

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> affidavit  
of Adnan Abyat in this proceeding  
and it was made on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

File No. S 210209  
Vancouver Registry

*In the Supreme Court of British Columbia*

Between

ALAIN BEAUDOIN, BRENT SMITH, JOHN KOOPMAN, JOHN VAN MUYEN,  
RIVERSIDE CALVARY CHAPEL, IMMANUEL COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH,  
and FREE REFORMED CHURCH OF CHILLIWACK, B.C.

Petitioners

and

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA,  
and DR. BONNIE HENRY IN HER CAPACITY AS PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICER  
FOR THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Respondents

#### **AFFIDAVIT OF ADNAN ABYAT**

I, ADNAN ABYAT, of 2626 Kingsway Avenue, Port Coquitlam, in the Province of British Columbia, MAKE OATH AND SAY AS FOLLOWS THAT:

1. I am the Imam of Masjid Al-Hidayah in Port Coquitlam, a Masjid operated by the Islamic Society of British Columbia, and as such I have personal knowledge of the matters herein deposed to except where stated to be on information and belief and where so stated, I verily believe them to be true.
2. For a Muslim, offering ritual prayer ("**Salat**") in congregation with other Muslims is an obligatory worship that a Masjid (Mosque) facilitates, providing this essential service to the Muslim community.
3. Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an (interpretation of the meaning):

***"I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me."***

***-- (Adh-Dhariyat 51:56)***

### **Obligatory Salat:**

4. The obligatory Salat is performed five times a day as was revealed in the Holy Qur'an and taught to us by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

5. Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an (interpretation of the meaning):

***"Indeed, performing Salat is a duty on the believers at the appointed times."  
-- (An-Nisa 4:103)***

6. It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik said: Abu Dharr narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

***".... He [Allah] said, '(The Salat) are five but (the reward) is fifty. The Sentence that comes from Me cannot be changed [cf. Qaaf 50:29] ...."  
-- Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 342; Muslim, 163***

7. A Salat distinguishes a Muslim from others, as it is reported on the authority of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say:

***"Between a man and shirk and kufr there stands his giving up Salat."  
-- (Sahih Al-Muslim, 82)***

8. Praying Salat in congregation is obligatory, so a Muslim must pray the obligatory Salat in congregation with the Muslims.

9. Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an (interpretation of the meaning):

***"And perform Salat and give Zakah, and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allah) along with those who bow." -- (al-Baqarah 2:43)***

## **The Friday Prayer**

10. For the Muslim men, attending the special Friday Prayer in congregation in Masjid is also an obligation. This religious service cannot be done online/virtually as it involves not only listening to the sermon delivered by an Imam, but also offering the Salat in congregation.

11. Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an (interpretation of the meaning):

***"O you who believe (Muslims)! When the call is proclaimed for the Salat (prayer) on the day of Friday (Jumu'ah prayer), come to the remembrance of Allah (Jumu'ah religious talk (Khutbah) and Salat (prayer)) and leave off business (and every other thing), that is better for you if you did but know!"***  
**-- (al-Jumu 'ah 62:9)**

12. On the authority of Taariq ibn Shihaab (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

***"Jumu'ah [Friday Prayer] is a duty that is required of every Muslim in congregation, except four: a slave, a woman, a child or one who is sick."***  
**-- (Abu Dawood 91067)**

13. It is not valid for Muslim men to offer the Friday Prayer in the house because the Friday Prayer is prescribed for the Muslims to gather in one place to listen to the sermon and offer obligatory Salat in congregation. If a Muslim man does not attend the Masjid and misses the Friday Prayer, there is no make up of the Friday Prayer and he may be misguided.

14. If a person for whom Jumu'ah is obligatory does not attend and does not have a valid excuse, this is a major sin. Whoever does not attend three Jumu'ahs (in a row) out of negligence has a seal placed over his heart and is regarded as one of the ghaafileen (negligent, heedless).

15. Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said:

***“People must cease neglecting Jumu’ah, or Allaah will put a seal over their hearts and they will truly be among the negligent.”***

***-- (Muslim, 865)***

### **Spiritual and Mental Benefits of Religious Gatherings**

16. Attending religious services (congregational prayers and lectures) in the Masjid is a means of keeping the Muslim community together and brings them peace of mind and consolation.

17. Since November 19, 2020, when members of the Muslim community were deprived of the ability to gather, I have observed that their morale has been adversely affected, they feel alone, estranged, and their spiritual well-being is adversely affected.

