

# COMBATTING ISLAMOPHOBIA

A POLICY HANDBOOK

JUNE 2026



CANADIAN MUSLIM  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
COUNCIL

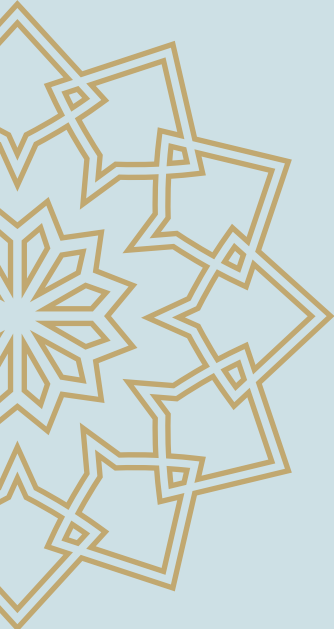


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## INTRODUCTION

On June 6, 2021, four members of the Afzaal family were murdered in London, Ontario in a hate-motivated terrorist attack. The attack on Our London Family was not an isolated tragedy, it exposed a reality many Muslim Canadians had warned about for years; that Islamophobia in Canada is an entrenched societal and systemic problem with devastating consequences.

Canada regrettably continues to record the highest number of targeted killings of Muslims among G7 nations, underscoring the urgent need for meaningful interventions at the federal government. The Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council (CMPAC) developed this Policy Handbook on Islamophobia and will launch it in commemoration of Our London Family, the victims of the June 6, 2021 London terrorist attack, and in response to the continued rise of Islamophobia across Canada.

Drawing upon academic scholarship, governmental studies, parliamentary reports, and recommendations advanced by experts and civil society organizations, the Handbook examines the rise and manifestations of Islamophobia in Canada alongside the institutional failures contributing to its persistence. Particular concerns continue to emerge regarding governmental practices and enforcement frameworks, including the conduct and accountability of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), such as in recent incidents blocking invited speakers attending the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) Convention, and legislative developments such as Bill C-9, which raise serious concerns regarding the protection of Charter freedoms.

Through this Handbook, CMPAC calls for substantive institutional reform, meaningful accountability measures, and concrete governmental actions capable of addressing anti-Muslim discrimination and protecting Muslim communities in Canada.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 6, 2021, four members of the Afzaal family were murdered in London, Ontario in a hate-motivated terrorist attack. The attack was a direct act of anti-Muslim violence that exposed a reality many Muslim Canadians had warned about for years. Islamophobia in Canada is an entrenched societal and institutional problem with devastating consequences. Canada continues to hold the highest number of targeted killings of Muslims among G7 nations.

The Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council (CMPAC) developed this Handbook in commemoration of the victims of the June 6, 2021 London terrorist attack and in response to the continued rise of Islamophobia across Canada. This Handbook contributes to the national conversation surrounding anti-Muslim hatred, institutional accountability, and public safety. It reflects CMPAC's position that addressing Islamophobia requires substantive action, institutional reform, and meaningful accountability measures capable of confronting the conditions continuing to enable discrimination against Muslim communities in Canada.

While acts of deadly Islamophobic violence represent the most devastating consequences of Islamophobia, they are not the only way in which anti-Muslim hate manifests in Canada. Muslim communities across Canada continue to experience discriminatory treatment, intimidation, exclusion and heightened scrutiny within civic life and public institutions. Concerns regarding systemic Islamophobia have increasingly emerged in relation to governmental practices and enforcement frameworks, particularly surrounding the conduct and accountability of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). Concerns surrounding profiling, secondary screenings, discretionary enforcement practices, and unequal treatment have contributed to declining trust between Muslim communities and public institutions. Recent incidents involving invited international Muslim scholars and speakers attending the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) Convention have further intensified concerns regarding ideological censorship, discriminatory immigration enforcement, and the growing use of border mechanisms in ways perceived to disproportionately impact Muslim communities and lawful political expression.

Simultaneously, recent legislative developments have demonstrated the risks associated with governmental approaches that fail to adequately safeguard constitutional freedoms. CMPAC's engagement with Bill C-9 reflects serious concerns that aspects of the legislation may infringe upon Charter-protected freedoms, including freedom of expression and freedom of religion. While the stated objective of combatting hate remains important, legislation lacking sufficient safeguards risks undermining lawful religious expression, political advocacy, and civil liberties, including within Muslim communities themselves.

This Handbook examines the rise and manifestations of Islamophobia in Canada and the institutional failures that continue to contribute to its persistence. It explores how anti-Muslim discrimination affects Muslim individuals, families, communities, and civic participation across the country. The Handbook analyzes the role of public policy, enforcement practices, and political discourse in shaping the experiences of Muslim communities within Canada.

In developing this Handbook, CMPAC drew upon academic research, governmental reports, parliamentary studies, and the work of civil society organizations addressing Islamophobia in Canada. The Handbook builds upon the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights' *Combatting Hate: Islamophobia and its Impact on Muslims in Canada* (2023), the Office of the Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia's *Understanding and Combatting Islamophobia: The Canadian Guide* (2024), the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights' *Islamophobia on the Rise: Taking Action, Confronting Hate and Protecting Civil Liberties Together* (2024), and research examining the impact of national security, border enforcement, charitable oversight, and financial regulatory frameworks on Muslim communities and Muslim-led organizations. It also advances CMPAC's own analysis and recommendations informed by ongoing engagement with Muslim communities across Canada.

The recommendations contained within this Handbook are intended to support a more effective national response to Islamophobia through stronger institutional reform, an emphasis on the protection of civil liberties, and meaningful safeguards for Muslim communities. Ultimately, this Handbook calls upon governments, public institutions, and policymakers to move beyond symbolic recognition and confront Islamophobia through concrete action, meaningful accountability, and institutional reform. Muslim communities in Canada should not be forced to continually endure discrimination, unequal treatment, or threats to their safety while governments respond with insufficient action and delayed reform.

