



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IMAMS COUNCIL



15 March 2024

FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHRISTCHURCH MASSACRE

Today, 15 March 2024, is a date which is etched into the collective mind of Muslims around the world. It is a date on which 51 men, women and children were murdered and many more injured at two mosques in **Christchurch, New Zealand**. It was a massacre against a people simply because of their religious beliefs and activity. The men, women and children were praying at the time in the mosques.

In New Zealand and around the globe, including in Australia, people continue to gather and mourn the victims and pay their respects to the families of the victims in commemoration of this tragedy.

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) continues to raise and address the issues of increasing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice and dangers of white supremacy. According to **Bilal Rauf**, ANIC Spokesperson and Advisor, *“This was a massacre committed by an Australian very close to home. The massacre was preceded by ignorance, hate and a pervading and publicly stated anti-Muslim sentiment which was left unaddressed and allowed to fester and be shared”*.

Ramia Abdo Sultan, ANIC Community Relations Advisor, states, *“15 March 2019 is a constant reminder that Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment is real, particularly for Muslim women who are readily identifiable by the religious attire they choose to wear. Vilification is real. Discrimination is real”*.

ANIC calls upon the Australian Government and the international community to acknowledge Islamophobia, anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian prejudice as being a real threat and danger to our society. We ask that Islamophobia and bigotry be addressed on a legislative level so that minority communities can be better protected.

In light of all this, ANIC, the Muslim community and Palestinian supporters in Australia and around the world continue to mourn and grief over the killing of the tens of thousands of innocent Palestinians in Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and strongly condemn the ongoing massacres, genocide, illegal settlements and war crimes committed by the Israeli Occupation, in particular in the month of Ramadan, where the entire population of the city of Gaza is facing an inevitable famine while the world is watching and silent.

ANIC extends its prayers and support to the brothers and sisters affected by the Christchurch tragedy and the Palestinian people in Gaza, as well as its sincerest gratitude to the people and organisations who continue to commemorate this sad tragedy and show their support to justice and humanity.