



CANADIAN MUSLIM
PUBLIC AFFAIRS
COUNCIL



Masajid & Imam Guide for Engaging with Politicians

Federal Elections 2025

April 12, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Purpose	1
2. Why Political Engagement Matters	1
3. Core Principles for Engagement	1
4. What You <i>CAN</i> and <i>CANNOT</i> Do	1
5. Resources for Elections	3
6. Engaging with Politicians: Practical Guidance	4
(a) When Politicians Reach Out or Visit	4
(b) What to Say When You Speak to Them	5
(c) Key Issues and Sample Talking Points to Raise with Politicians	6
7. Hosting a Candidate Forum	8
8. Protecting the Sanctity of Your Space	8
9. After the Election: Sustaining Engagement	8
Appendix A: Sample Code of Conduct for Political Visitors to the Masjid	9

Masjid Guide for Engaging with Politicians

A Non-Partisan Resource for Muslim Communities during Election Season

This guide was developed through a collaborative effort between the [Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council \(CMPAC\)](#), [The Canadian-Muslim Vote \(TCMV\)](#), and the [Canadian Council of Imams \(CCI\)](#) to support Muslim communities during the 2025 federal election. Recognizing the vital role of masajid and imams in fostering civic awareness and collective advocacy, this kit provides clear, principled, and faith-aligned guidance for political engagement.

1. Purpose

This guide equips masjids, community leaders, and Muslim organizations with tools to engage ethically, confidently, and strategically with politicians — in line with Islamic values and Canadian law. Engagement is about *building collective power, raising our voices, and demanding accountability*, not endorsing candidates.

2. Why Political Engagement Matters

Masjids are central hubs for civic participation. Engaging with elected officials allows our communities to:

- Raise issues of concern
- Demand justice and equity
- Encourage informed, values-driven voting
- Hold leaders accountable to all constituents

3. Core Principles for Political Engagement

- **Non-Partisanship:** Always remain neutral and do not endorse political parties or candidates.
- **Clarity of Purpose:** Be clear that engagement is about advancing community concerns and ensuring politicians hear from diverse voices. Engagement is about issues, not individuals.
- **Values-Driven Approach:** Anchor all conversations in Islamic values of justice, equity, and compassion.

4. What You CAN and CANNOT Do

Many masjids and Islamic centres in Canada are registered charities. As such, they must follow CRA rules on political activity and public policy engagement. The CRA allows charities to speak out on issues that align with their mission, but prohibits partisan politics.¹

¹ “A charity may carry out public policy dialogue and development activities that relate to its charitable purposes, provided it does so in a way that is non-partisan.” - CRA Policy Statement CPS-022: Public policy dialogue and development activities by charities

You CAN (Issued-Based Engagement)²

- **Engage in issue-based advocacy:** You can speak about issues like Palestine, Islamophobia, immigration, housing, foreign policy, and racism if it relates to your charitable mission (e.g. promoting religion, relieving poverty, combating discrimination).³
- **Educate your community:** You can provide non-partisan voter education, sharing election resources, encouraging civic participation and voter registration, promoting turnout, and providing space for informed discussion and political awareness.
- **Speak to elected officials:** You can meet and speak to elected officials by meeting with or writing to MPs and candidates to express your community's concerns, advocate for policy change, and educate your congregation about key issues and party platforms - without endorsing any party.
- **Host candidate forums:** You can invite candidates from different parties to a neutral, equally accessible community event to speak on issues.
- **Publish public statements on issues:** You can issue open letters or statements on human rights in Palestine, anti-Muslim racism, humanitarian crises, etc., as long as they don't support or oppose a particular party.⁴

These are all considered Public Policy Dialogue and Development Activities (PPDAs), which are permitted under CRA rules.⁵

You CANNOT (Partisan Political Activity)

Charities **must avoid** partisan political activity.⁶ This includes:

- **Endorsing or opposing a party or candidate** – You may not tell your congregation to vote for or against a specific party, leader, or MP.
- **Using your platform to promote a politician** – Including during sermons, on official social media accounts, or in emails.
- **Allowing campaigning during religious services** – No partisan political campaign speeches, candidate flyers, or political banners during Jummah or prayer events.

² Charity Law Bulletin by Drache Aptowitz LLP: "Charities can express views on contentious political issues such as international conflict, provided the views are linked to their charitable purpose and are not partisan."

³ "Charities can and should speak up on public policy issues, but they must not support or oppose political parties or candidates." - Imagine Canada

⁴ CCIC Legal Briefing on CRA Policy Changes (2019): "Charities may take public positions on controversial topics — including international human rights, environmental justice, and foreign policy — provided they do not advocate for or against parties."