## Government Reports Responding to Islamophobia in Canada

### 1) *Combatting Hate: Islamophobia and its Impact on Muslims in Canada (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2023)*

The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights' report, *Combatting Hate: Islamophobia and its Impact on Muslims in Canada (2023)*, represents one of the most comprehensive parliamentary examinations of Islamophobia undertaken in Canada. Drawing upon testimony from 138 witnesses, including written submissions, community consultations, and site visits across the country, the Committee examined both the manifestations of Islamophobia and the institutional factors contributing to its persistence. The Committee's research moves beyond discussions of interpersonal prejudice and hate crimes to examine how governmental practices can produce discriminatory outcomes affecting Muslim communities. Its findings provide an important parliamentary acknowledgement that Islamophobia must be understood as a matter of **institutional accountability** and governance. In doing so, Islamophobia is situated within broader discussions concerning civil liberties and the protection of rights guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

#### Structural and Institutional Issues Identified by the Senate Committee

One of the Committee's most significant findings was that Islamophobia in Canada cannot be understood solely as a matter of individual prejudice or isolated acts of hate. Rather, the evidence before the Committee demonstrated anti-Muslim discrimination is reproduced through institutional **structures, administrative practices, and public policy frameworks**. Witnesses repeatedly raised concerns that Muslims are frequently perceived through a security lens, resulting in disproportionate scrutiny and differential treatment within a range of governmental systems. The Committee recognized, even where policies may appear neutral in form, their implementation can produce discriminatory outcomes that disproportionately affect Muslim individuals and communities.

#### National Security Framework

The Committee heard extensive evidence that national security policies have had a disproportionate impact on Muslim communities. Witnesses argued that longstanding assumptions linking Muslim identity to security concerns have contributed to heightened scrutiny and **surveillance**. Particular concerns were raised regarding border screening practices, immigration enforcement, the Passenger Protect Program (No Fly List), and broader security-based screening measures that can result in **differential treatment** of Muslims. The Committee acknowledged concerns that aspects of Canada's national security framework continue to reflect and reinforce systemic Islamophobia, and recommended that future reviews of national security legislation and policy explicitly consider their impact on Muslim communities.

## Border Profiling and Immigration Enforcement

The Committee identified border screening and immigration enforcement as areas of recurring concern. Witnesses described repeated experiences of enhanced screening, additional questioning, and differential treatment when interacting with border authorities. The Committee concluded that the consistency of these accounts raises broader concerns regarding **systemic bias** rather than isolated incidents of misconduct.

Particular concerns were raised regarding the Passenger Protect Program and the discretionary authority exercised within Canada's border and security apparatus. The Committee heard testimony from individuals subjected to repeated scrutiny due to name similarities associated with Canada's No Fly List, despite the absence of any security concern. Witnesses raised concerns regarding the breadth of discretionary authority exercised by CBSA officers and the limited mechanisms available to **independently review decisions** affecting travellers. The Committee situated these concerns within a broader discussion regarding profiling at the border and the disproportionate impact of security-based screening practices on Muslim communities.

## Discriminatory Oversight of Muslim Charities

The Committee also examined concerns regarding the treatment of Muslim charitable organizations within Canada's regulatory framework. Witnesses argued that Muslim charities have been subjected to **disproportionate** audits, investigations, and compliance reviews despite a lack of evidence indicating elevated risk when compared with other charitable organizations.

Particular attention was directed toward the Canada Revenue Agency's Review and Analysis Division (RAD). Evidence presented to the Committee indicated that 75% of charity revocations resulting from RAD audits between 2008 and 2015 involved Muslim charities, despite Muslim charities representing less than 1% of registered charities in Canada. The Committee viewed these findings as raising serious concerns regarding the potential for institutional bias and recommended reforms aimed at increasing **transparency**, strengthening **oversight**, and reducing discriminatory outcomes within the charitable sector.

## Workplace and Public Sector Discrimination

The Committee further heard evidence that anti-Muslim discrimination persists within workplaces and public institutions. Witnesses described **barriers to employment**, **unequal treatment**, and **exclusionary practices** affecting visibly Muslim individuals. The Committee recognized that these experiences extend beyond isolated incidents and reflect broader structural barriers that continue to affect the participation and inclusion of Muslims within Canadian society.

## Failures of Accountability

A recurring concern throughout the Committee's study was the absence of adequate accountability mechanisms capable of identifying and addressing systemic discrimination. Witnesses repeatedly expressed concern that discriminatory practices often persist without meaningful review because of limited **transparency**, insufficient oversight, and the absence of effective **avenues for redress**. The Committee's recommendations therefore place significant emphasis on enhanced accountability measures, improved data collection, greater institutional transparency, and mechanisms capable of identifying and correcting discriminatory outcomes.

## Systemic and Institutional Dimensions of Islamophobia

Perhaps the most consequential conclusion reached by the Committee is its recognition that Islamophobia is not confined to interpersonal acts of hatred. Rather, the report establishes that anti-Muslim discrimination can be embedded across multiple sectors of Canadian society. In doing so, the report reframes Islamophobia as an issue of institutional governance and public accountability, requiring structural responses that extend beyond the condemnation of individual acts of prejudice. This finding reinforces the need to examine how public institutions, policies, and administrative practices may contribute to unequal outcomes for Muslim communities, even where discriminatory intent is absent. It further suggests that meaningful efforts to combat Islamophobia must be accompanied by **institutional reform**, stronger **accountability mechanisms**, and sustained efforts to **address systemic barriers** experienced by Muslims in Canada.

