



## **Message from the Federal President Steinmeier for Eid ul-Fitr 2020**

"At the end of this year's Ramadan, I send you my best wishes. Eid ul-Fitr is traditionally a huge, joyful celebration with family, friends and neighbours following a month of reflection, fasting and prayer.

This year, however, everything is different. Ramadan and Eid ul-Fitr are overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Joint prayers, a shared meal after sunset, the joyful celebration cannot take place this year, or only on a very limited scale.

Many of you doubtless find this depressing – a feeling shared by Christians and Jews. Yes, our Basic Law guarantees the right to practise religion freely; even so, this year it has been necessary to limit gatherings temporarily in order to save lives. I extend my sincere thanks to all of you who have observed these strict rules and helped us achieve initial successes in the fight against the virus. Thank you for your understanding; thank you for acting responsibly and prudently!

This year's Ramadan has also been overshadowed by the dreadful terrorist attack in Hanau. Many Muslims were among the victims of the perpetrator, a man blinded by racist hatred. This crime profoundly shocked me. It was an attack on our peaceful coexistence and on all the values we share in this country: respect for human dignity, tolerance and diversity, freedom of belief.

Allow me to assure you that as Federal President I am committed to ensuring that we as a society resolutely oppose all forms of racist hate speech. Hatred and marginalisation, violent attacks on Muslims, attacks on mosques – we must not tolerate, we must not permit such things. This is a task for each and every one of us. And it is the task of the state to protect you.

I wish you a blessed end to Ramadan, and my wish for you and for all of us is that we will be able to celebrate together again next

year. Because this festival has long been an element of our life together in Germany: it is an expression of faith in practice and a symbol of a peaceful, tolerant society. It connects Muslims, but it also connects Muslims and non-Muslims.

This year we cannot celebrate together as usual. However, we are bound in inner reflection and in a faith which gives solace and strength.”