### **Prohibitions during Obligatory Salat and Friday Prayer:**

18. Allah tells us in the Holy Qur’an (interpretation of the meaning):

***“Recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish Salat. Indeed, Salat prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.”***

***-- (Al-Ankabut 29:45)***

19. Talking, eating, drinking, touching, moving, or doing anything other than the prescribed actions to perform Salat, are prohibited during Salat. Each obligatory Salat takes between 10-20 minutes to perform in congregation.

20. During Friday sermons, the Imam is the only person who speaks when delivering the sermon and stands more than six feet away from the attendees and the attendees are required to sit down and listen attentively to the Imam and is prohibited from talking to each other, eating, drinking, or moving around. Friday sermon usually is between 30-40 minutes long.
21. If an individual does not adhere to the prohibitions for Salat and Friday Sermon, their Salat and Friday Prayer is considered invalid.

**Safety Plan during COVID 19:**

22. I believe that the risk associated with the viral transmission of COVID during the Salat and the Friday Prayer is minimal to none, due to the prohibitions of actions a Muslim must adhere to during such worship.
23. I and the leadership of the Islamic Society of British Columbia are committed to the health and wellbeing of our community members and the community at large. We are committed minimizing any risk of COVID transmission at our gatherings. Prior to the November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 prohibition on in-person religious gatherings, we met only for obligatory Salat and Friday Sermon with extensive safety protocols, including the following:
- numbers were restricted to a maximum of 50 per room,
  - the facilities were sanitized,
  - physical distancing of at least 2 metres was required between each individual,
  - individuals were required to bring their own prayer mats and wear masks,
  - hand sanitizers were available for attendees, and
  - a record of each person entering was kept.
24. I am aware that no case of Covid transmission occurred within our religious gatherings.

25. I have received letters from the following member of the Muslim community who share similar concerns for the well-being of people and how the prohibition on gathering in-person for prayer harms their communities:

- Yusuf bin Yakoob, Imam of Masjid Al-Huda (Surrey), whose letter is attached hereto as Exhibit "A";
- Younus Kathrada, Imam of Dar Al-Ihsan Islamic Center (Victoria), whose letter is attached hereto as Exhibit "B";
- Mohamed D Hessein Hassona, RPh, PhD, Chairman of the Management Board of Muslim Association of Canada (Vancouver Chapter), whose letter is attached hereto as Exhibit "C";
- Mobeen Imran Yakub, President of Abu Bakr Islamic Centre (Surrey), whose letter is attached hereto as Exhibit "D";
- Changix Khsan Durrani, Vice President of Pakistan-Canada Association (Vancouver), whose letter is attached hereto as Exhibit "E"; and
- Huthaifah Al-Fallah, a Muslim youth living in the Province of British Columbia, whose letter is attached hereto as Exhibit "F".
- Aseem Akhtar Khan, President of International Muslim Academy of Canada, whose letter is attached hereto as Exhibit "G".
- Imam of Guildford Islamic Cultural Centre, whose letter is attached hereto as Exhibit "H".

26. I have been made aware by Petrit Decani, the Imam of Masjid Ar Rahman Foundation of North Vancouver, that on December 5, 2020, he requested Dr. Henry, the Provincial Health Officer, to reconsider the Order but have not received any response from the Provincial Health Officer.

28. I swear this Affidavit *bona fide*, and for no improper purpose.

A Commissioner for Taking Affidavits  
within the Province of British Columbia

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ADNAN ABYAT



## Masjid Al-Huda

Learn, Practice & Propagate  
14136 GROSVENOR RD. SURREY, BC, V3R 5G8

This is Exhibit "A" referred to in the  
affidavit of ADNAN ABVAT  
sworn before me at West Vancouver  
this 22 day of February, 2021  
Sunday, 21, 2021  
A Commissioner for Taking Affidavits  
for British Columbia

To Whom It May Concern:

I write on behalf of **Masjid Al-Huda** to share with you our concern that the prohibition on in-person religious gatherings is harming our Muslim community members unnecessarily.

As you already know, we Muslims are required to gather to perform the obligatory prayers; 5 times a day in congregation and listen to Friday's sermon in-person.

