



CANADIAN MUSLIM  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
COUNCIL

ELECTION ISSUES  
2021 FEDERAL ELECTION

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# Institutionalize the Fight Against Islamophobia

## **FEDERAL OFFICE TO COMBAT ISLAMOPHOBIA**

For years the Muslim community has witnessed growing Islamophobia across Canada, from the Quebec mosque shooting to the London terrorist attack on the Afzal family.

The government held an Action Summit on Islamophobia but did very little in commitments to the community. Islamophobia in Canada has so many manifestations. Hate crimes to institutional racism in government agencies.

In order to tackle this both in the short term and the long term the community has called on the government to establish a federal office, with adequate mandate and resources, to develop and implement a comprehensive anti-Islamophobia strategy.

### **QUESTION FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the government to establish a federal office to combat Islamophobia and appoint a Special Envoy on Islamophobia with an appropriate budget?

## **ONLINE HATE**

In 2019, the House of Commons Justice Committee conducted a study of online hate. Its report included a series of recommendations to track and prevent online hate.

The Muslim community has called on the government to ensure that laws are adequate to the changed environment, including social media, online hate, and the rising threat of white supremacist groups.

### **QUESTION FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the government to implement a strategy to tackle online hate and radicalization that includes establishing clear regulations for online social media platforms?

# Eliminate Institutional And Systemic Islamophobia

## **CRA PREJUDICE AND BIASED AUDITS**

Two reports were released by civil liberties groups that exposed prejudiced and biased audits of Muslim charities by a secret division in the CRA.

This was the #1 issue raised at the National Action Summit on Islamophobia. The Liberal government responded with a controversial review by the CRA ombudsperson that is non-binding and limited in scope.

The Liberal Party has not offered any reforms in its platform. The Conservative Party has announced it will give more binding powers to the Ombudsperson and bring reform to income tax act on the CRA's direction and control problematic and draconian guidelines. The NDP has spoken out publicly on this matter and advocated for change.

The Charity Sector has called for an immediate moratorium on targeted audits of Muslim charities by the CRA's Review and Analysis Division (RAD) pending a comprehensive review of RAD leading to reform or dissolution of the division.

This has precedence and was done by Trudeau in the case of environmental groups.

### **QUESTION FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the government to support the Charity Sector's call for a moratorium on targeted audits of Muslim charities by the CRA's RAD division until a review is completed?

## **CBSA OVERSIGHT**

The CBSA has targeted refugees from Muslim countries, particularly from countries that have had experienced attempts to establish democracy and have been thwarted by military coups followed by crackdowns on activists and opposition. These include Muslims from Bangladesh, Egypt, Tunis, and others.

The CBSA has used a problematic section 34(1)(f) of the immigration act to block refugees and deport them back to their countries. Much of this is fueled by Islamophobia in the CBSA and foreign influence of these regimes. Today there is no way to address these concerns

through oversight or a complaints process. The CBSA works without accountability.

The Liberal government has been mute on these issues and has failed to bring reform through parliament.

The Muslim community is calling for reform and oversight of the CBSA, including a meaningful mechanism for investigation and resolution of complaints of targeting and profiling of Muslims.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the government to pass legislation to introduce oversight on the CBSA, no different than the RCMP and CSIS?

Will you urge the government to review section 34(1)(f) and bring Canada's immigration act in alignment with our UN obligations and other western states?

Will you also urge the Government for a review of the CBSA systemic Islamophobia in its enforcement of the act with refugees?

### **BILL 21**

Bill 21 prohibits a person who exhibits religious symbols such as the hijab, turban, or kippah from holding several public positions of power. Public servants such as police officers, lawyers and even teachers cannot identify themselves as members of a faith group while carrying out their duties.

It is a law that intends to enforce second class citizenship based on an individual's identity and religion. The Muslim community and other faith groups have been opposed to this Islamophobic legislation, as well as any legislation or public policy that targets protected rights.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the Attorney General to intervene in all future cases challenging Bill 21 before the courts?

# Foreign Affairs

## **PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

For years Canadians advocating for democracy and human rights around the world have faced obstacles to their free expression, particularly advocacy against authoritarian and occupying regimes such as in the Middle East, Myanmar and China.

With the exception of hate, freedom and expression cannot be limited and activists cannot be subjected to censorship and misrepresentation of both themselves and their cause.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you support the rights of activists to speak out without censorship or criminalization of their advocacy?