## The Scale of Islamophobia and Challenges in Reporting

The report highlights the prevalence of Islamophobia in Canada and the challenges associated with accurately measuring its impact. The Committee heard evidence that one in four Canadians do not trust Muslims and that incidents of anti-Muslim hatred continue to affect Muslim communities across the country. While police recorded 144 anti-Muslim hate crimes in 2021, witnesses emphasized that official statistics capture only a fraction of the incidents experienced by affected communities. The Committee heard evidence that approximately 223,000 Canadians reported experiencing hate-motivated crime in 2019, while only a small percentage of incidents are reflected in police-reported data. The report therefore identifies **underreporting** and gaps in data collection as significant barriers to understanding the full scope of Islamophobia and developing effective policy responses.

## 2) *The Canadian Guide to Understanding and Combatting Islamophobia for a More Inclusive Canada (Office of the Special Representative on Combating Islamophobia, 2024)*

The Office of the Special Representative on Combating Islamophobia's Canadian Guide to Understanding and Combating Islamophobia (2024), provides one of the most comprehensive governmental frameworks for understanding Islamophobia in the Canadian context. The publication examines how Islamophobia manifests within Canadian society and recognizes its impact on Muslim communities. It acknowledges that discrimination affecting Muslims can arise through institutional practices and governmental action. In doing so, Islamophobia is situated within broader discussions concerning institutional accountability and the protection of **rights guaranteed** under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Guide explicitly identifies Islamophobia as a systemic phenomenon that can be embedded within laws, policies, institutional practices, and administrative decision-making processes. It acknowledges that anti-Muslim discrimination can occur when the institutions responsible for protecting Canadians instead contribute to **unequal treatment, exclusion, or harm** experienced by Muslim communities.

### System-Level Islamophobia

A central contribution of the Guide is its recognition of system-level Islamophobia. The Guide defines this form of discrimination as systemic bias reflected through laws, policies, governmental practices, and institutional frameworks that disproportionately affect Muslims. It identifies **policing, security screening, government decision-making, and public discourse** as areas where systemic forms of Islamophobia may manifest.

The Guide further notes that Islamophobia can arise when government institutions interfere with the exercise of Charter-protected freedoms, including freedom of religion and freedom of expression, without sufficient justification.

Importantly, the Guide adopts the definition contained within Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy, which recognizes that Islamophobia can result in Muslims being viewed and treated as heightened security threats at institutional, systemic, and societal levels. This acknowledgement reflects a broader concern that anti-Muslim bias can become embedded within governmental systems and administrative practices rather than existing solely at the level of individual attitudes.

### Security-Based Stereotyping and Institutional Bias

The Guide identifies the portrayal of Muslims as security threats as one of the most persistent and damaging drivers of Islamophobia.

The Guide examines how narratives linking Muslims to extremism, violence, or terrorism have shaped public perceptions and contributed to discriminatory treatment. The Guide notes that such **stereotypes** have influenced public policy and institutional practices, creating conditions in which Muslims may be subjected to heightened scrutiny or suspicion based solely on their faith or perceived identity.

Particular attention is given to the persistence of **assumptions** that Muslims represent a security risk. The Guide identifies these narratives as a significant source of anti-Muslim **discrimination** and explicitly warns against the normalization of policies or practices that treat Muslims as inherently suspicious. It recognizes that the association of Muslim identity with security concerns can contribute to discriminatory outcomes within public institutions and government systems.

### Profiling, Surveillance, and State Institutions

The Guide identifies profiling and surveillance as significant manifestations of Islamophobia. It acknowledges that Muslims may be disproportionately affected by security measures, including racial profiling and surveillance practices occurring in airports, public spaces, and other institutional settings. The Guide further recognizes that government institutions may implement policies in ways that produce differential and negative outcomes for Muslims, including through unconscious or systemic bias.

Unlike approaches that frame discrimination solely as the result of individual misconduct, it is recognized that **institutional processes** themselves can contribute to **discriminatory outcomes**. This acknowledgment is particularly significant because it situates Islamophobia within the operation of state institutions rather than limiting the discussion to interpersonal prejudice or hate crimes.

### Media, Public Narratives, and Policy Formation

The relationship between public narratives and institutional decision-making is further highlighted. It notes that persistent portrayals of Muslims through the lens of extremism, or cultural incompatibility have contributed to broader social acceptance of discriminatory practices. Accordingly, negative **stereotypes** do not remain confined to public discourse but can **influence policy development, governmental responses,** and overall institutional behaviour.

The Guide recognizes Islamophobia can be reinforced through political rhetoric portraying Muslims as a threat. It identifies **white nationalist narratives** as a significant driver of hostility toward Muslim communities and highlights the role such narratives have played in shaping attitudes toward Muslims in Canada. The Guide further notes these narratives have been linked to acts of violence targeting Muslims and continue to **influence discussions** surrounding immigration, security, and the place of Muslims within Canadian society. The Guide demonstrates how harmful stereotypes contribute to patterns of discrimination affecting Muslim communities.

### 3) Islamophobia on the Rise: Taking Action, Confronting Hate and Protecting Civil Liberties Together (Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, 2024)

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights' report, Islamophobia on the Rise: Taking Action, Confronting Hate and Protecting Civil Liberties Together (2024), examines the growing prevalence of Islamophobia in Canada and the challenges facing Muslim communities amid rising social and political tensions.

Through its study, the Committee considered the experiences of affected individuals and communities, the role of public institutions in responding to discrimination, and the impact of Islamophobia on civil liberties and democratic participation. The Committee's findings contribute to a broader understanding of how discrimination affecting Muslim communities continues to shape public life and inform policy discourse across Canada.

The Committee recognized that Islamophobia extends beyond acts of violence and interpersonal discrimination. The Committee was presented with evidence demonstrating that discrimination affecting Muslim communities continues to operate through governmental practices. Witnesses argued **policies appearing neutral** in form can nevertheless **produce unequal outcomes**, contributing to systemic barriers affecting Muslims across multiple sectors of Canadian society.

