

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –
MCC statement of commitment to anti-Racism

June 5, 2020

The brutal murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police on May 25 has sparked protests around the world against racism, police brutality and the systemic injustice faced by African-Americans for generations. In the wake of this unprecedented movement, the Muslim Community Center of Silver Spring, MD, commits to standing with the Black community and fighting against racism, police brutality and inequality.

African-Americans are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police officers than other races; studies show that between 2013-2019, fully 99% of police killings resulted in no charges. These murders lie at the intersection of systemic racism and police brutality and immunity, and millions are now echoing the black community's longstanding call for accountability, reform, and lasting change.

Following up on its recent statement condemning the murder and calling for justice, the MCC acknowledges that a statement alone is not enough to begin dismantling the deeply entrenched structural racism that plagues our country, as well as racism within our own Muslim community. The MCC is joining that call with a pledge to actively work against racism, as we are called to do by God in our holy book:

O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. - Qur'an 4:135

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is All-Knowing,

All-Aware. - Qur'an 49:13

In pursuit of fulfilling that pledge, the MCC governance will work toward these goals:

1. Engage more fully with our own black and African-American Muslim community members, listen to them and be more responsive; center their voices and **let them guide us** as we acknowledge and work to eradicate anti-black racism in the Muslim community; recognize that our growth and success as a community are tied to the growth and success of our black brothers and sisters.

2. For those of us who are non-black Muslims, educate ourselves extensively about the history of the black community, the strength and resilience that enabled the progress of all people of color, including immigrant Muslims, and the inequalities and injustices that they still face today. Celebrate the achievements of black Americans and their contributions to American society and culture and their successes in the fight for justice.

3. We must all understand that not being racist is not enough; we must be actively anti-racist. Establish programming to educate our community about the importance of actively being anti-racist, and to train community members in fighting against racist, unjust policies and behaviors and in holding leaders accountable.

4. **Work harder at implementing change in our own leadership:** making sure our community leaders are cognizant of our full diversity, as well as involving more diverse community members in leadership positions, from committee chairs to board members.

5. **Conduct an institutional review of policies, procedures, and practices.** Structural racism is more subversive than explicit racism. While MCC's policies and procedures may not explicitly exclude any single group of people, we have a responsibility to determine whether well-intentioned policies may inadvertently or indirectly exclude people.

6. **Continue this work beyond this current moment** and ensure racial justice is something MCC continually strives towards. We are committed to long term growth, not simply trying to address current events.

On Friday June 5 at 7 pm, MCC's Muslim Youth Organization (MYO) will be holding space on Instagram Live (@mccmyo) for our youth who have been impacted by racial trauma. And next week, MCC will be co-sponsoring a virtual town hall meeting hosted by Communities United Against Hate with county and state officials who will inform communities about what they are doing to stop police brutality and how residents can get involved. There will also be a March on Saturday, June 6 in DC and an event in Howard County on June 7.

In 1955, James Baldwin wrote, "The story of the Negro in America is the story of America." If we are claiming our place as the most diverse religious community in the nation, we must acknowledge our failures to fully engage with this story, and we must commit sincerely and unwaveringly to struggling against the injustice suffered by our brothers and sisters right here at home.

The MCC reiterates its grief and outrage at the murder of George Floyd, and we continue to pray for peace and justice for all humanity and most of all for George Floyd's family, friends and community.

We commit to making this a continuing battle for the MCC and this community. We cannot stand down when the fire of this moment cools.

We welcome your feedback. Please email info@mcccmd.org or call 301-384-3454.

MCC's mission is to promote brotherhood and human dignity among all by developing an environment of understanding, compassion, and justice in our personal and professional lives. We strive to serve the needs of the Muslim community and community at large in a manner that promotes its positive image and standing in a changing environment. We aim to represent the Muslim community in interfaith circles, in government, public and media relations, and in the society at large.

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For more information, please email info@mcccmd.org or call 301-384-3454