Prior to the November 19<sup>th</sup> prohibition on in-person religious gatherings, we met for prayers with extensive safety protocols, including the following:

- numbers were restricted to 50 from 100 individuals,
- the facilities were sanitized,
- physical distancing of at least 2 meters was required between each individual,
- individuals were required to bring their own prayer mats and wear masks,
- hand sanitizers were available for attendees, and
- a record of each person entering was kept.
- Anyone with symptoms of COVID were not allowed to attend the Masjid.

We had no COVID outbreaks at any of these religious gatherings. We believe that we can continue to ensure the safety of our members and wider community and also meet in-person for 5 daily prayers.

As you may already know, the 5 daily obligatory prayers and the Friday prayers play an important role in upbringing of every Muslim. As Masjid is a house of Allah, it provides a way for a Muslim to connect with his Lord, provides continuous education about Islam, and provides a spiritual and mental guidance, so an individual can live a healthy lifestyle and perform better in a community.

I came to know the community is suffering from depression, loneliness, and suffering from mental health issues, which I believe can be eliminated if the individual is able to offer their 5 daily prayers at the Masjid while keeping the safety protocols in place.

I trust that together we may be able to come to a resolution with the Provincial Health Officer and reopen our Masjids while maintaining the safety protocols for COVID in place, insha Allah.

Sincerely,

Yusuf bin Yakoob (Imam Masjid Al-Huda)





February 21, 2021

Adnan Abyat, Imam  
Masjid Al-Hidayah  
Islamic Society of British Columbia  
2626 Kingsway Avenue  
Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 1T7

This is Exhibit "B" referred to in the  
affidavit of Adnan Abyat  
sworn before me at West Vancouver  
this 22nd day of February 2021  
A Commissioner for taking Affidavits  
for British Columbia

To Whom It May Concern,

I write on behalf of the Dar Al-Ihsan Islamic Center to share with you our concern that the prohibition on in-person religious gatherings is harming our Muslim community members unnecessarily.

As you already know, we Muslims are required to gather to perform the obligatory prayers in congregation and listen to the Friday sermon in person.

Prior to the November 19th prohibition on in-person religious gatherings, we met for prayers with extensive safety protocols, including, but not restricted to, the following:

- numbers were restricted according to provincial health guidelines
- the facilities were sanitized,
- physical distancing of at least 2 metres was required between each individual,
- individuals were required to bring their own prayer mats and wear masks,
- hand sanitizers were available for attendees,
- a record of each person entering was kept.
- Anyone with symptoms of COVID were not allowed to attend the Masjid.

We had no COVID outbreaks at any of these religious gatherings. We believe that we can continue to ensure the safety of our members and wider community and also meet in person for prayers.

As you may already know, obligatory and Friday prayers play an important role in the upbringing of every Muslim. As the Masjid is a house of Allah, it provides a way for a Muslim to connect with their Lord, provides continuous education about Islam, and provides spiritual and mental guidance, so an individual can live a healthy lifestyle and perform better in the community.

Gathering together for the Friday prayers is a deeply meaningful and powerful part of our community members' lives. It is an opportunity to gain religious knowledge, engage in spiritual reflection, and connect deeply with fellow believers. For many Muslims in Canada, Friday prayers are the only chance they have to engage in communal worship and to access religious guidance. Without this significant experience, many Canadian Muslims find themselves feeling spiritually lost and adrift; they feel isolated and alone, often without the support they need. Friday prayers are more than just an act of ritual worship; to Canadian Muslims, they are a

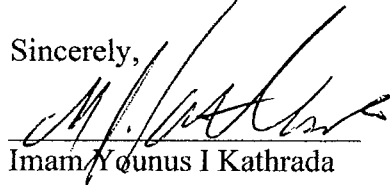
lifeline for spiritual and emotional well-being, and a contributing factor to improved mental health.

For a community that includes a demographic featuring multiple intersections of visible and vulnerable minorities, mosques and Islamic centers provide an empowering, much-needed support system.

Without being able to attend Friday prayers, and other religious gatherings, many of our community members suffer from increased cases of depression, isolation, and other mental health issues. I believe these can be eliminated if the individual is able to offer their prayers at Masjid while keeping the safety protocols in place.

I trust that together we may be able to come to a resolution with the Provincial Health Officer and reopen our Masjids while maintaining the safety protocols for COVID in place, insha Allah.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Younus I Kathrada', written over a horizontal line.