## **UN RESOLUTIONS ON PALESTINE**

Since 2019, the Federal government has voted in favor of the UN resolution in support of Palestinian self-determination. However, it has continued to vote against all other resolutions, despite the majority of the international community supporting the rights of Palestinians more consistently.

Canada's anti-Palestinian voting record at the UN has played a major role in our declining reputation in the world.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE**

With the current examples of expulsions in Sheikh Jarrah and other jurisdictions, Canada spoke out. To further Canada's position, will you urge the government to speak out for the rights of Palestinians and call out the violations of Israel, as we would do with any other nation?

Will you urge our government to change its vote on 3 of the 16 UN resolutions which are: the resolution on Israel settlements, the projection of refugees properties, and the Assistance to Palestine refugees with UNRWA?

## **SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY EVERYWHERE**

In the Islamophobia summit Trudeau reaffirmed that “on the world stage, our government will always stand up for peace and democracy, human rights, freedom of expression, and freedom of belief. This includes the protection of minorities.”

But in practice the Government has been selective in its foreign policy. It has condemned coups in Mali and Myanmar, but remained silent in Egypt and most recently Tunis.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the government to support democracy and human rights unequivocally?

Will you urge the government to establish a human rights office with a mandate and resources to ensure our foreign policy is principled and consistent?

## **AFGHANISTAN**

Afghanistan is plunging into further chaos.

The UN Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan estimates a worst-case scenario of 500,000 Afghan refugees. UNHCR estimates 400,000 Afghans have already fled their homes this year. A third of the population is already facing food insecurity, and as NGOs pull out, the humanitarian crisis will only worsen.

Canada has an obligation to both those left behind and to provide protection and a home to refugees, regardless of political control. Western Nations who have occupied Afghanistan for 2 decades have a moral obligation to support the Afghan people.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the Government to call for Western nations to take responsibility and support the people of Afghanistan?

Will you urge your party to commit to more refugees from Afghanistan if you are elected?

# Taking Care Of All Canadians

## **COVID-19 RESPONSE & REBUILDING OUR ECONOMY**

The pandemic exposed the deep inequities routinely experienced by women, members of racialized communities, those with disabilities, and individuals struggling with mental health and addictions.

Canada's 170,000 charities and nonprofits have been responding to these challenges and have the expertise, local networks and talent needed to create the inclusive recovery Canadians deserve to address poverty, discrimination, homelessness, youth unemployment, the lack of mental health supports and inadequate childcare.

### **QUESTION FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the government to ensure its COVID-19 recovery plan is built and implemented in partnership with community organizations and provide additional funding particularly for organizations supporting good social causes?

## **FOOD SECURITY**

Food insecurity is on the rise in Canada. During the pandemic, it increased by 39 per cent, affecting one in seven Canadians. Far too many people can't afford good food, or they worry about running out with no money to buy more.

The federal government must take the lead in addressing the real causes of food insecurity in Canada.

### **QUESTION FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the government to address the root causes of food insecurity and commit additional resources to the Emergency Food Security Fund in order to support the demand on food bank funding and food security funding programs?

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

More than 235,000 people in Canada experience homelessness in any given year, and over 35,000 people experience homelessness on any given night.

Canada's National Housing Strategy (NHS) is intended to address housing development and affordability, and manage Canada's housing crisis.

Not enough has been done.

### **QUESTION FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you urge the government to increase resources towards Canada's National Housing Strategy, commit to eliminating homelessness, and invest more funds into building new affordable housing across the country?

## **INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Beginning in May 2021, with the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C. The graves of more than 1,300 other children have since been found, including more than 751 in Marieval, Sask.

At the same time Indigenous communities have been hit hard by COVID 19. This is especially true for people living on reserve and in the sparsely populated and geographically remote northern territories.

In their 2019 platforms, the Liberals, NDP and Green Party all committed to implement this global human rights standard, but the Conservatives did not.

In June 2021, the Senate passed an Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

### **QUESTION FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you commit to urge the government to outline an actionable path to reach the Truth and Reconciliation report recommendations as well as prioritize the implementation of UNDRIP?

## **IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES**

Muslims across the world are experiencing persecution, oppression, and authoritarian regimes. The numbers of refugees from Muslim countries is growing, whether it be the Rohingyas in Myanmar, and Uyghurs in China, political opposition in Bangladesh or Egypt.

Canada's refugee system must offer a safe haven to those who need protection.

### **QUESTION FOR CANDIDATE**

Will you ensure the government is committed to welcoming, protecting, and supporting refugees who seek asylum because of their human rights and democracy activism or escaping persecution for their faith?