



**24 March 2020**

## **FATWA STATEMENT ON PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES IN DEALING WITH COVID-19**

1. The Fatwa Committee has taken into account the recent developments of the COVID-19 situation in Singapore. The number of patients infected as of 23 March 2020 has increased to 509 with 2 deaths, compared to when the mosque closure was announced on 12 March 2020 (~ 187 patients). The Fatwa Committee also considered the worsening situation of COVID-19 worldwide, where the number of patients and those who died from the virus have drastically increased. This means that the spread of COVID-19 pandemic has become more critical and yet to show any positive development. The risk of infection still exists, especially at large assemblies usually seen at mosques, in the form of congregational and Friday prayers. Therefore, the Fatwa Committee has decided that the closure of mosques should be extended until the situation stabilises, and the number of infections can be well contained, based on the advice of the Ministry of Health and healthcare professionals.

2. This fatwa is issued in accordance to the religious principles and fundamentals of the Shari'ah which requires one to avoid all forms of harm and danger. Among them are the following principles: (a) to eliminate all forms of harm (*al-dharar yuzāl*) and (b) to minimise cause that can lead to danger and harm (*Sad al-Zarā' i'*). This means that if a harm is expected to occur, precautionary measures must be taken to ensure the protection of the lives<sup>1</sup> and health of individuals and the general public.

3. We are facing an emergency situation where there is a high risk to human life and safety if precautionary steps are not taken to contain the COVID-19 transmission. In this situation, it is our priority to safeguard the lives and well-being of the community.

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<sup>1</sup> The protection of life is one of the five main principles that serve as the basis for Shari'ah, known as the al-Daruriyat al-Khamsah.

Therefore, as a result, Friday prayers cannot be conducted and are rendered non-obligatory on Muslims, even though they miss more than three consecutive Friday prayers. The Fatwa Committee would also like to emphasise that the hadiths of the Prophet s.a.w., prohibiting a person from missing Friday prayers (due to negligence) are for normal situations and not applicable during a crisis situation as what we are currently facing.

4. The Fatwa Committee advises members of the community to follow the guidance provided by the Prophet s.a.w. when facing a virus outbreak, namely, to stay at home and be patient. The Prophet s.a.w said: *and there is none who lives in the time of plague except that he stays in his house patiently hoping for Allah's reward and believing that nothing will befall him except what Allah has written for him, and he will get the reward of a martyr.*<sup>2</sup>

5. Therefore, our priority today is to safeguard our safety and health, for ourselves, our families and our community, while continuing with our acts of worship at home and with our families. May Allah s.w.t. alleviate the trials faced by all mankind and give us the patience and perseverance to overcome them faithfully.

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<sup>2</sup> Hadith reported by Imam Bukhari, An Nasaie and Imam Ahmad.