#### National Security Frameworks and Charitable Oversight

One of the Committee's most significant concerns related to Canada's national security and anti-terror financing frameworks. Witnesses argued these systems continue to be influenced by assumptions associating Muslim communities with heightened security risks, resulting in disproportionate scrutiny of Muslim organizations and charities. Particular concerns were raised regarding Canada's National Inherent Risk Assessment and broader anti-terror financing measures, which witnesses argued contribute to a culture of suspicion and reinforce **institutional bias** within regulatory and enforcement processes. The Committee heard these practices risk normalizing unequal treatment by **embedding discriminatory assumptions** within governmental decision-making.

#### Legislative and Policy-Based Discrimination

The Committee also examined the role legislation can play in producing discriminatory outcomes. Significant attention was devoted to Quebec's Act Respecting the Laicity of the State (Bill 21), which witnesses argued disproportionately affects Muslim women seeking employment in the public sector while maintaining their religious identity. Evidence presented to the Committee suggested the legislation has contributed to **workplace exclusion** and reinforced the **perception that differential treatment** based on religious identity **is acceptable** within public institutions.

## Civil Liberties and Democratic Participation

A recurring concern throughout the study involved the impact of Islamophobia on civil liberties and democratic participation. Witnesses described how Muslims, Palestinians, and advocates for Palestinian human rights have faced **restrictions on expression, professional repercussions**, as well as **barriers to participation in public life**. The Committee heard concerns **discrimination** increasingly intersects with fundamental freedoms, particularly freedom of expression and **freedom of association**.

Witnesses further argued individuals engaging in lawful political advocacy or public debate frequently encounter heightened scrutiny because of their identity, or faith. As a result, the report frames Islamophobia not only as an issue of equality, but also as a challenge to democratic participation and civil liberties.

## Institutional Production of Security Threat Narratives

A significant theme in the report is the continued portrayal of Muslims through a security framework. The Committee heard evidence that **stereotypes** depicting Muslims as extremists or inherent security risks continue to **influence** public discourse and **institutional decision-making**. Witnesses argued these assumptions contribute to heightened surveillance, disproportionate scrutiny, and discriminatory treatment. The report explicitly references Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy, which recognizes Islamophobia can result in Muslims being viewed and treated as heightened security threats at institutional, systemic, and societal levels.

## Documenting Islamophobia and the Need for Better Data

The report stresses the importance of documenting Islamophobia through improved research and data collection. The Committee heard evidence that incidents of Islamophobia, anti-Arab discrimination, and anti-Palestinian racism have increased in recent years, with community organizations reporting substantial rises in complaints involving harassment, discrimination, threats, vandalism, and violations of civil liberties.

Evidence presented to the Committee indicated that more than 1,000 incidents were reported to community organizations between October 2023 and March 2024. Witnesses emphasized that many incidents remain underreported and that existing data collection mechanisms do not fully capture the scope or lived realities of affected communities.

The report therefore highlights the need for **sustained investment in community-based research**, reporting initiatives, and both quantitative and qualitative data collection to better understand emerging trends, **inform evidence-based policymaking**, and ensure responses to Islamophobia are grounded in the experiences of affected communities.

## Recurring Findings from the Three Reports

The three reports emphasize that Islamophobia should not be understood solely as a matter of individual bias. Rather, Islamophobia is sustained through broader systems that shape how Muslims are perceived, governed, and treated within Canadian society. These systems include political discourse, media narratives, security frameworks, and public institutions.

The recurring significant contribution of these three reports is therefore the explicit recognition that Islamophobia can be systemic in nature and perpetuated through institutional systems, policies, actions, and omission. The reports move beyond discussions of addressing interpersonal discrimination and situate Islamophobia and **strategies to address it within the broader context** of governance, public administration, and institutional accountability.

All three reports thus recognize that Islamophobia cannot be understood nor prevented and addressed solely with regard to individual acts of prejudice. Rather, each publication acknowledges that discrimination affecting Muslim communities can also be reinforced – and therefore can in future be **remedied – through laws, policies, and institutional practices**.

The three reports' findings lead to a collective conclusion that addressing Islamophobia requires critical examination and an enhancement of **transparency** and **accountability** in the structures, policies, and practices that to date continue to produce unequal outcomes for Muslim communities in Canada.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Part 1: Adoption and Endorsement of Existing Governmental Reports' Recommendations

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Canadian parliamentary and governmental bodies have already developed a substantial set of coordinated recommendations to address Islamophobia. CMPAC's position is to affirm, consolidate, and support their implementation as a foundational pillar of national action.

Across the Senate Human Rights Committee report *Combating Hate: Islamophobia and its impact on Muslims in Canada*, the House of Commons Justice Committee report *Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian discrimination*, and the federal *Guide to Combating Islamophobia*, a clear set of converging priorities emerges. Collectively, these reports recognize that Islamophobia is not limited to individual acts of prejudice or hate crimes, but is also reflected in systemic and institutional practices that can produce unequal outcomes for Muslim communities. As a result, these recommendations collectively emphasize structural reform, institutional accountability, data collection, public education, and community partnership as essential components of an effective response.