Imam Younus I Kathrada

Muslim Association of Canada (Vancouver Chapter)

February 21, 2021

Mohamed D Hessein Hassona RPh, PhD  
Chairman of the Management Board  
MAC (Vancouver)  
2122 Kingsway, Vancouver,  
BC V5N 2T5

This is Exhibit "C" referred to in the  
affidavit of ALWAN ARYAT  
sworn before me at West Vancouver  
this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February 2021  
A Commissioner for taking Affidavits  
for British Columbia

Assalamu Alaykum Brother Adnan,

I write on behalf of the Muslim Association of Canada (Vancouver Chapter) to share with you our concern that the prohibition on in-person religious gatherings is harming our Muslim community members unnecessarily.

As you already know, we Muslims are required to gather to perform the obligatory prayers in congregation and listen to Friday's sermon in-person.

Prior to the November 19<sup>th</sup> prohibition on in-person religious gatherings, we met for prayers with extensive safety protocols, including the following:

- numbers were restricted to 50.
- the facilities were sanitized,
- physical distancing of at least 2 meters was required between each individual,
- individuals were required to bring their own prayer mats and wear masks,
- hand sanitizers were available for attendees, and
- a record of each person entering was kept.
- Anyone with symptoms of COVID were not allowed to attend the Masjid.


We had no COVID outbreaks at any of these religious gatherings. We believe that we can continue to ensure the safety of our members and wider community and meet in-person for prayers.

As you may already know, obligatory and the Friday prayers play an important role in upbringing of every Muslim. As Masjid is a house of Allah, it provides a way for a Muslim to connect with his Lord, provides continuous education about Islam, and provides a spiritual and mental guidance, so an individual can live a healthy lifestyle and perform better in a community.

I came to know the community is suffering from depression, loneliness, and suffering from mental health issues, which I believe can be eliminated if the individual is able to offer their prayers at Masjid while keeping the safety protocols in place.

I trust that together we may be able to come to a resolution with the Provincial Health Officer and reopen our Masjids while maintaining the safety protocols for COVID in place, insha Allah.

Sincerely,

  
Chairman of the Management Board  
MAC (Vancouver)



ABUBAKR  
ISLAMIC  
CENTRE

February 20, 2021

Adnan Abyat, Imam  
Masjid Al-Hidayah  
Islamic Society of British Columbia  
2626 Kingsway Avenue  
Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 1T7

This is Exhibit "A" of the affidavit of Adnan Abyat sworn before me at West Vancouver this 22nd day of February 2021. A Commissioner for taking Affidavits for British Columbia.

Assalamu Alaykum Brother Adnan,

I write on behalf of the Abu Bakr Islamic Centre to share with you our concern that the prohibition on in-person religious gatherings is harming our Muslim community members unnecessarily.

As you already know, we Muslims are required to gather to perform the obligatory prayers in congregation and listen to Friday's sermon in-person.

Prior to the November 19<sup>th</sup> prohibition on in-person religious gatherings, we met for prayers with extensive safety protocols, including the following:

- Worshippers were limited to 45 people,
- the facilities were sanitized,
- physical distancing of at least 2 metres was required between each individual,
- individuals were required to bring their own prayer mats and wear masks,
- hand sanitizers were available for attendees, and
- a record of each person entering was kept.
- Anyone with symptoms of COVID were not allowed to attend the Masjid.

We had no COVID outbreaks at any of these religious gatherings. We believe that we can continue to ensure the safety of our members and wider community and also meet in-person for prayers.

As you already know, obligatory and the Friday prayers play an important role in upbringing of every Muslim. As the Masjid is a house of Allah, it provides a way for a Muslim to connect with his Lord, provides continuous education about Islam, and provides a spiritual and mental guidance, so an individual can live a healthy lifestyle and perform better in a community.

I came to know the community is suffering from depression, loneliness, and suffering from mental health issues, which I believe can be eliminated if the individual is able to offer their prayers at Masjid while keeping the safety protocols in place. We have been receiving an overwhelming number of requests, especially from our senior population to take whatever steps are necessary to reopen the Masjid for them. People are suffering and we need to take care of them.

