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National Council of Canadian Muslims. (2016, May 26). Canadian Muslims Begin Ramadan Observance [media release]. https://www.nccm.ca/canadian-muslims-begin-ramadan-2/

Canadian Muslims begin Ramadan observance

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– For Immediate Release –

(Ottawa – May 26, 2016) Muslims in Canada and around the world will begin observing the holy month of Ramadan tomorrow.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar during which Muslims abstain from food and drink from the break of dawn until sunset, and increase their focus on worship, spiritual growth and charity.

Fasting is one of the "five pillars" or basic tenets of Islam.

The Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau issued a Ramadan greeting to Canadian Muslims.

"Tonight at sunset, Muslims in Canada and around the world will mark the start of Ramadan," reads the Prime Minister's statement. "This year, as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation, let us take the opportunity to honour the many cultures, traditions, and beliefs that make Canada such a wonderful place to live. Muslim Canadians help make Canada the strong, diverse, and inclusive country it is today."

"Ramadan is a special time for Canadian Muslims, newly arrived immigrants and refugees. It's a time when many community members focus on spiritual reflection and increase their acts of charity," says NCCM Executive Director Ihsaan Gardee. "This sacred time offers an opportunity to reconnect with family, friends and community members. It's also an opportune time for Muslims to refocus on sharing Islam's intrinsic spirit of generosity and compassion with fellow Canadians."

Communal *iftars* or breaking-of-the-fast meals occur at most mosques daily. Some Muslim families will invite their neighbours to share the evening meal as well. Community members also often gather late at night to perform special evening worship, known as *taraweeh*.

The end of Ramadan will be marked by communal prayers called *Eid ul-Fitr*, or Feast of the Fast-Breaking on or about June 26*.

[***NOTE**: Because the beginning of Islamic lunar months depends on the actual sighting of the new moon, the start and end dates for Ramadan may vary. Consult local Muslim communities for the beginning and end dates of Ramadan.]

According to the 2013 National Household Survey, Canadian Muslims are the fastest growing religious group in Canada and comprised approximately 3.2 percent of the population with some estimates placing the population now around 1.1 million.

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