#### 01

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##### National Coordination and Accountability

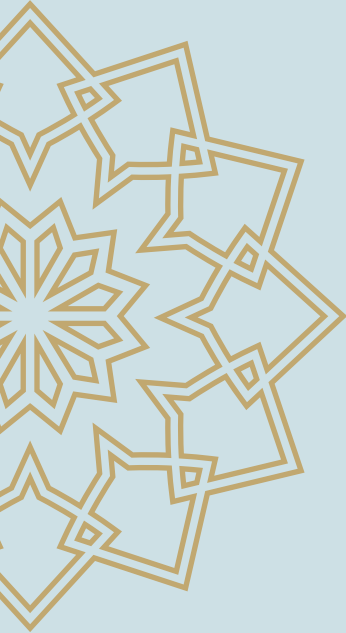
A consistent recommendation across parliamentary and federal guidance is the need for stronger national coordination to address Islamophobia. This includes the establishment or strengthening of federal leadership mechanisms, alongside the development of a coordinated national approach. The Senate report calls for a national action framework and dedicated leadership capacity, while the House of Commons report reinforces the need for coordinated federal action and accountability across departments and jurisdictions. CMPAC supports the full implementation of these recommendations, recognizing that fragmented responses are insufficient to address systemic discrimination.

#### 02

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##### Addressing Systemic Discrimination in Institutions

Both parliamentary committees emphasize that Islamophobia must be understood and addressed as a systemic issue embedded within public institutions, including law enforcement, border services, education, and federal workplaces.



Recommendations across the reports call for strengthened anti-racism and anti-discrimination policies, improved institutional training, and accountability mechanisms to address discriminatory practices. CMPAC endorses these measures and supports their full operationalization within federal institutions, particularly in areas where racial or religious profiling has been documented or alleged.

### 03

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#### Hate Crimes, Data Collection, and Enforcement

The Senate report and House of Commons report both highlight significant gaps in hate crime reporting and data collection. They recommend improved disaggregation of data, enhanced reporting mechanisms, and the establishment or strengthening of dedicated hate crime units. These measures are intended to improve both accountability and prevention.

### 04

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#### Online Harms and Misinformation

A major area of convergence across the reports is the need to address online hate speech, misinformation, and platform accountability. Recommendations include increasing transparency in social media systems, improving regulatory oversight, and developing legal or policy tools to respond to digital hate while protecting freedom of expression. CMPAC supports these recommendations as essential to addressing the contemporary drivers of Islamophobia, particularly given the role of digital platforms in amplifying harmful narratives.

### 05

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#### Education, Public Awareness, and Countering Stereotypes

All three sources emphasize the importance of education and public awareness in combatting Islamophobia. This includes integrating anti-racism and religious literacy into education systems, countering stereotypes and misinformation, and promoting broader public understanding of Muslim communities in Canada.

## Support for Affected Communities and Civil Society

The reports consistently recommend increased funding and support for community organizations, victim services, and civil society initiatives working to combat Islamophobia. They emphasize the importance of collaboration with Muslim, Arab, and other affected communities in developing and implementing responses. CMPAC fully supports these recommendations, recognizing that effective policy must be developed in partnership with those most impacted.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Part 2: Recommendations on Protection of Muslim Communities and Community Spaces

While existing federal and parliamentary recommendations provide an important foundation, CMPAC identifies a continued and urgent need to strengthen the direct protection of Muslim communities, institutions, and places of worship across Canada. Rising incidents of hate-motivated violence, threats, and harassment underscore that policy frameworks must be matched with sustained, adequately resourced protective measures.

#### 01

### Dedicated National Protection Funding

CMPAC recommends the establishment of a permanent, federal protection fund specifically designated for Muslim community safety and security. This fund should:

- Support physical security upgrades for mosques, Islamic schools, and community centres
- Covers costs for surveillance systems, lighting, reinforced entry points, and emergency response infrastructure
- Be accessible through a streamlined and rapid application process, particularly following threats or incidents
- Be scaled according to risk assessments and community needs rather than competitive grant cycles.
- The funding stream is to be long-term, predictable, and insulated from annual discretionary reallocation to ensure sustained protection.

**02**

## Expanded Security Infrastructure Support for Religious Institutions

CMPAC recommends significantly expanding and modernizing existing federal security funding programs to ensure equitable access for Muslim communities. This includes:

- Prioritizing mosques, Islamic centres, and Muslim educational institutions under national security infrastructure programs.
- Reducing administrative barriers that delay urgent security upgrades.
- Ensuring equitable distribution of resources across urban, suburban, and rural Muslim communities.
- Incorporating proactive risk assessment tools to identify institutions at elevated risk of hate motivated incidents.

**03**

## Establish Dedicated Security Funding for Muslim Institutions

CMPAC recommends that the federal government establish dedicated adequately resourced security funding to protect Muslim institutions from hate-motivated crimes, violence, and threats.

The federal government has a clear responsibility to limit the promotion and spread of hate, both online and offline, and to ensure the protection of vulnerable communities and their institutions. CMPAC recognizes the Government of Canada's decision to invest \$10 million to support the protection of Jewish communities against hate-motivated crimes and violence. Delivered through the Canada Community Security Program (CCSP), this funding supported approximately 170 synagogues and 40 Jewish schools across Canada and represents an important example of proactive government action to safeguard communities facing heightened risks of hate.

CMPAC recommends that comparable policy action be implemented to address the security needs of Muslim institutions across Canada. With approximately 755 mosques and 100 Islamic schools serving communities nationwide, federal security funding and protective infrastructure investments should reflect the scale and needs of Muslim communities, particularly in light of the documented rise in anti-Muslim hate incidents and violent Islamophobia in Canada and internationally.

Such funding should support physical security upgrades, protective infrastructure, emergency preparedness measures, and other initiatives designed to ensure that mosques, Islamic schools, and community centres remain safe and accessible spaces for worship, education, and community engagement.

#### 04

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### Community Safety Partnerships and Rapid Response Mechanisms

CMPAC recommends the establishment of formal community safety partnerships between Muslim organizations, local law enforcement, and municipal authorities. The partnerships should prioritize trust-building and preventative engagement rather than reactive enforcement alone. These should include:

- Designated liaison officers for Muslim community institutions.
- Rapid response protocols following threats, attacks, or credible security concerns.
- Regular safety planning consultations between police services and community leadership.
- Clear communication channels to ensure timely reporting and response to incidents.

