



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CANADIAN MUSLIMS

Your Voice. Your Future.

Public Statement on the Sanctity of Sacred Spaces (Updated January 2016)

Sacred spaces are places that many people look towards for inner peace and to (re)establish a sense of connection with their concept of the divine, with their community, and with the larger fellowship of humanity. Whether these are manifested as formal buildings, such as churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, or gurdwaras, what makes them special is not simply their location, history, holiness, or physical beauty but their centrality in the hearts, minds and cosmology of the people in whom they inspire such awe and reverence.

In Canada's multicultural context we are particularly fortunate and blessed to have a variety of these places across many of our urban and rural centres. As the country grows and continues to welcome new immigrants to its shores, there is a growing trend towards a greater diversity of faith communities. As a result, existing spaces may need to be expanded and new ones built to accommodate the needs of the growing presence of different faith communities.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) welcomes this trend and takes the position that all of these spaces—whether or not they belong to an organized faith group—must be protected and preserved. They add to the richness and diversity of the tapestry that comprises Canada's identity.

Unfortunately, we must recognize and confront the reality that there are those who would randomly or regularly seek to attack, violate, and desecrate these places with criminal or hateful intent. It is NCCM's position that there can be no valid reason to justify these types of acts. We stand united with all Canadians of conscience in unequivocally condemning them in the strongest possible terms. Those who would perpetrate such premeditated or indiscriminate acts, regardless of their background, represent a special kind of cowardice and malevolence that should and must be confronted at every turn. We call upon all citizens to work with their community leaders to assist local authorities in preventing such acts and providing information that leads to the capture and prosecution of those responsible.

As part of its commitment to the very Canadian principles of acceptance, respect and inclusivity that helped shape the Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and which are echoed within the spirit and scripture of the Islamic faith, NCCM will continue to highlight anti-Muslim and Islamophobic acts as well as reach out and support other faith communities that find themselves, their beliefs, and their institutions under attack.

NCCM is a national, non-profit, grassroots organization striving to be a leading voice that enriches Canadian society through Muslim civic engagement and the promotion of human rights.

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