⁵ "PPDAs are permissible and may further a charitable purpose where they are a means of contributing to the development of public policy relevant to a charity's purpose." - *CRA Guidance CPS-022*

⁶ "A charity cannot directly or indirectly support or oppose a political party or candidate for public office." — *CRA Policy Statement CPS-022*

- **Disproportionate or unequal access** – If you allow one candidate to speak at your mosque, you must give the same opportunity to others in the riding.
- **Fundraising for a political party or candidate** – Not allowed under any circumstances.

5. Resources for Elections

This section offers a curated list of resources to help Imams, masjid leadership, and community advocates engage effectively in the 2025 federal election. These tools support informed, coordinated, and principled civic engagement through khutbahs, community messaging, candidate outreach, and policy advocacy.

(a) Canadian Council of Imams (CCI)

The CCI Election Khutbah Notes below offer guidance for Imams delivering sermons that encourage civic engagement during the federal election period. Grounded in Islamic teachings, these notes highlight the importance of political participation, justice, and collective responsibility, and can be adapted to support community-specific messaging.

- [CCI Election Khutbah Notes 1](#)
- [CCI Election Khutbah Notes 2](#)

(b) CMPAC Resources

MuslimsVote.ca	CMPAC’s main election engagement hub, offering regularly updated talking points, voter education materials, campaign toolkits, and information on local and national events to mobilize Muslim voters across Canada.
MuslimsVote Recommendation per Riding	An online tool to help voters identify MuslimsVote recommendation per riding using their address/ postal code.
Jumu'ah Khutbah Talking Points - Federal Elections 2025	Faith-informed guidance for Khateebis to discuss the importance of civic engagement during Jumu’ah sermons while remaining non-partisan and rooted in Islamic teachings.
Sample 2025 Ramadan Khutba at University of Toronto	A sample khutbah delivered during Ramadan 2025 that integrates themes of civic responsibility, political awareness, and justice within a student context—offered as inspiration for khutbahs in masjid and campus settings.

(c) TCMV Resources

Canadian Muslim Vote (TCMV) Information Hub	TCMV's election portal features educational content and outreach tools to empower Muslims across Canada to vote, volunteer, and engage constructively with candidates.
Canadian Muslim Vote (TCMV) Platform Comparison Tool	A side-by-side comparison of political party platforms on key issues relevant to Canadian Muslims, designed to inform voters without endorsing specific candidates or parties.

(d) Other Resources

National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) 2025 Federal Election Policy Guide	A comprehensive breakdown of federal policy priorities from the Muslim community's perspective, including legal analysis, advocacy demands, and recommendations for action by candidates.
Justice for All - Elect Justice: Political Party Report Card	An issue-based scorecard evaluating how major political parties align with justice-centered priorities, including foreign policy, human rights, and equity for marginalized communities.
Vote Palestine	A campaign resource highlighting key questions and policy demands for candidates regarding Palestinian human rights, Canadian foreign policy, and accountability in international law.
Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME): 2025 Federal Elections Toolkit	A grassroots-oriented toolkit to help Canadians engage candidates on foreign policy, human rights, and justice in the Middle East, with specific focus on Palestinian rights and international law.
www.elections.ca	The official, non-partisan source for all election logistics, including voter registration, ID requirements, advance polling, and important dates.

6. Engaging with Politicians: Practical Guidance**(a) When Politicians Reach Out or Visit**

During elections, candidates and sitting Members of Parliament may request to visit your masjid or attend Friday prayers. These requests are common, and your masjid has every right to set the terms of such visits. **Before agreeing, ask yourself:** Will this benefit our community? Can we offer the same opportunity to all major candidates in a fair way? Can we protect our non-partisan stance? If the answer to all three questions is yes, then it's appropriate to proceed but with clear boundaries in place.

If your masjid chooses to accept a visit from a candidate or MP, it's important to set clear boundaries and communicate your expectations from the start. Be upfront about your non-partisan position and emphasize that the space must be respected as a religious and neutral setting. You can say: *“As a religious and non-partisan space, we welcome all candidates equally. However, we do not allow campaigning, speeches, or distribution of materials during prayer services.”*

To maintain neutrality and transparency during political visits, consider the following steps:

- Provide a written code of conduct for political visitors (**See Appendix A**).
- Clearly state that the visit does not imply an endorsement.
- Extend the same opportunity to all major candidates in the riding.
- Avoid photos that may appear as endorsements (e.g., posing with imams or during sermons).
- Unless you are hosting a formal all-candidates forum, ask candidates to attend as listeners only, without speeches or campaign messaging.
- Let candidates know the purpose of the visit is to meet constituents, not to promote their campaign. Remind them that the masjid is a neutral, spiritual space.

Thoughtful planning is key to ensuring the visit runs smoothly and stays within CRA guidelines:

- Assign a trusted community liaison or leader to accompany the visitor.
- Prepare a list of community concerns or policy priorities to share (see Section 5(c) - Key Issues and Sample Talking Points).
- Politely ask the candidate not to speak from the minbar or make any public remarks during prayer times.