#### 05

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### Protection of Community Spaces During High Risk Periods

CMPAC recommends the development of targeted protection measures during periods of elevated risk, including religious holidays and geopolitical flashpoints. These measures should include:

- Temporary increased security presence near mosques and Islamic centres during Ramadan, Eid, and other populated observances.
- Coordinated monitoring of credible threats during periods of international conflict or heightened online hate activity.
- Emergency funding flexibility to rapidly deploy security resources when risk levels escalate.

**06**

## Support for Victims and Post-Incident Recovery

CMPAC recommends strengthening support systems for communities and individuals affected by Islamophobic incidents. This should include:

- Funding for trauma-informed support services following hate crimes or threats.
- Financial assistance for restoration of damaged community property.
- Public safety communication protocols to ensure affected communities receive timely updates and support.
- Integration of victim support services within Muslim community organizations.

**07**

## National Data Collection on Threats to Places of Worship

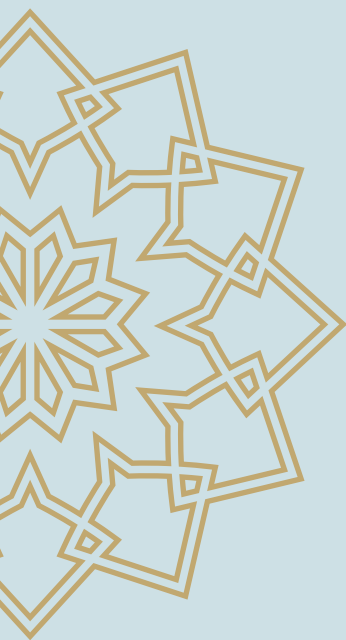
CMPAC stresses the importance of improved national data collection specifically tracking threats, vandalism, and attacks on Muslim community spaces. This should include:

- Incidents targeting mosques, Islamic schools, and Islamic organizations.
- Be integrated into national hate crime reporting systems.
- Inform allocation of protection funding and risk-based security planning.
- Data must be publicly accessible and transparent.

**08**

## National Strategy on Combatting Islamophobia and Protecting Muslim Communities

CMPAC recommends that the Government of Canada establish a comprehensive National Whole-of-Government Strategy on Combatting Islamophobia to coordinate federal efforts, strengthen accountability, and ensure a consistent approach across public institutions. Recent federal initiatives addressing antisemitism have demonstrated the value of a coordinated national framework focused on assessing the nature and drivers of hate, aligning governmental responses, improving research and data collection, and measuring outcomes.



While important recommendations have already been advanced through parliamentary studies, governmental reports, and civil society initiatives, meaningful progress requires a coordinated implementation framework capable of addressing both interpersonal manifestations of Islamophobia and the systemic and institutional factors that contribute to its persistence.

The strategy should recognize that Islamophobia is not limited to individual acts of prejudice or hate-motivated violence. As identified by recent parliamentary and governmental reports, Islamophobia can also manifest through systemic barriers, institutional practices, online environments, and public narratives that contribute to discrimination and insecurity for Muslim communities.

**CMPAC recommends that the strategy include the following:**

a) Assessing the Nature, Scale, and Drivers of Islamophobia

The federal government should conduct regular national assessments examining the nature, scale, and drivers of Islamophobia across Canada. These assessments should examine manifestations of Islamophobia within public institutions, workplaces, educational settings, community spaces, and online environments. Particular attention should be paid to identifying emerging threats, patterns of discrimination, and systemic barriers affecting Muslim individuals and communities.

b) Developing a Coordinated Government Response

The strategy should establish a coordinated whole-of-government approach involving federal departments and agencies whose policies and programs directly affect Muslim communities. Federal efforts relating to public safety, justice, immigration, education, and community development should be aligned to ensure consistency, effectiveness, and accountability. The strategy should also strengthen collaboration with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to support a coherent national response.

c) Improving Research and Data Collection

The federal government should strengthen the collection of disaggregated data relating to hate crimes, threats against places of worship, discrimination, and barriers affecting Muslim communities. Improved research and data collection should support evidence-based policymaking while enhancing transparency and public accountability. Regular public reporting should be undertaken to monitor trends and assess progress.

#### d) Measuring Progress and Accountability

The strategy should establish clear objectives and measurable performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of governmental efforts to combat Islamophobia. Regular reviews should be conducted to assess the impact of community safety programs, educational initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and other anti-Islamophobia measures. Findings should be publicly reported to ensure transparency and accountability.

#### e) Partnership with Muslim Communities

Meaningful consultation with Muslim organizations, community leaders, academics, and civil society groups should form a central component of the strategy. Muslim communities should be actively involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs intended to address Islamophobia. Community engagement should be ongoing and designed to ensure that governmental responses remain informed by lived experiences and emerging challenges.

CMPAC's protection focused recommendations, together with the proposed National Strategy on Combatting Islamophobia and Protecting Muslim Communities, emphasize that combatting Islamophobia requires not only policy commitments, but investment in the safety and security of Muslim communities. A sustained protection funding framework, strengthened institutional partnerships, and improved rapid response capacity are essential to ensuring that Muslim community spaces in Canada are safe, resilient, and fully protected.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Part 3: Addressing Structural Islamophobia in Regulatory and Institutional Systems

Structural Islamophobia is reflected in regulatory systems, institutional practices, and legal frameworks that produce unequal or discriminatory impacts on Muslim communities and Muslim-led organizations. Unlike overt hate-based incidents, these forms of harm often emerge through administrative processes such as financial regulation, charitable oversight, national security compliance regimes, and institutional decision-making.

The recommendations below draw on the findings and recommendations of Dr. [Anver Emon](#) and Dr. [Michelle Gallant](#). Notably, both experts identify concerns relating to transparency, accountability, and the potential for disproportionate impacts on Muslim charities and organizations operating within Canada's regulatory and compliance frameworks.

