

July 19, 2021

The CUPE 3906 executive grieves with our Muslim colleagues, friends, and community members. We do not accept Islamophobia and we recognize that dismantling systems of white supremacy is directly intertwined with the liberation of workers and their communities from capitalism.

Islamophobia is not just a matter of individualized hatred - it is systematically driven by a state-sanctioned and profit-motivated War on Terror, which involves a web of domestic surveillance and criminalization. This is fueled by the exclusionary rhetoric of politicians and media, and upheld by dangerous and violent white supremacist organizing--especially in Hamilton, which holds the odious distinction of being Canada's hate crime capital.

The recent tragic news about the mass murder of a Muslim family in London, Ontario, has made it more than ever imperative that we take a strong position against Islamophobia. We will not stand still as we see Islamophobic acts on the rise, prompting even children to wonder if they are safe and ask if they "[look too Muslim](#)". No one should feel this way about who they are, no one should be the object of hatred just for peacefully following their faith, which preaches love and kindness to each other. We must make this clear to everyone and take the necessary steps to ensure all of us feel protected

Since the act of terror at the Quebec City mosque in 2017, authorities have been slow in taking adequate measures to protect persons of faith. Statistics Canada [data on police-reported hate crimes](#) shows that religiously motivated crime accounts for roughly a third of all hate crimes, second only to crimes motivated by race and ethnicity – a trend that has held steady for at least the past five years. Last year in Toronto we also had another monstrous act of hatred, as a volunteer caretaker was stabbed to death in front of his Mosque. More needs to be done, and it needs to happen right now.

Together with the [calls made by human rights advocate Amira Elghawaby](#) , we call for:

- The removal of barriers to reporting hate. Up to two-thirds of all victims are not coming forward, according to Statistics Canada's General Social Survey. Among the reasons people cite is mistrust of the police, not wanting to present at a police station, or having a police cruiser parked in front of one's residence while giving a report. Solutions that are being tried in cities like Ottawa include allowing people to report hate through an online portal instead. Third-

party reporting is also a real option in which community health centres and local organizations take reports and provide it to police for further investigation and follow up.

- Repeating and reporting the victimization portion of the General Social Survey annually instead of every five years or so. We would have a better objective measure of how many hate crimes are unreported.
- Mandating and embedding anti-racism and anti-oppression training in educational institutions. This would be important for teachers, staff, and students, and would additionally provide bystander training to empower victims of hate and those who witness such incidents. Universities should promote seminars and events to educate the community and counter Islamophobic narratives, foster research to identify and redress discrimination and ensure their curricula reflects this research. School councils should also be encouraged to provide training and information to parents. In this spirit, we urge McMaster to keep promoting workshops like [H.E.A.R.T](#) and to further the work of the Equity and Inclusion Office to challenge Islamophobia on campus.
- Bolstering or introducing anti-racism directorates at every level of government. Well-resourced directorates should exist to provide space for community advocates to explore ways in which policies and programs are addressing racism and discrimination. These directorates should also lead on addressing systemic racism within public agencies and run public awareness campaigns.
- Funding programs that encourage and support racialized post-secondary students to run for office and learn about the political process. Representation is key to ensuring that the voices of marginalized communities are not only at the table, but are helping set it.
- Along with heeding community calls for a national summit on Islamophobia, and dismantling white supremacist hate groups, the federal government must also introduce legislation against online hate that it has long promised.

We must all stand united and rise together against Islamophobia, we must fight it in our workplaces, in our neighbourhoods, in our politics, everywhere it lurks, replacing it with justice and love. An injury to one is an injury to all and we will not cease our fight as long as any of us can't be at peace.

In solidarity,



Sharoni Mitra

President, on behalf of the Executive Committee of CUPE Local 3906