If your masjid decides to decline a visit, do so respectfully but firmly. For example: *“We are maintaining neutrality during this election and not hosting political visits at this time. Thank you for understanding.”*

This decision is entirely within your legal rights. The CRA does not require charities or masjids to engage with politicians, especially if doing so could compromise neutrality or cause division in your congregation. If a visit poses a risk of distraction, disagreement, or misunderstanding, it is perfectly reasonable to decline.

(b) What to Say When You Speak to Them

When speaking to elected officials, it's helpful to follow a clear and respectful structure to guide the conversation. Begin by introducing your community—briefly describe your masjid or organization, and mention your community's size, diversity, and active role in local civic life. This sets the tone and provides context for your concerns.

Next, highlight two to three key issues that matter most to your congregation. These might include anti-Islamophobia policies, international human rights, immigration, or family reunification. Use local or personal examples to illustrate how these issues impact your community directly.

Then, ask clear and specific questions. For example: “If elected, will you commit to supporting a national strategy to combat anti-Muslim hate?” or “What is your party’s position on Canada’s arms exports to countries committing human rights violations?” Direct questions help ensure accountability and signal that your community is paying attention.

Finally, be sure to follow up. Ask how you can stay in touch, and offer to send relevant materials, reports, or a summary of your community’s priorities by email. Let them know your community is politically engaged and watching their record closely.

To ensure safety and protect your space, always vet political visits with your board and make sure there’s internal alignment. Have a plan in place in case a visitor tries to turn the moment into a publicity stunt. Above all, maintain your dignity and protect the sanctity of your religious space.

(c) Key Issues and Sample Talking Points to Raise with Politicians

Muslim communities in Canada care deeply about justice — both locally and globally — and see political engagement not only as a right, but as a moral and religious responsibility. It is fully legal for charities and masjids to speak on issues related to their charitable mission, such as social justice, human rights, and community well-being, provided they do not endorse or oppose any political party or candidate.⁷

Below are sample talking points designed to support non-partisan engagement. These can be used during political visits, all-candidates forums, or written correspondence with elected officials. Choose issues that are meaningful to your congregation and ensure that any topic raised reflects your masjid’s mission and values.

When selecting topics to raise with candidates, ensure that all conversations and issues are framed in a manner that respects Islamic values and the cultural norms of your congregation. This fosters a respectful environment and allows for dialogue that aligns with the spiritual and communal integrity of the masjid. Begin by grounding the conversation:

- *“We are a non-partisan, faith-based community organization committed to justice, equity, and human rights.”*
- *“We welcome all candidates and elected officials, but we do not allow campaigning inside the masjid.”*
- *“Our congregation is deeply concerned about justice — both here in Canada and abroad.”*
- *“We believe politicians must be accountable to all their constituents, including Muslim Canadians and advocate for issues of concern to them”*

⁷ “A charity may carry out public policy dialogue and development activities that relate to its charitable purposes... This includes seeking to influence laws, policies, or decisions at any level of government.” *CRA Policy Guidance CPS-022*

Then, raise specific issues that matter to your community:

Specific Issue	Description	Sample Talking Point	Sample Ask
<p>Palestine & Foreign Policy</p>	<p>Canada must uphold international human rights and international law in its foreign policy decisions — a concern rooted in values of peace, justice, and equality. Mosques may advocate for an end to Canadian complicity in rights violations abroad.</p>	<p><i>“Our congregation is deeply concerned about Canada’s role in enabling human rights abuses in Palestine. We are calling on all political leaders to support a two-way arms embargo on Israel, suspend military trade, and back international accountability mechanisms like ICC investigations.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Will you commit to supporting a foreign policy grounded in international law and human rights, including action on arms sales and accountability mechanisms?”</i></p>
<p>Islamophobia & Systemic Discrimination</p>	<p>The rise in anti-Muslim hate, surveillance, and exclusion from public life remains a top concern for Muslims in Canada. Addressing systemic Islamophobia is central to many organizations' anti-discrimination missions.</p>	<p><i>“Our community continues to live in fear of hate crimes, discrimination, and targeted surveillance. We need concrete, well-funded action — including reforms to national security laws, proper hate crime reporting mechanisms, and enforcement of anti-hate policies in schools, policing, and online platforms.”</i></p>	<p><i>“What concrete steps will you take to address systemic Islamophobia and ensure equal protection under the law for our community?”</i></p>
<p>Islamophobia in Charity Sector</p>	<p>Muslim-led charities are disproportionately targeted for audits, regulatory scrutiny, and de-registration, threatening the vibrancy and fairness of the charitable sector.</p>	<p><i>“We are alarmed by the systemic over-surveillance of Muslim charities. Will you commit to an independent review and policy reforms that ensure all charities are treated fairly?”</i></p>	<p><i>“How will your party address systemic bias in the regulation of Muslim-led charities and ensure accountability in the audit process?”</i></p>

