



CANADIAN MUSLIM PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

September 8, 2026

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne

Department of Finance Canada
90 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Minister Champagne,

The Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council (CMPAC) welcomes the opportunity to provide recommendations as part of the federal government's pre-budget consultations. Muslim communities across Canada continue to make significant contributions to Canada's economic, social, cultural and civic life. At the same time, Muslims continue to experience Islamophobia, hate-motivated incidents, discrimination, threats to community institutions, systemic barriers, and concerns regarding the equitable application of federal policies and programs.

The federal government has made important investments in recent years, including Canada's [Anti-Racism Strategy 2024–2028](#), Canada's Action Plan on Combatting Hate, [the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program](#), the [Canada Community Security Program](#), and [federal initiatives](#) dedicated to combatting Islamophobia. The next federal budget should build on these investments while addressing persistent gaps in implementation, community access, accountability and long-term sustainability.

These recommendations build upon [CMPAC's 2026 Combatting Islamophobia: A Policy Handbook](#), which draws on academic research, governmental studies, parliamentary reports and civil society expertise to identify the systemic and institutional dimensions of Islamophobia in Canada. The Handbook identifies areas requiring sustained federal action, including community security, federal accountability, national security and enforcement frameworks, research and data, and meaningful engagement with Muslim communities.

CMPAC recommends that the Government of Canada prioritize investments that strengthen the safety and resilience of Muslim communities, address systemic Islamophobia, protect civil liberties, support equitable immigration and humanitarian policies, and ensure that Canada's international assistance reflects its commitments to human rights and international law.

Pre-Budget Recommendations Summary

CMPAC recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. **Establish dedicated funding within existing federal anti-racism and anti-hate programs to address Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.**
2. **Expand and reform the Canada Community Security Program to ensure equitable and accessible protection for mosques, Islamic schools and Muslim community institutions.**
3. **Maintain and strengthen dedicated federal institutional capacity to combat Islamophobia.**
4. **Invest in research, data collection and accountability mechanisms addressing systemic Islamophobia across federal institutions.**
5. **Strengthen oversight and accountability within national security, border and federal regulatory institutions.**
6. **Invest in dedicated IRCC capacity to complete outstanding Gaza immigration applications, accelerate Palestinian family reunification and student processing, address biometrics and documentation barriers, and strengthen settlement support for Palestinians arriving in Canada.**
7. **Invest in humanitarian assistance, recovery and long-term reconstruction in Gaza, Syria, and Sudan, including through locally led and Canadian Muslim humanitarian organizations.**
8. **Create sustainable mechanisms for structured engagement between the federal government and Muslim civil society.**

1. Establish Dedicated Funding to Address Islamophobia Within Federal Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate Programs

Canada has established significant federal infrastructure to address racism and hate. However, broad anti-racism and anti-hate programs do not automatically ensure that communities experiencing specific forms of discrimination receive equitable access to resources.

Islamophobia must be addressed as both interpersonal hatred and a systemic form of discrimination that can manifest through employment, education, national security, immigration, public institutions, political discourse and access to public services. [Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2024–2028](#) and [Canada's Action Plan on Combatting Hate](#) provide an important foundation for this work. The federal government should now ensure that Muslim-led organizations have predictable and equitable access to these programs.

Recommendations (Ministry of Canadian Heritage):

- Establish a dedicated Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism funding stream within the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program (MARP).
- Allocate a defined proportion of federal anti-racism and anti-hate community funding to initiatives addressing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism, informed by demonstrated community need.

- Prioritize multi-year funding agreements rather than short-term project funding for organizations conducting sustained anti-Islamophobia work, with eligible costs explicitly including staffing, salaries and core operating expenses necessary to maintain organizational capacity and sustain this work between individual projects and funding cycles.
- Ensure Muslim-led grassroots and civil society organizations can access funding without disproportionate administrative barriers.
- Fund initiatives by Muslim civil society organizations addressing systemic Islamophobia in employment, education, healthcare, immigration, national security and other federal policy areas.
- Require transparent annual reporting on the distribution and outcomes of federal anti-racism and anti-hate funding, including funding directed toward initiatives addressing Islamophobia.
- Create targeted funding within federal anti-racism programs for initiatives addressing employment discrimination and economic barriers experienced by Muslim Canadians, including community-led employment equity, workplace rights and anti-discrimination initiatives.

Dedicated funding would provide greater certainty for community organizations and allow programs to move from short-term interventions toward long-term institutional change.

