



MUSLIM
ADVISORY COUNCIL
OF CANADA

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE NATIONAL SUMMIT ON ISLAMOPHOBIA

JULY 2021

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ABOUT US

We are a national not for profit organization dedicated to empowering the Canadian Muslim diaspora by identifying community stakeholder needs and advocating for an equitable society.

OUR VALUES

Lifelong Learning

We see learning as more than professional development, but as a mindset and philosophy to help us constantly adapt, change and excel.

Authenticity

We celebrate character and genuineness. We expect, respect and welcome different opinions, modes of expression and diversity.

Shared Achievement

We believe success is a team sport. We care about results, but more importantly, we care how those results are achieved.

Freedom & Responsibility

We trust our team. We embrace the freedom of members to work non-traditional hours if needed, to work from home and exercise creativity in career goals and development.

Professionalism

Individually and as a team, we hold ourselves to the highest professional standards.

We demand the best of ourselves every day and in everything we do.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Halton is rich in history and modern traditions of many First Nations and the Metis. From the Anishinabe to the Attawandaron, the Haudenosaunee, and the Metis - These lands surrounding the Great Lakes are steeped in Indigenous history. We have the responsibility to honour and respect the four directions, land, waters, plants, animals, ancestors that walked before us, and all the wonderful elements of creation that exist.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation for sharing their traditional territory with us.

INTRODUCTION

On Sunday June 6th 2021, the Afzaal family was brutally killed in an act of violent terrorism. A fifteen year old girl, a seventy four year old woman, a forty six year old man, and a forty four year old woman, were deliberately targeted in London, Ontario, out of hatred and Islamophobia. Although undoubtedly heart-wrenching, this act is not alone, and is one of many that have consistently targeted Muslims throughout Canada for their faith, ethnicity and religious beliefs.

As aforementioned, this attack was not an outlier in the treatment of Muslims across Canada, however it was in some ways, a final straw that sparked anger and fear across the nation. Incidents continue to rise in numbers, and the safety of our community is no longer guaranteed. In all parts of Canada, Islamophobia has intensified within a condensed amount of time, and our community is tired of simply pushing aside each attack and labelling it as an unfortunate incident. It is for these reasons that the Muslim Advisory Council is reinforcing the call for immediate change. We consulted with national Muslim leaders and they provided their insight and perspectives in regards to Islamophobia and action items required to combat hate. These insights have helped to shape our policy recommendations. This report will explain our recommendations and the importance of implementing them. The Muslim Advisory Council of Canada believes that the true test of the governments commitment to its citizens will be demonstrated through the discussion, implementation and actions taken from the policy recommendations from this report and those put forth by other organizations.

The Muslim Advisory of Canada stands in solidarity with Muslims all over Canada as a beacon and a support system for all those affected within the community. We understand the fear that has spread throughout our neighbourhoods and we hope to incite the change that will provide permanent safety and comfort to the Muslim community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Muslim Advisory Council of Canada remains steadfast in combatting all forms of racism, discrimination and hate, and Islamophobia, in particular. While we continue to advocate for policy changes to help codify measures that stop acts of hate against Muslims, unfortunately Islamophobia persists.

Since the brutal June 6, 2021 attacks against the Afzaal family in London, Ontario, there have been at least seven recorded acts of hate perpetuated against Muslims in these six weeks alone. These include (but are not limited to):

- Attack on a Black Muslim woman wearing a hijab, Edmonton on June 11, 2021
- Alleged attempt to break into the Islamic Institute of Toronto (IIT) on June 16, 2021
- Alleged racially motivated attack on June 20, 2021
- Knife to the throat of hijabi woman on June 23, 2021
- Saskatoon man, stabbed & beaten beard cut off on June 25, 2021
- Slurs and threats levelled at mother and daughter in Hamilton on July 12
- Cambridge mosque vandalization on July 15th

The issue of systemic Islamophobia can present itself in many layers in the lives of Canadian Muslims. Some of these layers include the discrimination youth face at school by their peers, the health care inequities experienced by Muslims during and after child birth, and villainizing Muslims in TV shows and movies, dehumanizing Muslims to the general public over multiple years. It is present in unfair workplace practices that leave Muslim employees out of networking spaces and potential opportunities and also when those with power and influence in Canada, through the choice of their words, perpetuate Islamophobia to constituents. The ongoing racism and discrimination of Muslims in Canada has been exacerbated by the lack of accountability by not only each level of government but by all of the systems in place.

Until there are policy changes to address the very real threat of Islamophobia, and unless further societal norms across the country are advanced to truly reflect an inclusive and hate-free society, these acts of Islamophobia will continue.

The Muslim Advisory Council of Canada - with your integral support - will continue to work tirelessly with community members, elected officials and other non-profit organizations to ensure this goal is achieved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "T. Wyne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and a smaller "W".