You can conclude the meeting or visit with statements like:

- *“We believe in the right to advocate for Palestine without fear, and we expect our political leaders to protect free expression and dissent.”*
- *“We appreciate your time and hope to see meaningful action on these issues.”*

7. **Hosting a Candidate Forum**

Masjids can host all-candidates forums as long as they follow CRA guidelines. These forums are a powerful tool to educate voters and hold candidates accountable, while maintaining the masjid's non-partisan status. To stay non-partisan

- Allow all candidates from major parties running in your riding (you can set your own rules of conduct for visitors that includes, dress, and topics allowed when addressing your congregations).
- Use a neutral moderator (not an imam or board member)
- Prepare community-driven questions on: Islamophobia, Gaza and foreign policy
- Keep the event in a non-prayer area (optional), or after prayer times
- Do not allow campaign flyers, signs, or promotional material inside the prayer hall

8. **Protecting the Sanctity of Your Space**

Your masjid is first and foremost a place of worship, reflection, and community healing. During election season, it's essential to maintain its dignity, even when under pressure from high-profile candidates or parties. To protect the sanctity of your space, ensure that your board and volunteers are briefed on your election policy, and set clear expectations about behavior and boundaries. Reinforce that your space is neutral and rooted in justice, making it clear that political activities do not align with the purpose of the masjid.

Never allow campaigning during Jummah or prayer services, permit political speeches from the minbar, or allow campaign photos in front of the mihrab or while prayers are taking place. These actions would compromise the neutrality and sanctity of your religious space.

9. **After the Election: Sustaining Engagement**

After the election, your engagement should not end. It's important to build long-term relationships with the elected representative, but always on your terms. You can start by inviting the elected MP for a listening session, ensuring it is focused on genuine dialogue rather than a photo-op. Ask them to meet with youth, women, and grassroots leaders to hear from a diverse range of voices. Follow up with a letter outlining your community's priorities and keep your congregation informed about the promises made and the actions taken. This is how you build power — through consistent, principled advocacy.

Appendix A: Sample Code of Conduct for Political Visitors to the Masjid

This sample Code of Conduct is provided to assist masjid in maintaining neutrality, transparency, and respect during political visits. Masjid are encouraged to amend, add to, or adjust the language below to reflect their own needs, policies, and community context.

Sample Code of Conduct for Political Visitors

As a place of worship and community, our masjid maintains a sacred, apolitical environment rooted in spiritual reflection, inclusivity, and service. We welcome respectful engagement with political representatives and candidates, and request that all visits observe the following principles:

1. Respect for Sacred Space

- Visitors must dress modestly and act with decorum appropriate to a religious space.
- Entry into the prayer area is permitted only with permission from masjid leadership and in accordance with masjid customs.
- Observe quiet and respectful conduct during prayers or any religious programming.
- Political activities must not interfere with prayer times, sermons, or community events.
- Refrain from engaging in any campaign activities inside the prayer hall or during religious services.

2. No Campaigning or Political Messaging

- No distribution of campaign literature, signage, or merchandise is permitted on masjid property.
- Candidates may introduce themselves and share their platform as part of community engagement, but formal partisan speeches or direct solicitations for votes are discouraged within the masjid building or on its grounds.
- Visits are understood to be for educational, relational, and community listening purposes, recognizing that candidates may wish to highlight their priorities and those of their party in the process.

3. Non-Partisan Access

- The masjid does not endorse any political candidate or party.
- Access to the masjid must be offered equitably to all political representatives or candidates upon request.
- Any meetings or town halls hosted by the masjid must be presented in a neutral, balanced format.

4. Community Dialogue and Engagement

- Political visitors may be invited to meet with community members in a designated space outside prayer areas.
- Conversations should be an opportunity for mutual dialogue — for community members to raise concerns and priorities, and for visitors to share their positions and respond to questions in an open and respectful manner.

5. Use of Images and Media

- Photography and video recordings must be approved in advance by masjid leadership.
- Images from the visit may not be used in campaign advertisements, social media promotions, or fundraising materials, unless approved by masjid leadership.
- Any public sharing of the visit must be respectful and in line with the masjid’s values and neutrality.

6. Coordination and Oversight

- All visits must be coordinated through the masjid board or designated leadership team.
- A masjid representative will accompany political visitors during their time at the masjid.
- The masjid reserves the right to postpone, cancel, or end a visit if this code is not upheld.

By entering the masjid, you agree to uphold the dignity, neutrality, and peaceful nature of our space. We welcome constructive engagement with those who serve the public and ask that all visits reflect mutual respect and understanding.

Contact for Coordination:

Contact name:

Phone Number:

Email: