the hardship.

While we are doing all that we can do, to continue the operation of *Masaajid* and fulfill their financial obligations, the Council is appealing the resourceful community members to support our institutions in this difficult time. As we recognize that our *Masaajid* have their fixed operating cost that must be covered, it is our responsibility to make sure we take care of it by making generous contributions in the greatly rewarding month of Ramadan.

Furthermore, our *Masaajid* are receiving an increasing number of distress calls from financially stressed families across the region. In order to meet this growing need, the Council is asking everyone to pay *Zakah* sooner rather than later. Please consult your local imams as to how to correctly calculate your *Zakah* and fulfill the important obligation.

Sadaqatul Fitr: The community is advised that the Council has decided **\$10.00 as a minimum amount** for your individual *Sadaqatul Fitr* obligation. ***You may pay more based on your capacity.***

We ask Allah ﷻ to alleviate this unprecedented suffering from the entire humanity out of His boundless Mercy and Rahmah.



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Signed by: (In alphabetical order of the first name)

Imam Ahmed Limame – The Outaouais Islamic Centre

Imam Anver Malam – Jami Omar

Imam Ismail Al-Batnuni – AMA (Masjid Al-Rahmah)

Imam Mohammad Badat – Masjid Bilal

Imam Muhammad Suliman – Ottawa Muslim Association

Imam Owais Tilly – Jami Omar

Imam Rashid Al-Qasmi – Masjid Taqwa

Imam Samy Metwally – Islamic Society of Gloucester

Imam Sikander Hashmi – Kanata Muslim Association

Imam Mylound Tajri – Aylmer Mosque

Imam Zijad Delic – South Nepean Muslim Community (SNMC)