Tabassum Wyne

Executive Director

Muslim Advisory Council of Canada

www.muslimadvisory.ca

COMMUNITY RESPONSE AFTER THE ATTACK IN LONDON, ONTARIO

Not going on evening walks

I have anxiety and haven't slept

Always looking over my shoulder on walks now

Frightened

I am scared to go out

Terrified of the sound of a revving vehicle when I'm walking

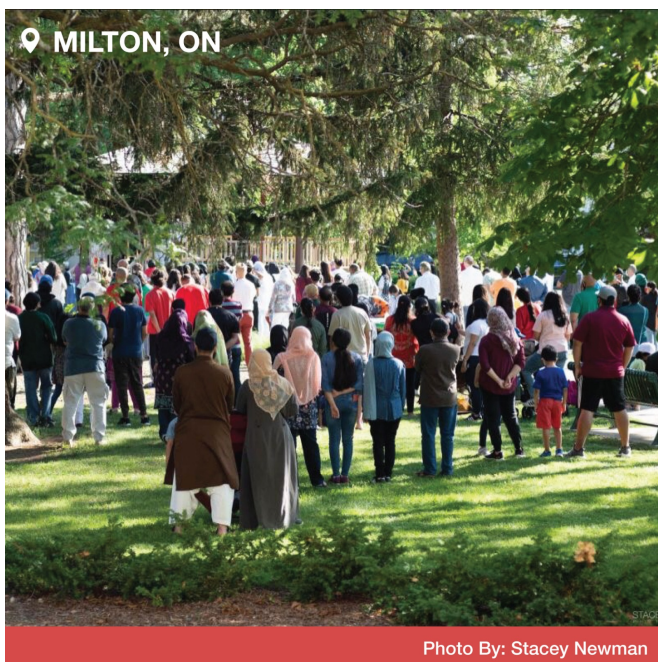
I am more alert and aware of my surroundings. Especially if I'm alone with my kids

Not going out alone

I used to feel very safe in my town, but now I feel scared that anyone could harm me

HALTON REGION VIGILS

We would like to take this time to highlight the Halton Region vigils that were organized by various community members and groups in memory of the beloved Afzaal family that were subject to a terrorist attack just over a week ago in London, Ontario. We would like to give our heartfelt gratitude and acknowledge all of the speakers, community members and politicians that showed up in solidarity.



CURRENT ONGOING CAMPAIGN FOR COMMUNITY TO SUBMIT EXPERIENCE WITH ISLAMOPHOBIA

The Muslim Advisory Council of Canada invited Canadian Muslims to submit their experiences with Islamophobia. We will be compiling these submissions into another report in an effort to help the broader community understand how common Islamophobic incidences are in Canada. This submission process is confidential.



**SUBMIT YOUR
EXPERIENCE WITH
ISLAMOPHOBIA**

muslimadvisory.ca/2021/06/28/islamophobia/

 www.muslimadvisory.ca  [@muslimadvisorycouncilcanada](https://www.instagram.com/muslimadvisorycouncilcanada)  info@muslimadvisory.ca

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ROUNDTABLE

We gathered the community to discuss systemic changes that are needed in Canada which will entail a whole level of government approach to eradicate Islamophobia in society.



Here is a snapshot of what was heard:

1. More Muslims should be hired in leadership positions
2. Black Muslim women face 6 times as much discrimination compared to non-Black Muslim women, so issue of Islamophobia is multi-layered.
3. Create a special Islamophobia task force in policing agencies.
4. There must be harsher sentencing for online hate and hate crimes.
5. The government needs to pass meaningful legislation to address online hate.
6. White supremacist terrorists must be stopped in their tracks. Their groups must be disbanded and rendered illegal and an active program of de-radicalization of their members must be a priority of the Canadian government.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Each level of government will play an important role in eradicating anti-Islam sentiments in our communities and in order to combat Islamophobia within Canada. Each level of government must actively participate in the discussion, implementation and action items recommended in this report and those put forth by other organizations.

This report will break down each recommendation to the relevant level of government. It will explain the need for these changes, what we hope to achieve, and the long term prospects for the Muslim community in Canada.

The Muslim Advisory Council of Canada holds a responsibility in ensuring that these recommendations are detailed, solution-oriented and implemented within the framework of our government.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

MUNICIPAL RECOMMENDATION #1: MANDATORY ANNUAL ANTI-ISLAM TRAINING FOR ALL MUNICIPAL & REGIONAL EMPLOYEES

We recommend Mandatory Interactive Annual Anti-Islam Training for all Municipal & Regional employees as education, learning and awareness is an imperative step in creating change in regards to Islamophobia. Current anti-racism training at the municipal level is not sufficient as we heard from Halton Town Councillors. We propose that municipalities engage and hire organizations to conduct quarterly or annual interactive refresher training sessions about Islamophobia. We also propose that after each municipal and regional election, newly elected politicians and their staff be required to sign up for an anti-Islam training session. As these are leadership positions with influence, we feel this is a necessary step in combating Islamophobia in society.