Mobeen Imran Yakub

President



# Pakistan-Canada Association

P.O. Box 47002, Unit 19-555 West 12th Ave, Vancouver, B.C., V5Z-4L6

Web: [www.pakcan.com](http://www.pakcan.com) E-mail: [info@pakcan.com](mailto:info@pakcan.com)

February 21, 2021

The Provincial Government B.C.  
Members of Parliament British Columbia

This is Exhibit "E" referred to in the  
affidavit of ADNM ABAT  
sworn before me at West Vancouver  
this 22 day of February 2021  
A Commissioner for taking Affidavits  
for British Columbia

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please accept this letter as a request to allow in-person prayers in mosques with protocols of social distancing, masks and sanitizers including limitations of the number of people allowed at one time. This practice is followed and applied in every public place in Canada which includes offices and schools as well. The Provincial governments has always been an active partner whenever major developments in the history of Health Care in Canada have occurred. We are optimistic because health care remains a top concern for every government in B.C. Today's health needs may be different from the past but due to the pandemic things are difficult for everyone which we all understand and ready for the challenge to do our part as a community member. We are deeply committed to the safety of all our community during this pandemic.

We understand the situation, but we have some reservations on the Health Ministers orders in relation to places of worships. The Health Minister orders has marked some things as essential and some non-essential. Place of worships (Masjids) are essential for the Muslim community as part of our faith. We were disappointed with the provincial government orders that places of worship are not considered essential. Pray is compulsory for Muslims. The statistics shows that the COVID19 patient's numbers are more reported in the public places such as Pubs, restaurants or other places rather than places of worship as per the media reports.

Prayers are particularly important for Muslims or any faith. The five daily prayers times are among the most important obligations of the Islamic faith. Prayer is one of Islam's

Five Pillars the guiding tenets that all observant Muslims must follow. All Masjids across B.C has strictly followed the Safety protocols of the Health Minister BC and further committed to the additional protocols but completely banning in-person prayers will affect us as a community. It has been for months now that we are not allowed to attend prayers in-person in B.C. We have previously applied social distancing, Masks and Sanitizers and still we can review SOP's for attending prayers to always ensure safety. We can monitor people with health problems or sickness from going to mosque or elderly members of the community including children who are more vulnerable to the pandemic. We can create a system for the prayer. The Holy month of Ramadan is approaching for Muslims followed by Eid ul Fitr according to the Islamic Calendar in April 2021. If the mosques are closed in Ramadan or Eid, it will be difficult for Muslims to practice their religion freely with such unreasonable limitations.

These unreasonable limitations will also be a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms under the Constitution of Canada. We as a Muslim community member deeply concerned about the closure of mosques. Please note that for observant Muslims religion plays an important part in their lives. Islamic religion is a guide for Muslims. Similarly, Church is also important for Christians or Catholics so it will deeply affect their community as well as other Places like synagogues, temples or Gurdwara. All the religions or different faith people will be concerned on the ban from attending prayers.

We all as a community respectfully ask the government to please lift the restrictions on mosques across B.C. and allow us to attend in-person prayers with all the safety protocols outlined above. All we are asking is to designate or consider mosques or any worshipping place for any religion and prayers as essential services like pubs, cannabis stores and restaurants. We look forward to your response for the Community in B.C or Canada.

Yours Sincerely,

*Changiz Durrani*

Changiz Khan Durrani

Vice President – Pakistan-Canada Association

02/21/2021

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Huthaifah Al-Fallah, and I am a Muslim youth living in BC. The COVID-related restrictions on religious services has hit me hard - as a Muslim, and a visible minority, I feel as though I have lost a major part of my life. Being able to attend the mosque has always been so much more than just showing up for a ritual prayer; it's about my spiritual and mental health, feeling connected to God and being able to turn to my imam and community elders for mentorship, advice, and connection in difficult times.

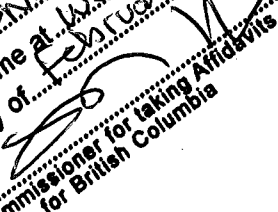
I find it strange that I can go to school or even go to the mall with friends, but I'm not allowed to go to the mosque to spend time in prayer and reflection. The pandemic has caused a lot of difficult changes in my life, and spirituality has always played a large role in coping with tough situations. Having the mosque shut down has really hurt me in so many ways. I feel isolated not just from my community, but from one of the most powerful ways of connecting with my faith. Being separated from the mosque has been just another factor impacting the isolation and depression that I've experienced since COVID began.

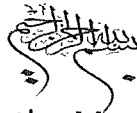
Please reconsider the restrictions on places of worship! More than going to the mall or a restaurant, I and so many other Muslim youth need and want to go back to the mosque to fulfill our religious responsibilities and to find comfort and support through our faith.

