

## Statement in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Quebec City

Assalaamu Alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa baraaatuh.

Praise is for Allah, creator and sustainer of the universe. Peace and blessings on His beloved Messenger, Muhammad, his companions and those who follow him in righteousness until the end of time.

We are gathered today in the wake of the horrific murders of our fellow brothers in faith while they were performing the Esha prayer last night at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City. They were murdered in cold blood, while their gaze was toward their Lord, unaware of the harm that would come to them. We resign ourselves to the inevitability of death, and say what we have been taught: Verily from Allah we have come and to Him is our return."

Our primary thoughts are with the victims and their families. In the best of Islamic tradition, we ask the Almighty to accept them in His grace, to forgive whatever shortcomings they have and to multiply their good deeds. We ask Allah to grant them the highest rewards in Paradise. We also ask Allah to give their loved ones patience and comfort at the time of this senseless loss.

As the investigation continues and we learn more of this tragedy, one thing is certain: that terror, hate and violence knows no race, religion or citizenship. It belongs to the worst in humanity...fueled by a lower self that does not know God nor has any sense of a common humanity.

As we react in horror and sadness at this brutal crime, we equally are inspired by the genuine outpouring of love, support and solidarity by our fellow human beings – from all walks of life, from diverse faiths and those who do not profess any particular faith.

This is the common thread that stitches together the fabric of humanity – one of compassion, love, justice, neighbourliness and a shared destiny.

Today as we mourn the loss of life, we also celebrate the beauty of life and the amazing potential for all of us to create a better future together.

Islam teaches us that belief and good actions go hand in hand; forgiveness overcomes hate; charity does not diminish wealth and that the reward for good is nothing but good. We are also taught that our faith is not complete unless we love for our fellow human beings what we love for selves.

Today we call on our fellow Muslims, our fellow Canadians and all those who share the gift of life to work in every way possible to fight against the tidal wave of hate that seeks to ruin our shared joys, hopes and ambitions. Our children's future depends on our present: how we build the bedrock of universal values that will shape their interaction, interdependencies and common destiny.

To the families and relatives of the victims: we are sharing your pain tonight, and we feel your emotions of grief, sadness and confusion. Yet, we say to you that Allah is merciful in ways that we cannot comprehend, and only He can reward you and your loved ones with His infinite bounties. Be patient in your time of trial and know that in the ultimate end Justice will be served.

To our fellow Canadians: we must ever be vigilant of those who would seek to destroy our friendships, our common citizenship and our trust and care for one another. Let us not allow them to break our spirit, to create hatred and animosity or to stereotype one another. We are all servants of the Merciful One, and His Mercy must shine in our actions.

On behalf of the Islamic Institute of Toronto, we are committed to work with anyone who desires peace, reconciliation, compassion and justice. We are committed to helping these victims and their families and to stand in solidarity with those who stand for them.

May God's peace and blessings be upon all of you and your families.