The Expected Outcomes of such training:

- Gain better understanding of Muslims
- Opportunity for staff to ask questions that they may have about Muslims
- This is a great community bridging opportunity
- This gives employees an opportunity to network with Muslims
- This is a learning opportunity to understand a large population of constituents so its mutually beneficial for politicians and the community

MUNICIPAL RECOMMENDATION #2: HATE CRIME REPORTING

1. Enforce User-Friendly Hate Crime Reporting Systems that ensure safety for Muslims and other minorities.

Why is this needed?

Statistics Canada states that the increase in hate crimes was one of 151 percent, a stat from 2017. About two-thirds of these go unreported. This means that the stats we currently base our conclusions on are inaccurate as they do not cover the full depth of the attacks that happen against Muslims. It also means that the population has a lack of trust in the police and law enforcement as they become labelled as ineffective and unable to protect citizens, due to the high number of attacks. This recommendation is one of immediate urgency as it is regarding the safety of Muslims, even while walking around and doing day to day activities and errands. Muslim women specifically, who wear the hijab are visible targets and often have to endure harassment and move on simply because the quickest way to reach a police based solution is not efficient at all.

Many incidents of harassment and attacks are left unreported due to one of the following reasons: In our current system, the way situations are dealt with are non-efficient in reporting hate crimes. With *Reporting Hate Crimes on the Phone* the victim often becomes re-traumatized. The current approach requires the victim to take on the responsibility of explaining their situation and determining how to navigate an already difficult conversation combined with the extra layer of anti-Islam sentiments some police officers may hold. Furthermore, explaining the problem of anti-Islam hate and how an attack might be racially motivated becomes difficult when officers are not educated on the cross cultural disadvantages faced by minorities. The layers of difficulty in the current police reporting system is a strenuous one for the Muslim community and one that should not be our burden.

2. Lack of trust with police to protect BIPOC due to instances with police brutality surrounding minorities. People do not trust the police when it comes to reporting incidences and their safety.

Some of these examples include:

- Ejaz Choudry- 62 year old Pakistani, schizophrenic man who was shot and killed by the Ontario police. The officer was then not charged.
- The Ontario Human Rights Commission states that a black man is 20 times more likely to be shot than a white man- indicating why Black Muslims may no longer hold trust.
- CBC compiled a database of every person who died during a police intervention between 2007-2017. Black and Indigenous people were severely overrepresented in this. In Toronto, Black people accounted for 37 percent of the victims yet they make up slightly more than 8 percent of the population.

We recommend the enforcement of user-friendly hate crime reporting systems as a need to make it easier for the Muslim community (and all racialize communities) to come forward and report hate incidences and hate crimes. This will help accurate reporting for statistical purposes and will help the community feel heard and feel safe. We also recommend that police organizations work with local and grassroots organizations and communities that deal with hate and come up with a best practice for their communities.

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Enforce User-Friendly Hate Crime Reporting Systems that ensure safety for Muslims and other minorities
2. Police organizations work with local and grassroots organizations and communities that deal with hate and come up with a best practice for their communities.
3. Dedicated funding required for community organizations for education initiatives on how to report hate crimes.
4. Receipt of quarterly reports on incidents from Halton Regional Police Services and roundtable discussions with hate crime unit of HRPS.
5. Required training for police on anti-Islam hate- this is extremely important as it brings forth the narrative that not everyone has the same experiences in their community

MUNICIPAL RECOMMENDATION #3: DEDICATED FUNDING

Muslim organizations require dedicated funding to properly advocate for their communities. Grassroots, local organizations are best equipped with the knowledge of what the needs of their communities are and are usually connected to the constituents and should be consulted with to determine what funding is necessary.

We also recommend that each municipality determine the source of funding made available to organizations through grants.

For example: The Milton Community Fund

Since 2001, the Milton Community Fund has given \$6.8 million to the Milton community. From researching past recipients of this fund, from 2018-2020, no Muslim organizations are listed as recipients. This is not a coincidence. The Milton Community Fund is discriminatory to the Muslim population in Milton as the source of the funding is the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation. Gambling is considered a non-permissible act in Islam due to the suffering, loss and possible addiction that can occur with this act.

1. Muslim not for profits will not be able to benefit from this fund which could help build capacity for some.
2. Recommendation: Milton Town Council to find other sources of funding to ensure Council funding distribution is equitable to the Milton Muslim community.

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Dedicated funding for local and grassroots Muslim organizations
2. Each Municipality determine source of funding made available to organizations through grants, such as the discriminatory Milton Community Fund
3. Milton Town Council to find other sources of funding to ensure Council funding distribution is equitable to the Milton Muslim community.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT:

PROVINCIAL RECOMMENDATION #1: MANDATORY ANNUAL ANTI-ISLAM TRAINING FOR ALL PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES

We recommend Mandatory Interactive Annual Anti-Islam Training for all Provincial employees as education, learning and awareness is an imperative step in creating change in regards to Islamophobia. Current anti-racism training at the municipal level is not sufficient as we heard from Halton Town Councillors. We propose that provincial governments engage and hire organizations to conduct quarterly or annual interactive refresher training sessions about Islamophobia. We also propose that after each provincial election, newly elected politicians and their staff be required to sign up for an anti-Islam training session. As these are leadership positions with influence, we feel this is a necessary step in combating Islamophobia in society.

The Expected Outcomes of such training:

- Gain better understanding of Muslims
- Opportunity for staff to ask questions that they may have about Muslims
- This is a great community bridging opportunity
- This gives employees an opportunity to network with Muslims
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PROVINCIAL RECOMMENDATION #2: EDUCATION

Education will be a key component in countering Islamophobia and anti-Islam rhetoric from a young age. Our executive director serves on the Halton District School Boards Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committee and consults regularly with youth groups in the region.

The Muslim Advisory Council Recommends that:

- 1. Mandatory Annual Anti-Islam lesson/course in schools for both students and teachers/staff**

- a. October is Canadian Islamic History Month and a lesson or course developed from Kindergarten-Grade 12 will educate the youth and the school administration about religious tolerance, countering Islamophobia, how to be an ally to Muslims and it will lead to accountability, acceptance and diversity.
- b. Possible topics for K-Grade 12: Shining a light on the positive Canadian Muslim contributions in society, presenting a lesson on how calling individuals slurs is not acceptable, and holidays celebrated by Muslims.
- c. Anti-Islam training for public teachers, staff and administration to ensure they better understand a large segment of their students.

- 2. Repercussions & Accountability for students (and staff) whom, implicitly or explicitly, refer to Muslim students as terrorists.**

We have consulted with youth groups in the Halton Region and it's clear that global events have localized impacts, and the youth are facing the brunt of this discrimination in the schooling system. We are referring to global events such as in France and Palestine. The accountability measure we recommend is a suspension and/or expulsion of students who repeatedly are complicit in spreading such hate. Muslim students who are subjected to this continued discrimination are less likely to speak up again once it goes ignored by school administration.

3. Dedicated Funding for Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committees for School Boards.

There needs to be dedicated funding for each of the community organizations that are participating in these advisory capacities, because while giving advice is important there needs to be an output attached to the advice given in regards to the work that needs to be done. For example, we identified that students were being explicitly referred to as terrorists by their peers in a Halton Region school after a global event occurred. We require resources to hire a diversity coordinator to meet with the school board to ensure accountability when such incidences arise.

PROVINCIAL RECOMMENDATION #3: HEALTHCARE

As we know, systemic Islamophobia is everywhere in Canada. Healthcare is no exception. Inequities in care for BIPOC is commonplace. Islamophobia in birthing is also commonplace. Our executive director serves on the McMaster Children's Hospital Family Advisory Council, where she advises on improvements to patient care.

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Healthcare students in nursing and medical school in Canada take a religious tolerance and diversity course on ways to combat Islamophobia and other BIPOC discriminatory practices.
2. Mandatory Annual Anti-Islam Training for healthcare professionals as a continuing education course informed by Muslim parents and organizations such as Muslim Advisory Council of Canada to ensure continuous learning.
3. Make mental health resources for birth trauma and maternal mental health issues more accessible. There are currently barriers to access therapy and counselling that the province can look into removing.

PROVINCIAL RECOMMENDATION #4: PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT TO RE-ASSESS ONTARIO CULTURE DAYS FUNDING AND REDIRECT THESE FUNDS DIRECTLY TO CULTURAL GROUPS DOING THE WORK

This policy recommendation is in regards to Ontario Culture Days, in which local organizations receive a large grant from the provincial government to put on the event.

1. We would like to see the Culture Days funding redirected to the cultural groups that are taking part and doing the work, and not solely to the one beneficiary.
2. Secondly, we would like to see that the beneficiary receiving the Culture Days funding equitably distribute the funds to the cultural groups that are participating.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION #1: CRIMINALIZING ISLAMOPHOBIA

The Muslim Advisory Council of Canada recommends that the federal government immediately condemn Anti-Islam hate by criminalizing Islamophobia as a whole. We ask the government to respond in the same way the government is responding to calls for reform from other Canadian organizations. We wish to see a more stable attempt at this.

Motion M-103:

We want to see a better attempt than Motion M-103, which although contained essential starting points, did not hold the proper impacts that should be implemented. Firstly, in it being a non-binding motion. As a resolution of the House is a declaration of opinion or purpose it does not require that any action be taken, nor is it binding. The House has frequently brought forth resolutions in order to show support for an action or outlook. We feel that this is not adequate in actually stopping these attacks as it does not incite fear or consequence for those who engage in violence. Secondly in the response from the population given to Liberal MP Iqra Khalid for adopting this motion in the first place. She was met with death threats, hate speeches against her, and all manner of verbal abuse, invalidating the motion in the first place and proving the point that further solid action needs to be taken. We wish for formal and secure legislation to be in place, calling out acts of Islamophobia and labelling it as specified for this type of hate.

Why is this needed?:

1. Islamophobia is gendered- meaning that it operates according to gendered stereotypes about Muslim men (as violent terrorists and patriarchs) and Muslim women (as subjugated victims and dangerous cultural vectors). It affects the whole population as well as those who others perceive to “look Muslim”.

2. Islamophobia intersects with other systems of racism- Black Muslims, Indigenous Muslims, and Black Indigenous Muslims experience the compounding effects of anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, and Islamophobia; for example, they are more likely to suffer the negative effects of information-sharing agreements between police and national security agencies, since Black and Indigenous communities are disproportionately targeted by police. This means there are several groups in play that need this motion for their safety.

Our Context:

The following statistics were a submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief November 30, 2020 Submitted by: International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, Islamic Social Services Association, and Noor Cultural Centre

- 46% of Canadians have an unfavourable view of Islam – more than for any other religious tradition
- Fewer than half of Canadians would find it “acceptable” for one of their children to marry a Muslim – lower than for any other religious group
- 56% of Canadians believe that Islam suppresses women’s rights
- More than half of people living in Ontario feel mainstream Muslim doctrines promote violence
- 51% support government surveillance of mosques (as compared to 46% of Americans)

In even discussing something like this, it already makes people feel safer as it brings forth the narrative that the safety of minorities is a priority, and the government does not condone hate. We recommend criminalizing the hatred and violence that occurs in mass instances, and provide consequences for those who target minorities under the pretence of free speech.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION #2: CONDEMNING BILL-21

Our next recommendation is the complete condemnation of Bill 21 or an act respecting the “laicity of the state”.

We believe this to be problematic for two main reasons:

Referring to a portion of what the bill entails: “To that end, the bill provides that the laicity of the State is based on four principles: the separation of State and religions, the religious neutrality of the State, the equality of all citizens, and freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. Parliamentary, government and judicial institutions are bound to adhere to these principles in pursuing their missions. This bill states that personnel members of a body must exercise their functions with their face uncovered, and persons who present themselves to receive a service from such a personnel member must have their face uncovered when doing so is necessary to allow their identity to be verified or for security reasons. Persons who fail to comply with that obligation may not receive the service”.

1. The first and most obvious issue is that the bill targets a specific group of people who would actually cover their face in public without any medical reason, and that is Muslim women observing the niqab. Forcing Muslim women to unveil themselves forces them to choose whether to be treated as an equal member of society, or cover their face. It forces them to abandon their dignity and is disrespectful, racist, and does not comply with the freedom of expression that is guaranteed in Canada.
2. The second reason is that when a government endorses such a bill, supports it and allows it to plant roots and establish itself, it now provides a basis for Islamophobia to occur because it is backed up by the law. Individuals now have a concrete reason to not trust the hijab, or the niqab, and in turn not trust religion, because their government has provided a basis for their opinion to be credible. Now it is no longer an opinion; it is backed up by the state and therefore holds merit.

The Impact:

- 52% of Canadians feel that Muslims can only be trusted “a little” or “not at all”
- 42% of Canadians think discrimination against Muslims is “mainly their fault”
- 47% of Canadians support banning headscarves in public (compared with 30% of Americans)

These narratives have been outwardly supported and allowed. We would like the Quebec charter to be denounced, seeing as they are the only place in Canada that uses the civil law and Napoleonic code from France. We would like this Bill formally labelled as racist and unacceptable as a part of Canada.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION #3: DISMANTLING ONLINE HATE

The concept of online hate is also imperative in finding the root causes of anti-Islam narratives. There are over 6600 online right wing extremism forums initiating this hate with an extensive amount of Canadian users. These groups promote white supremacist narratives, they initiate and discuss violence, and the response has been less than adequate on solving this matter.

Why is this needed?

Online hate, primarily through social media, continues to fuel Islamophobia and animosity towards Canadian Muslim populations.

Examples:

- In 2016, software company Cision documented a 600 percent rise in the amount of intolerant hate speech in social media postings. Their study focused on the usage of hashtags such as #banmuslims and #siegeheil.
- In 2019, Leger Marketing reported that 60 percent of Canadians report having seen hate speech on social media, and 62 percent of Quebecers stated that they had seen hateful or racist speech on the Internet or on social media in relation to Muslims.
- Mosques have been vandalized with Neo Nazi symbols in Edmonton, Muslims have had slurs thrown against them.
- Many mosques had bylaws temporarily waived for Ramadan so they could play their call to prayer, and this was met with hate and backlash, a few months later Andre Audet from Quebec had charges against him when they found hundreds of online posts calling for the death of all Muslims and Justin Trudeau.
- After the London Attack, facebook groups were flooded with justifications and sympathizing with the killer, while another man filmed a Muslim family outside their home and “jokingly” told a truck who drove past to go back and hit them.

How:

We ask for regulations and thorough investigations about the base of these hate groups so that the individuals involved may be held accountable. (For example, the Proud Boys, the Base, the Atomwaffen division were added to terrorist lists). In this way we want more investigations that are thorough, as it is a direct contributor to the endangerment of Muslims. There is no accurate information in these groups and any association with them furthers anti-islam rhetoric spreading. It makes Muslims targets, and encourages hateful behaviour

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION #4 DEDICATED FUNDING

Dedicated Capacity Building Funding for grassroots Muslim organizations. Including a knowledge hub.

Due to the ongoing history of violence and Islamophobia in Canada, prioritizing dedicated capacity building grants for Muslim organizations will be a direct step in advocating for and creating change.

Proper funding and resources allows for the full potential of goals to be reached.

Short Term Goal:

- To provide capacity building grants that will allow Muslim organizations to actively advocate for what their community needs.

Long Term Goal:

- For these grants to contribute to the overall development of Muslim and other minority organizations on a larger scale
- For these organizations to grow overtime with this investment in their projects as a communal and essential need.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION #5: MANDATORY ANNUAL ANTI-ISLAM TRAINING FOR ALL FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

The Role of Canadian Politicians in Perpetuating Islamophobia

When politicians use terms such as “Islamist terrorists” they are adding fuel to fire and associating an entire religion, followed by 1.9 billion Muslims worldwide, to terrorism. This aforementioned occurrence happened in January 2020 after a global event in France. Politicians are Canada’s lawmakers and influencers so when they themselves are complicit in perpetuating and spreading anti-Islam rhetoric, it is a grave concern. Thus, we recommend anti-Islam training for all federal leaders on an annual basis.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION #6: BETTERED ACCESS TO MUSLIM MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Muslim community in Canada needs immediate access to mental health resources and we recommend funding be directed to grassroots and local Muslim organizations to partner with local mental health service providers in localities to ensure the community receives the help they need. Mental health services are costly and many cannot afford them. We also recommend affordable mental health access be provided to all Canadians.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION #7: FUNDING TOWARDS SELF DEFENCE TRAINING FOR RACIALIZED WOMEN

Visible Muslim women feel unsafe in their communities and many are even getting attacked such as the cases in Alberta and most recently, Hamilton, Ontario. Locally here in Halton Region women feel unsafe as well. Women need to know how to defend ourselves from perpetrators in the event a gender-based Islamophobic incident occurs.

Muslim women choosing to wear the hijab are obvious targets with no means to do anything. Providing self defence knowledge will allow for them to feel safer within their own communities.

We recommend immediate access to funds to be directed to grassroots and local Muslim organizations to partner with self defence instructors and provide this much needed and timely service to the community.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION #8: ENDING DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE.

According to Statistics Canada, in 2017 the workplace was the number one place where discrimination occurs. Unfortunately, this is a common place where Islamophobia is perpetuated, be it in everyday micro-aggressions or explicit actions such as refusing to accommodate Muslim employees with a space to pray.

Recommendations:

1. We recommend a policy be implemented to ensure diverse hiring practices, and religious tolerance training for leadership. We would like to see workplaces, board of directors of organizations and change starting from the top to be reflective of society. This includes hiring practices, requiring a certain percentage of board members and executives to be designated as BIPOC hires, and educating workplace employees on diversity within the workplace.
2. We also recommend that any form of abuse, racism, and racial harassment be treated as of utmost importance and dealt with immediately by suspending or expelling said individual from the workplace. Because workplaces can be large, oftentimes incidents go unnoticed and unmonitored. No one is held accountable since harassment and side remarks are seen as unprofessional if discussed in the work area. This should not be the case and we recommend consequences to ensure that tolerance is a key factor in any work environment.



Over **1 million**
Muslims live in Canada



Muslims make up
3.2% of Canada's
total population

Hate crimes targeting
the Muslim population
accounted for 17% of all hate
crimes in Canada in 2017.



Ontario is home to
582,000 Muslims

1 out of every 5
Canadians a visible
minority.



Islam is the **second**
largest religion in
Canada after Christianity.

South Asians are
the largest visible
minority group in Canada.



It's also the **fastest**
growing religion in
Canada and the world.

1/3 of Muslims in
Canada has experienced
discrimination due to their
religion or ethnicity/culture.