Sincerely,

Huthaifah Al-Fallah



This is Exhibit "F" referred to in the  
affidavit of ADNAY ABRAT  
sworn before me at West Vancouver  
this 22 day of February 2021  
  
A Commissioner for taking Affidavits  
for British Columbia



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

# International Muslim Academy of Canada

Incorporated 1996 – Society Act of Act of BC S-36081

February 22, 2021

Adnan Abyat, Imam  
Masjid Al-Hidayah  
Islamic Society of British Columbia  
2626 Kingsway Avenue  
Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 1T7

As-Salam Alaikum Brother Adnan,

This is Exhibit "G" referred to in  
affidavit of Adnan Abyat  
sworn before me at West Vancouver  
this 22 day of February 2021  
A Commissioner for taking Affidavits  
for British Columbia

I write on behalf of the Fiji Islamic Center to share with you our concern that the prohibition on in-person religious gathering is harming our Muslim community members unnecessarily.

As you already know, we Muslims are required to gather to perform the obligatory prayers in congregation and listen to Friday's sermon in person.

Prior to the November 19th prohibition on in-person religious gatherings, we met for prayers with extensive safety protocols, including the following:

- numbers were restricted to 50 persons,
- the facilities were sanitized,
- physical distancing of at least 2 metres was required between each individual,
- individuals were required to bring their own prayer mats and wear masks,
- hand sanitizers were available for attendees, and
- a record of each person entering was kept.
- Anyone with symptoms of COVID were not allowed to attend the Masjid.

We had no COVID outbreaks at any of these religious gatherings. We believe that we can continue to ensure the safety of our members and wider community and meet in-person for prayers. The in-person prayers at Masjid and listening to Friday's sermon is very important aspect of our religion and currently we feel we have been deprived of a important part of our religious duty. As you may already know, obligatory and the Friday prayers play an important role in upbringing of every Muslim. As Masjid is a house of Allah, it provides a way for a Muslim to connect with his Lord, provides continuous education about Islam, and provides a spiritual and mental guidance, so an individual can live a healthy lifestyle and perform better in a community.

I came to know the community is suffering from depression, loneliness, and suffering from mental health issues, which I believe can be eliminated if the individual is able to offer their prayers at Masjid, while keeping the safety protocols in place.

I trust that together we may be able to come to a resolution with the Provincial Health Officer and reopen our Masjids while maintaining the safety protocols for COVID 19 in place, Insha Allah.

Sincerely,

*Assem A. Khan* (E-Sign)

Assem Akhtar Khan

President. Email: [aakhan@telus.net](mailto:aakhan@telus.net). P: 604.220.0383

---

Unit # 17&18, 12988 – 84<sup>th</sup> Ave., Surrey, BC, Canada V3K 0W6

Ph: 604-591-0644

Email: [imaczfdonations@gmail.com](mailto:imaczfdonations@gmail.com)





UNIT 101 15290 103A STREET, SURREY V3R 7P8 PHONE: 604 666 6731 MAIL: info@giccmasjid.org

Adnan Abyat, Imam  
Masjid Al-Hidayah  
Islamic Society of British Columbia  
2626 Kingsway Avenue  
Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 1T7

This is Exhibit "H" referred to in the  
affidavit of Adnan Abyat  
sworn before me at West Vancouver  
this 22 day of February 2021  
[Signature]  
A Commissioner for taking Affidavits  
for British Columbia

February 21, 2021

Assalamu Alaykum Brother Adnan,

I write on behalf of the Guildford Islamic Cultural Centre (GICC) to share with you our concern that the prohibition on in-person religious gatherings is harming our Muslim community members unnecessarily.

As you already know, we Muslims are required to gather to perform the obligatory prayers in congregation and listen to Friday's sermon in-person.

Prior to the November 19<sup>th</sup>'s prohibition on in-person religious gatherings, we met for prayers with extensive safety protocols, including the following:

- At most 50 attendees were allowed after consultation with COVID-19 health authority,
- the facilities were sanitized,
- physical distancing of at least 2 metres was required between each individual,
- individuals were required to bring their own prayer mats and wear masks,
- hand sanitizers were available for attendees
- a record of each person attending the Friday prayer was kept to trace contact if needed

We had no COVID -19 outbreak at any of these religious gatherings. We believe that we can continue to ensure the safety of our members and wider community and also meet in-person for prayers.