2. Strengthen the Canada Community Security Program

Mosques, Islamic schools, community centres and other Muslim institutions continue to face security concerns arising from hate-motivated threats, harassment and violence. [The Canada Community Security Program](#) is an important federal mechanism for supporting communities at risk of hate-motivated incidents. However, security funding must be accessible, responsive and proportionate to the needs of vulnerable institutions. Community safety cannot depend on individual institutions having sufficient fundraising capacity to finance security measures independently.

Recommendations (Ministry of Public Safety Canada):

- Maintain and expand long-term funding for the Canada Community Security Program.
- Establish a dedicated and needs-based allocation for Muslim institutions, including mosques, Islamic schools and community centres.
- Reduce or waive cost-sharing requirements for institutions with limited financial capacity, particularly small, volunteer-run and community-based organizations, so that access to federal security funding is determined by demonstrated security need rather than an institution's ability to contribute matching funds.
- Ensure funding covers physical security infrastructure, cybersecurity, emergency preparedness, security assessments, staff and volunteer training, and other eligible protective measures.
- Reduce administrative barriers for small and volunteer-run community institutions.

- Provide rapid-access emergency funding where institutions face an immediate or heightened threat.
- Ensure program design and funding decisions are developed through meaningful consultation with communities experiencing hate.
- Publish disaggregated information on applications, approvals, processing times and funding distribution to evaluate whether communities have equitable access to the program.
- Establish safeguards to keep community security funding focused on protecting institutions without contributing to the surveillance, stigmatization or securitization of the communities it is intended to protect.

3. Strengthen Federal Institutional Capacity to Combat Islamophobia

The establishment of the former Office of the Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia reflected federal recognition that Islamophobia requires sustained attention across government. Following the end of this dedicated office, it is important that addressing Islamophobia remains an identifiable and adequately resourced federal priority.

Existing federal programs and institutions should have clear responsibilities for addressing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism, including through policy development, research, community engagement, interdepartmental coordination, and public education. The transition away from a dedicated office should also be accompanied by transparency regarding how previously committed resources for combatting Islamophobia are being allocated and how the federal government will measure progress.

Recommendations (Ministry of Canadian Heritage):

- Ensure that existing federal anti-racism and anti-hate initiatives maintain specific and measurable commitments to combatting Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.
- Maintain dedicated federal funding for initiatives addressing Islamophobia, including through existing programs such as Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy and Canada's Action Plan on Combatting Hate.
- Provide transparency regarding the allocation of funding previously committed to federal efforts to combat Islamophobia and ensure these resources continue to support relevant initiatives.
- Assign clear responsibility within relevant federal departments for coordinating government-wide efforts addressing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.
- Establish measurable objectives, performance indicators, and annual public reporting on federal efforts to combat Islamophobia.
- Ensure that federal departments assess legislation, regulations, programs, and policies for potential disproportionate impacts on Muslim communities.
- Maintain structured and meaningful engagement with Muslim civil society organizations, community leaders, and experts in the development and evaluation of federal anti-racism and anti-hate policies.

The conclusion of the former Office of the Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia should not result in reduced federal attention, resources, or accountability for addressing Islamophobia. The federal government should ensure that existing institutions and programs retain clear responsibilities, measurable commitments, and adequate resources to address Islamophobia as a distinct and systemic policy concern.

4. Invest in Research, Data and Government-Wide Accountability on Islamophobia

Effective public policy requires reliable evidence. Significant gaps remain in Canada's understanding of how Islamophobia operates within public institutions and how Muslim communities experience discrimination across sectors. [Recent research initiatives](#) demonstrate both the scale of these challenges and the limitations of existing federal data. The 2026 Survey of Muslims in Canada (SMiC), based on nearly 2,000 interviews across 58 census subdivisions, found significant disparities in experiences of workplace discrimination, belonging and confidence in institutional responses. For example, 88% of Muslim respondents who experienced workplace discrimination did not report it, while 43% of those who did report discrimination indicated that no action was taken. These findings demonstrate the need for sustained and disaggregated data capable of identifying where systemic barriers occur and whether existing institutions are responding effectively.

Greater investment in research and disaggregated data would enable governments to identify disparities, evaluate programs and develop evidence-based responses. Federal data collection should also better capture discrimination based on religion and its intersection with race, gender and other forms of discrimination, particularly in areas such as employment and access to public services.