## 01

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### Enhanced Transparency and Accountability in Regulatory Oversight

CMPAC recommends that federal authorities, including the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), strengthen transparency regarding audits, compliance reviews, and regulatory decision-making affecting charities and non-profit organizations. Dr. Gallant recommends greater disclosure regarding audit practices and the collection of anonymized data to enable assessment of potential disparities in regulatory treatment. Similarly, Dr. Emon emphasizes the need for clearer disclosure of the legal and regulatory grounds underlying audits and compliance measures. Together, these recommendations underscore the importance of ensuring that regulatory actions are transparent, understandable, and subject to meaningful scrutiny.

CMPAC therefore recommends the development of mechanisms that improve public understanding of audit and compliance processes while protecting privacy and confidentiality. This includes the collection and publication of anonymized data to assess whether particular communities or sectors experience disproportionate regulatory impacts.

## 02

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### Strengthen Procedural Fairness and Review Mechanisms

Both Dr. Gallant and Dr. Emon identify the importance of procedural safeguards within regulatory systems. Gallant recommends expanding avenues for review of CRA decisions, including consideration of legislative amendments that would permit appeals to the Tax Court of Canada. Emon similarly calls for enhanced oversight and accountability mechanisms to mitigate the risk of disproportionate and prejudicial regulatory treatment. CMPAC supports reforms that strengthen procedural fairness, ensure access to meaningful review mechanisms, and enhance accountability for administrative decision-making. Such measures are essential to maintaining public confidence in regulatory institutions and ensuring that compliance frameworks are applied fairly and equally.

**03**

### Improve Cultural and Religious Competency in Regulatory Institutions

CMPAC recommends that regulatory bodies and enforcement agencies strengthen internal expertise relating to cultural and religious diversity. Gallant specifically recommends that compliance and audit functions include individuals with expertise and familiarity with diverse cultures and religions in order to reduce the risk of bias, prejudice, or discrimination.

**04**

### Address Financial Exclusion and De-Risking Practices

CMPAC recommends increased oversight of financial exclusion and de-risking practices affecting charities and non-profit organizations. Emon's recommendations highlight concerns regarding restrictions on banking services and disproportionate compliance burdens placed on charities and humanitarian organizations. CMPAC supports the creation of reporting, review, and complaint mechanisms that promote accountability where banking services are restricted or terminated and ensure that legitimate charitable organizations are not unfairly excluded from financial services.

**05**

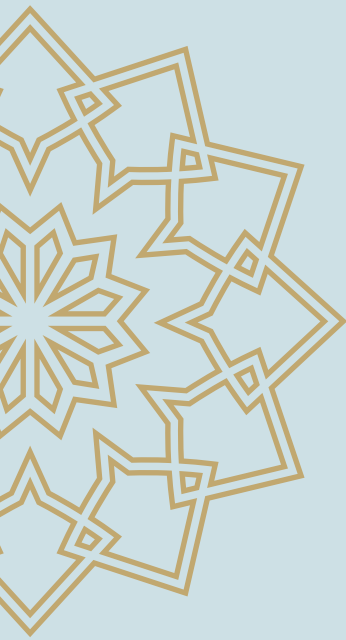
### Clarify Compliance Requirements for Humanitarian and Charitable Activities

CMPAC recommends greater legal and regulatory clarity regarding humanitarian and development activities, particularly in conflict-affected or high-risk jurisdictions. Emon recommends comprehensive federal guidance concerning humanitarian exceptions and authorization requirements, as well as ongoing engagement with the charitable sector to promote consistent interpretation of regulatory obligations. Greater clarity would rescue uncertainty, facilitate compliance, and help ensure that legitimate humanitarian activities are not unnecessarily impeded.

**06**

### Address Financial Exclusion and De-Risking Practices

CMPAC recommends that charitable and non-profit organizations be meaningfully included in policy development and regulatory review processes.



Emon calls for formal participation of sector representatives in anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing policy discussions, while Gallant's recommendations similarly reflect the need for greater transparency and engagement between regulators and the organizations they oversee. CMPAC supports institutionalized consultation mechanisms that allow affected organizations to provide input on policy design, implementation, and review.

## 07

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### Protecting Privacy While Promoting Regulatory Integrity

MPAC supports measures that balance transparency with the protection of privacy and organizational reputation. Gallant emphasizes that regulatory authorities should prioritize non-disclosure and privacy protections, particularly where public disclosure could cause significant harm to charitable organizations. At the same time, she recommends greater transparency regarding systemic audit practices. CMPAC supports a balanced approach that promotes accountability while safeguarding privacy and preventing unnecessary reputational harm.

The recommendations of Anver Emon and Michelle Gallant reveal significant areas of convergence. Both emphasize the importance of transparency, accountability, procedural fairness, and safeguards against disproportionate impacts within regulatory systems. Together, their work highlights the need to examine not only individual acts of discrimination, but also the institutional and administrative structures that can create unequal burdens for Muslim communities and Muslim-led organizations. CMPAC therefore supports reforms that strengthen fairness, oversight, and meaningful participation in the development and implementation of Canada's regulatory frameworks.

## Part 4: Education & Community Engagement Strategy

CMPAC recognizes that combatting Islamophobia requires not only institutional reform and protection measures, but also long-term investments in education, public awareness, and sustained community engagement. These efforts are essential to addressing misinformation, reducing prejudice, and strengthening social cohesion across Canada.

### 01

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#### National Education on Islamophobia & Religious Literacy

CMPAC supports the expansion of education initiatives that improve public understanding of Islam and Muslim communities in Canada. Consistent with existing federal recommendations, CMPAC calls for measures that aim to reduce ignorance-based prejudice and promote informed understanding from an early stage.

