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Press Release

Think for Actions Condemns Arson Attack On Alberta Edson Mosque on Saturday night while Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitar on June 16, 2018

Calgary, AB, June 18, 2018 - **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

A mosque in Edson, Alberta was set on fire around 11pm on June 16, 2018. Shortly after the Isha prayers as people were leaving and were in the parking lot, an unknown arsonist set fire to the south entrance of the mosque. The vice president of the Islamic Society of Edson Tufik Baterdouk said, "The fire burned for nearly 15 minutes before firefighters arrived to extinguish it."

The bills brought forward by the federal government in recent years have added great hardship for the average Canadian Muslim. A few bills are:

- Bill C 24: Dual citizenship act. June 20th, 2014
- Bill S 7: Barbaric Cultural Practices Act. 5 November 2014
- Bill C 51: Anti-terrorism Act. Jan 16, 2015
- Bill C 75: The Niqab ban at Oath taking ceremony. June 19, 2015
- Bill 62: An Act to Foster Adherence to State Religious Neutrality, October 2017

Hate crimes against Muslims in Canada have increased by 60% from 2014 to 2015, and 253% over four years, from up from 45 in 2012 to 159 in 2015. This attitude was one of the major factors that lead to the death of six and injured 19 others when Alexandre Bissonnette opened fire in a Québec Masjid on January 29, 2017.

Canadian Community Engagement Study 2018 concludes:

- 2/3rd of Canadians believe that the atmosphere towards Muslims in Canada is negative
- 2/3rd of Canadian's want the government to invest resources towards reducing and eventually eliminating systemic racism and discrimination on religious grounds;
- 2/3 of Muslims have personally experienced discrimination due to their race or ethnicity in the last 5 years; almost 1/2 of the incidences were verbal abuse or attack;
- 82% Muslims believe that discrimination against Canadian Muslims has increased in the last 5 years;

Chairperson for the national think tank, Think for Actions, Dr. Mukarram Zaidi says, "We strongly condemn this hate crime against the Canadian Muslim Community. This act of arson against a mosque was carried out while Canadians Muslims across the country are celebrating Eid ul-Fitr, which marks the end of the Ramadan. We request the government to bring stronger legislation to prevent on anti-Muslim rhetoric / Muslim phobia / Islamophobia. As under the banner of free speech politicians and other groups have been demonizing Muslims and Islam that leads to loss of life and property of Canadian Muslims."

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Think for Actions is a National Think tank focused on Muslim affairs. We focus on community research and professional development of youth. We aim to engage the government and public at a local and national level to offer new and effective solutions.

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