

All praise is due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad.

Public Statement 4 on Corona Virus (COVID-19) – Janazah during lockdown

We trust everyone is well and keeping themselves, their families, and communities safe by adhering to the guidelines for Alert Level 4.

As Muslims, we have some degree of experience in changing our lifestyles and routines for a month every year during Ramadan. Muslims should find this easier to deal with inshaAllah. There is no need to get anxious or worried, we are all in this together. We will do what is right and the result will be whatever Allah Wills.

We have addressed the issue of daily prayers and religious gatherings in our previous statements. One of the things that needs clarification and guidance is Janazah during the lockdown period.

The rules, taken literally, meant in the event of death, the body would be handed to a registered funeral director who would complete the burial without any input or participation from anyone else. This posed problems for us because funeral directors cannot give ghusl or pray Janaza unless they have employed sufficient number of Muslims. Therefore, we have sought clarification from the relevant authorities, and conclude as follows:

All funerals during the lock down period must go through a registered funeral director, private or family funerals are not permitted. A few Muslim males and females in different localities can work with their local funeral services as part of their team to handle the body and complete the final rites. The funeral directors will brief them on their operations including health and safety requirements. These Muslim volunteers will then become part of the “essential services” personnel, therefore able to complete the funeral and burial for the deceased. We need to ensure these people have the know-how and the ability to perform all the tasks including leading salatul Janazah, since there will be no public Janazah, these volunteers will pray Janazah which will suffice for everyone inshaAllah. The number of people who can view the body in the funeral home from the same ‘bubble’ is at the discretion of the funeral director as it is based on the size of their facilities and ability to maintain the distances. The entire process will be under the supervision of the funeral service.

As you know, the dead have the right upon the living to given them a proper funeral and burial. Therefore, Muslim associations and organisations are urged to make contact with their local funeral homes and establish an understanding on how they will handle such a situation should it arise during the lock down period. All registered funeral directors should be aware of the provisions allowed for the Muslims in the guidelines.

We urge all Muslims to abide by these arrangements and cooperate with the funeral directors in this regard.

Stay at home, look after each other and keep your spirits high. May Allah SWT grant us strength to be patient and steadfast during these trying times, and lift this and all afflictions from us. Ameen.

For further information regarding funerals please visit:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-funerals-and-tangihanga>

The Ulama Council of New Zealand

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