These measures include

- Integration of religious literacy and anti-Islamophobia education into school curricula across provinces and territories.
- Development of educational materials that address stereotypes, misinformation, and historical contexts of discrimination.
- Training for educators on recognizing and addressing Islamophobia and related forms of bias in classroom settings.
- Inclusion of Muslim voices, perspectives, and contributions in educational content.

### 02

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#### Public Awareness and Countering Misinformation

CMPAC emphasizes the importance of public education campaigns that address stereotypes and misinformation about Muslim communities.

CMPAC supports efforts that are critical in addressing the role of media and digital platforms in shaping public perceptions.

- National and regional public awareness campaigns challenging Islamophobic narratives.
- Development of tools to improve digital and media literacy, particularly among youth.
- Support for initiatives that counter online misinformation, hate speech, and harmful stereotypes.
- Promotion of accurate and balanced portrayals of Muslim communities in public discourse.

**03**

### Countering White Nationalist Narratives and Political Drivers of Islamophobia

CMPAC recognizes that Islamophobia is often reinforced through political rhetoric, public narratives, and misinformation that portray Muslims as a threat to public safety, national identity, or social cohesion. Consistent with the findings of the Office of the Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia, CMPAC recommends that governments and public institutions take proactive measures to address narratives that contribute to hostility, discrimination, and violence targeting Muslim communities.

These measures must include:

- Supporting research examining the role of white nationalist movements, extremist ideologies, and hate networks in promoting anti-Muslim narratives.
- Developing public education initiatives that challenge stereotypes portraying Muslims as security threats or outsiders within Canadian society.
- Strengthening efforts to monitor and respond to organized hate movements and extremist groups that promote anti-Muslim hatred.
- Encouraging responsible public discourse that rejects the scapegoating of religious and racialized communities.
- Supporting initiatives that promote accurate and evidence-based discussions concerning immigration, diversity, national security, and social inclusion.

**04**

### Community-Based Engagement

CMPAC supports strengthening partnerships between government, civil society, and Muslim communities to ensure meaningful engagement in policy and programming. Strengthening partnerships requires a participatory approach to ensure that policies are responsive to community needs and are grounded in lived realities.

CMPAC recommends:

- Increased funding for Muslim-led community organizations and grassroots initiatives.
- Support for interfaith and intercultural dialogue initiatives that build understanding across communities.
- Inclusion of lived experience in the design and evaluation of public policy and education programs.

**05****Solidarity, Inclusion, and Social Cohesion**

Long-term prevention of Islamophobia requires broader efforts to strengthen solidarity and social cohesion across Canadian society.

CMPAC recommends:

- Initiatives that promote cross-community solidarity against racism and discrimination.
- Programs that foster intercultural understanding and cooperation.
- Encouragement of civic engagement that reinforces shared democratic values and inclusion
- Efforts to build resilience against division, polarization, and hate-based narratives.

**06****Institutional Role of Education Systems and Public Bodies**

Educational institutions and public bodies play a central role in preventing Islamophobia. Accordingly, CMPAC supports:

- Strengthening anti-discrimination policies in schools, colleges, and universities.
- Ensuring accessible reporting mechanisms for incidents of Islamophobia in educational settings.
- Providing support services for students and staff affected by discrimination.
- Embedding equity, diversity, and inclusion principles in institutional governance and programming.

CMPAC affirms that education and community engagement are foundational pillars in the long-term elimination of Islamophobia. While structural reforms and protection measures address immediate and systemic harms, sustained investment in knowledge, dialogue, and community partnership is essential to preventing the reproduction of prejudice and fostering inclusive civic life in Canada.



## CONCLUSION

Islamophobia in Canada is not limited to isolated acts of prejudice or hate-motivated violence. As demonstrated throughout this Handbook, it can also manifest through institutional practices, regulatory frameworks, public narratives, and policy decisions that contribute to unequal treatment and exclusion of Muslim communities. This Handbook was developed in commemoration of the Afzaal family and the victims of the June 6, 2021 London terrorist attack. Their memory serves as a reminder that Islamophobia carries real consequences for individuals, families, and communities. This work forms part of a broader effort to address the underlying conditions that perpetuate discrimination and contribute to future harm.

CMPAC's recommendations are grounded in this understanding. CMPAC endorses **implementation of existing governmental and parliamentary recommendations**, recognizing the established significant consensus regarding national coordination, institutional accountability, hate crime prevention, online harms, education, and support for affected communities. CMPAC calls for enhanced protection of Muslim communities, mosques, Islamic schools, and **community** centres through dedicated security funding, strengthened **partnerships**, improved emergency response mechanisms, and investments that reflect the scale and needs of Muslim institutions across Canada.

CMPAC urges reforms aimed at addressing structural Islamophobia within regulatory and administrative systems by strengthening **transparency, procedural fairness, accountability, and meaningful participation in policymaking**. Finally, CMPAC emphasizes that lasting change requires sustained **investments in education, public awareness, community engagement, and initiatives that foster social cohesion** and mutual understanding.

The federal government, provincial governments, public institutions, civil society organizations, and community leaders all have a role to play in confronting Islamophobia. Meaningful progress will require coordinated action, adequate resources, and a commitment to **ensuring that the rights, freedoms, and security** of Muslim Canadians **are protected in practice** as well as in principle. Combatting Islamophobia is not solely a matter of protecting one community, it is a matter of strengthening Canada's **commitment to equality, democratic participation, religious freedom, and human rights for all**.

CMPAC therefore calls upon governments, institutions, and community partners to move beyond acknowledgment and toward implementation. The recommendations in this Handbook provide a **practical roadmap** for advancing accountability, protecting vulnerable communities, addressing systemic discrimination, and building a more inclusive Canada in which all individuals can participate fully and safely in public life regardless of their faith or identity.



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