**HAMPTON ROADS MULSIM COMMUNITIES JOINT STATEMENT ON COVID-19/NOVEL CORONA VIRUS**

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

*And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return." (2:155-6)*

On 3/15/2020, the leadership of the various Muslim communities of Hampton Roads, spanning from Williamsburg to Virginia Beach, VA, met to decide on the local unified approach to how to proceed with our activities and the status of our centers in light of the current situation regarding the novel coronavirus. Our discussion took into account the statements from the Fiqh Council of North America, The Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA), American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP), the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America (AMJA), and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). We also recognized the declaration of both a national emergency and a state emergency by the government authorities. In addition, we had counsel from community medical professionals as well as consideration of the recent cluster of positive patients on the Peninsula, including one death, precipitating even further restrictions for our locality by Governor Northam.

Based on sound guidance of Islamic scholars worldwide, when local authorities demand limitations on Houses of worship, it is required for our community to comply. We currently not only have a mandate preventing gatherings above 50 people, but also “social distancing” of 6 feet, making congregational prayers impossible. Jumuah(Friday) prayers cannot be held under these conditions either. There is sound basis in Shariah as well as authentic Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH) that justify these extreme measures in these type of circumstances. These evidences are readily available in the above referenced statements.

In order to protect not only our congregations, but also the community at large, we have agreed to the following actions:

1. All local masajid (Mosques) will be closed for congregational and Jumuah (Friday) prayer for at least the next two weeks. A determination on further closures will be made at that point. We are in the process of arranging for possible live-streaming of Jumuah(Friday) Khutbah.
2. All weekend schools are closed until further notice. We are exploring the possibility of on-line Islamic classes for our students.
3. All Halaqas, meetings, and any other activity in the center will be canceled until further notice.
4. Outreach to local community members, Foodbanks, community service activities, etc. will be at the discretion of the local organizations. Please visit the organization’s individual websites for details.
5. The status of Ramadan activities is to be determined at this time.

We encourage community members to use resources such as organization websites and social media pages such as HRCI and Hampton Roads Muslims on Facebook, to get the latest updates.

We want to reassure the community that we do not take these decisions lightly and are saddened at the closure of our Masajid. None of us expected to ever see this happen. We encourage our community to make dua that this pandemic passes quickly and we can reopen our centers.

This statement is being jointly issued by:

Mosque of Williamsburg, Peninsula Islamic Community Center, Hampton Mosque, Masjid Al-Quba, Muslim Community of Tidewater, Rumi Friendship Association, TARF-Ansar Mosque, Masjid Crescent Community Center, Masjid William Salaam, Chesapeake Mosque