Muslims Live

424,900
in Toronto

73,200
in Vancouver

221,000
in Montréal

Making these the three largest census
metropolitan areas where Muslims live.

The **workplace** was the
number one place where
discrimination occurs.



SOURCES

- <https://bit.ly/2T4oNEy>
- <https://bit.ly/2S1mx0b>
- <https://bit.ly/39MAO8v>
- <https://bit.ly/2wyzFTJ>
- <https://bit.ly/2uPkjtD>
- <https://bit.ly/39L07yo>



Image Source: <https://muslimadvisory.ca/2020/09/30/canadian-islamic-history-month/>

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATION #9: THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN PERPETUATING ISLAMOPHOBIA

The media in Canada and around the world has played a significant role in advancing and perpetuating Islamophobia. This has been over 20 years in the making since the September 11, 2001 incident. Muslim men are often portrayed as terrorists in television shows or movies and Muslim women are often portrayed as oppressed and being forced to wear the hijab by their spouses. These are not reflective of the true Canadian Muslim identity. Muslims are not a monolith and come from varying backgrounds, as should be noted.

Recommendations:

1. **Amendments to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) Key Television Policies.**

a) Assign a Muslim CRTC commissioner: The CRTC is an administrative tribunal that regulates and supervises broadcasting and telecommunications in the public interest. However, current leadership has only one minority voice represented. When an organization does not reflect its community, the voices that have been historically left out, will continue to be so, knowingly or unknowingly.

b) Specific Policies such as the Diversity of Voices Policy need to include and consult Muslim organizations

2. **Media mentorship program:**

Dedicated funding of millions from the Canada Media fund for a talent activation initiative focused on experienced Canadian Muslim writers and storytellers. This program will build a more inclusive and innovative industry with a focus on increasing representation behind the camera and in front of the camera. This one of a kind mentorship initiative will aim to guide selected applicants an opportunity to develop their craft at the same time, gain invaluable insight and perspective and industry knowledge and exposure to executives, creators and established industry professionals. Our goal for this is to be a multi-year initiative with collaboration from industry professionals and the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television and/or Telefilm Canada. This initiative would launch underrepresented voices on a path to achieve success and exposure in the industry and empower Canadian Muslim storytellers. By taking back the Muslim narrative in the media, we can counter the stereotypes that have perpetuated Islamophobia for over 20 years.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

MUNICIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation #1: Mandatory Annual Anti-Islam Training for all Municipal & Regional employees

- Municipalities engage and hire organizations to conduct quarterly or annual interactive refresher training sessions about Islamophobia. We also propose that after each municipal and regional election, newly elected politicians and their staff be required to sign up for an anti-Islam training session. As these are leadership positions with influence, we feel this is a necessary step in combating Islamophobia in society. Politicians and officials bringing forth anti-Islam rhetoric pose a threat to our community.

Recommendation #2: Hate Crime Reporting

-Enforce User-Friendly Hate Crime Reporting Systems that ensure safety for Muslims and other minorities

-Police organizations work with local and grassroots organizations and communities that deal with hate and come up with a best practice for their communities.

-Dedicated funding required for community organizations for education initiatives on how to report hate crimes.

-Receipt of quarterly reports on incidents from Halton Regional Police Services and roundtable discussions with hate crime unit of HRPS.

-Required training for police on anti-Islam hate- this is extremely important as it brings forth the narrative that not everyone has the same experiences in their community. Any minor form of education for police forces will allow them to be aware of the problems faced by minorities.

Recommendation #3: Dedicated Funding

- Dedicated funding for local and grassroots Muslim organizations
- Each Municipality determine sources of funding made available to organizations through grants, such as the discriminatory Milton Community Fund
- Milton Town Council to find other sources of funding to ensure Council funding distribution is equitable to the Milton Muslim community.

PROVINCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation #1: Mandatory Annual Anti-Islam Training for all Provincial employees

- We propose that provincial governments engage and hire organizations to conduct quarterly or annual interactive refresher training sessions about Islamophobia. We also propose that after each provincial election, newly elected politicians and their staff be required to sign up for an anti-Islam training session. As these are leadership positions with influence, we feel this is a necessary step in combating Islamophobia in society.

Recommendation #2: Education

- Mandatory Annual Anti-Islam lesson/course in schools for both students and teachers/staff
- Repercussions & Accountability for students (and staff) whom, implicitly or explicitly, refer to Muslim students as terrorists.
- Dedicated Funding for Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committees for School Boards

Recommendation #3: Healthcare

- Healthcare students in nursing and medical school in Canada take a religious tolerance and diversity course on ways to combat Islamophobia and other BIPOC discriminatory practices.

- Mandatory Annual Anti-Islam Training for healthcare professionals as a continuing education course informed by Muslim parents and organizations such as Muslim Advisory Council of Canada to ensure continuous learning.