As you already know, the obligatory and the Friday prayers play an important role in upbringing of every Muslim. As Masjid is a house of Allah, it provides a way for a Muslim to connect with his Lord, provides continuous education about Islam, and provides spiritual and mental guidance, so an individual can live a healthy lifestyle and perform better in a community.

During the pandemic, Masjids are an excellent source to attend to fight against the mental trouble that this pandemic has caused. The places of worship provided the community an environment where they can fight against the anxiety and uncertainty that the COVID-19 pandemic brought. Unfortunately, the closure of the GICC has caused the local Muslim community further hardship and deep pain which is adding greater distress to the situation. On behalf of the GICC community, I have received many complaints about how the closure is negatively affecting our community.

I trust that together we may be able to come to a resolution with the Provincial Health Officer and reopen our Masjids while maintaining the safety protocols for COVID-19 in place, Insha'Allah.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Imam

## Fwd: Re-consider Order - Request for Exemption

Petrit Deçani <petritdeçani@gmail.com>  
 To: adnanazzobair@gmail.com  
 Cc: Abdur Rehman Afzal <abdur.afzal@gmail.com>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Petrit Deçani <petritdeçani@gmail.com>  
 Date: Sat., Dec. 5, 2020, 5:57 p.m.  
 Subject: Re-consider Order - Request for Exemption  
 To: <ProvHlthOffice@gov.bc.ca>  
 Cc: <HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca>

This is Exhibit "I" referred to in the  
 affidavit of A. Khan, sworn before me at West Vancouver  
 this 22 day of February 2021  
 A Commissioner for taking Affidavits  
 for British Columbia

Dear Dr. Henry and Hon. Mr. Dix,

First of all thank you for all you've been doing in encouraging the people to take the precautionary measures so we can keep each other safer in these perplexed times.

I'm writing to you as an Imam, a concerned faith leader for the Muslim community of North Shore. We are close to the expiration of the most recent Order, in which you've requested that Places of Worship suspend in-person gatherings/events until December 7th.

Please allow me to kindly express on my behalf and on behalf of the Muslim community of North Shore, that we appreciate you and everything you've been doing, but frankly we were dissappointed with this order from your end, where places of worship had to suspend services, while a variety of other places could still function with strict covid-19 measures (apparently).

I don't blame you because I like to think you are not familiar with how we carry out our weekly Friday prayer at the Mosque. Ever since we re-opened in May, we've been keeping with all the measures and strictly enforcing them, as a matter of fact we went beyond what was recommended by you. In order for you to get the idea, here's what we implemented:

- Sanitizer dispensers at the entrance
- 6 Feet distance at all times (clearly labeled all over and on the ground)
- Mandatory mask-wear (we provided them as well)
- Sign in sheet with name and phone numbers (if needed)
- Everyone to come with their own prayer mat (instead of praying directly on carpet of mosque as usual)
- Temperature check device/sanitizer at entrance
- Appointed volunteers at the entrance making sure people are abiding by the measures
- Requested that people don't use the washrooms at the Mosque, rather come ready from home
- Sanitizing all common areas between prayers

In addition to this, the Imam who gives the sermon and leads the prayer, was always 10 feet away from the rest of the congregants, mind you, he's the only one speaking (on mic), at prayer time the people behind him simply follow prayer movements and recitation of the Qur'an, it is not done in unison. After the sermon+prayer which typically takes 15-20 minutes altogether, the people are ordered to leave the Mosque while maintaining the measures in place.

This is how our mandatory and essential Friday service took place in a nutshell.

We believe it's unfair to have us and other places suspend services, especially our Friday prayer service, which to us is essential and it cannot be performed virtually. We have already suspended the rest of in-person activities from classes to lectures, which are taking place online. We've been doing everything expected from us and more, and while we want to be part of the solution, we request that at least the prayers continue in the Mosque with a limited number of 50 people.

Please consider making an exemption for such gatherings (which by the way don't involve eating or even sharing food), because we are much safer than a movie theater let alone a restaurant.

If you have any questions for us, please do get in touch with me through this email or you can reach me at 778-836-9067.

Thanking you sincerely,  
Petrir Decani

*Imam of Masjid Ar-Rahman Foundation of North Vancouver*

**Masjid Ar-Rahman**

<http://www.northvanmasjid.ca>

**Phone 604-929-0800**

**Email [info@northvanmasjid.ca](mailto:info@northvanmasjid.ca)**