- Make mental health resources for birth trauma and maternal mental health issues more accessible. There are currently barriers to access therapy and counselling that the province can look into removing.

Recommendation #4: Provincial Government to Re-Assess Ontario Culture Days Funding and Redirect these Funds Directly to Cultural Groups Doing the Work

- We would like to see the Culture Days funding redirected to the cultural groups that are taking part and doing the work, and not solely to the one beneficiary.

- Secondly, we would like to see that the beneficiary receiving the Culture Days funding equitably distribute the funds to the cultural groups that are participating and stop the unfair practice of asking BIPOC folk to work for free.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation #1: Criminalizing Islamophobia

- Immediately condemn Anti-Islam hate by criminalizing Islamophobia as a whole. We ask the government to respond in the same way the government is responding to calls for reform from Canadians as well as organizations and commissions, including the Parliamentary Black Caucus, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We wish to see a more stable attempt at this.

Recommendation #2: Condemning Bill-21

- Complete condemnation of Bill 21.

Recommendation #3: Dismantling Online Hate

- We ask for regulations and thorough investigations about the base of these hate groups so that the individuals involved may be held accountable. (For example, the Proud Boys, the base, the Atomwaffen division were added to terrorist lists). In this way we want more investigations that are thorough, as it is a direct contributor to the endangerment of Muslims. There is no accurate information in these groups and any association with them furthers anti-islam rhetoric spreading. It makes Muslims targets, and encourages hateful behaviour

Recommendation #4 Dedicated Funding Capacity Building Funding for Grassroot Muslim organizations.

- Due to the ongoing history of violence and Islamophobia in Canada, prioritizing dedicated capacity building grants for Muslim organizations will be a direct step in advocating for and creating change.

Recommendation #5: Mandatory Annual Anti-Islam Training for all Federal employees: The Role of Canadian Politicians in Perpetuating Islamophobia

- Politicians are Canada's lawmakers and influencers so when they themselves are complicit in perpetuating and spreading anti-Islam rhetoric, it is a grave concern. Thus, we recommend anti-Islam training for all federal leaders on an bi-annual basis.

Recommendation #6: Bettered Access to Muslim Mental Health Services

- The Muslim community in Canada needs immediate access to mental health resources and we recommend funding be directed to grassroots and local Muslim organizations to partner with local mental health service providers in localities to ensure the community receives the help they require. Mental health services are costly and many cannot afford them. We also recommend affordable mental health access be provided to all Canadians.

Recommendation #7: Funding Towards Self Defence Training For Racialized Women

- We recommend immediate access to funds to be directed to grassroots and local Muslim organizations to partner with self defence instructors and provide this much needed and timely service to the community.

Recommendation #8: Ending Discrimination in the Workplace

- We recommend a policy be implemented to ensure diverse hiring practices, and religious tolerance training for leadership.

- We also recommend that any form of abuse, racism, and racial harassment be treated as of utmost importance and dealt with immediately by suspending or expelling said individual from the workplace.

Recommendation #9: The Media's Role in Perpetuating Islamophobia

- Amendments to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) Key Television Policies.

- Media mentorship program.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of these policy recommendations is to ensure that the Muslim Advisory Council of Canada executes its capacity to provide advice and guidance to all levels of government in Canada to chart the path forward to safety, protection and well-being of the Canadian Muslim community. We request that our insights not only be considered, but actively discussed and implemented. All of the recommendations have been thoroughly researched, deliberated, and are pertinent to the stakeholders involved. The call to actions proposed in this report serve the sole purpose of guaranteeing the safety of the Canadian Muslim population, along with long term concerning Islamophobia in Canada.

From the upcoming National Summit on Islamophobia, we would like to see a fully accessible report which should clearly outline the policy recommendations that each level of government will implement from the recommended action items from the insight, perspectives and ideas proposed. We would also like to see it outlined as to which commitments will be turned into action. A plan such as this will highlight to the public and to all Canadian Muslims and organizations, the path forward, through which medium the government plans to achieve these actionable items, which will provide reassurance that Canadian Muslim voices are being heard.

The true test of each level of government will be dependant upon the recommendations considered, brought into action and the intensity at which the recommendations are implemented. These recommendations are community informed, who best know the hatred and fear they are experiencing. These recommendations come from a need for long term change from systemic Islamophobia, but also from an immediate desire to feel safe and accepted in our own country. Canadian Muslims have the right to live free from racism, discrimination and hate, as per the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Government of Canada should be compelled to implement accountability measures from the recommendations provided in this report.

The Muslim Advisory Council of Canada aspires to aid government officials in understanding and adopting permanent, consistent and appropriate policy changes to support minorities and the Muslim community. As a national organization, our role will also be to support our community in times of hardship, and we anticipate that these recommendations will chart the path forward in achieving diversity, tolerance, as well as eliminating all forms of hate in Canada.



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