Recommendations:

- Create a dedicated federal research funding stream on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism to finance multi-year academic, community-led and policy research examining systemic discrimination and its impacts on Muslim communities.
- Establish sustained federal funding for national and longitudinal research on the experiences of Muslim Canadians, building the evidence base on employment, discrimination, belonging, public services, civic participation and interactions with federal institutions.
- Establish a coordinated federal framework for collecting and publishing disaggregated data on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim discrimination, including hate-motivated incidents, employment discrimination, barriers to public services, and disparities within immigration, border enforcement, policing and national security systems.
- Expand federal labour-market and employment data collection to better capture discrimination and economic disparities based on religious identity, including the experiences of Muslim workers.
- Fund multi-year research partnerships between Muslim civil society organizations, academic institutions and relevant federal agencies to examine systemic Islamophobia in

employment, education, healthcare, immigration, policing, national security and access to public services, with dedicated resources for community-led research.

- Require federal departments and agencies whose policies significantly affect Muslim communities to establish measurable anti-Islamophobia objectives, identify indicators and benchmarks, and publicly report on progress toward those objectives.
- Fund national public education initiatives that improve understanding of Islamophobia, anti-Muslim racism and their systemic manifestations.
- Ensure research and data collection include the experiences of Muslim women, Black Muslims, Indigenous Muslims, converts, newcomers and other communities experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination.

Improved evidence will allow public resources to be directed toward demonstrated needs and enable Parliament and the public to evaluate whether federal initiatives are producing measurable results. The experience of initiatives such as the [2026 Survey of Muslims in Canada](#) also demonstrates the value of sustained, community-informed research in identifying disparities that may not be visible through existing government datasets. Federal investment should build the long-term research and data infrastructure necessary to identify these disparities, track changes over time and translate evidence into institutional action.

5. Strengthen Accountability in National Security, Border and Regulatory Institutions

CMPAC's Policy Handbook identifies systemic Islamophobia within governmental practices and enforcement frameworks as an area requiring substantive institutional reform and meaningful accountability. Building on that work, federal action must examine not only individual instances of discrimination, but also the policies, risk-assessment frameworks, regulatory practices and administrative structures through which disproportionate impacts on Muslim communities may arise.

Protecting national security and maintaining effective border and regulatory systems are legitimate and necessary government responsibilities. These objectives must, however, be pursued consistently with the [Charter](#), due process, equality rights and freedom from discrimination. Muslim charities, travellers, advocates and community organizations have repeatedly raised concerns regarding disproportionate scrutiny and the potential discriminatory effects of national security and regulatory frameworks. [Research](#) examining Canada's anti-terrorist financing framework has also raised concerns about how risk assessments and national security priorities can shape the regulatory treatment of Muslim-led charities. These concerns extend across a broader institutional framework involving the Department of Finance, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), and Canada's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regime.

The expansion of federal enforcement and national security capacity should therefore be accompanied by corresponding investments in independent oversight and accountability. Addressing systemic Islamophobia requires examining not only individual decisions, but also the

risk-assessment frameworks, regulatory processes and institutional practices that can produce disproportionate outcomes.

Recommendations:

- Increase resources for independent review and oversight bodies responsible for national security and federal law-enforcement activities.
- Strengthen independent oversight of the Canada Border Services Agency and ensure effective mechanisms exist for complaints concerning discrimination and profiling.
- Require systematic collection and public reporting of appropriate disaggregated data to identify potential racial or religious disparities in enforcement.
- Fund mandatory anti-racism, anti-Islamophobia and Charter-rights training for relevant federal officials.
- Establish regular independent review of Canada's National Inherent Risk Assessment (NIRA) and related anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing risk frameworks to assess their potential disproportionate impacts on Muslim-led charities and humanitarian organizations, including through Charter equality and GBA Plus analysis.
- Strengthen transparency and accountability within the CRA's regulation of registered charities, including the national-security-related activities, risk-assessment methodologies and audit-selection practices of the Charities Directorate's Review and Analysis Division (RAD).
- Allocate resources for continued independent review of CRA charity regulation and implementation of recommendations arising from external reviews, with measurable and publicly reported progress toward strengthening consistency, impartiality and accountability in decision-making.
- Create clear safeguards governing the use of national security and terrorist-financing risk assessments in charity regulation, including mechanisms for assessing potential discriminatory impacts and ensuring compliance with Charter equality protections.
- Incorporate financial inclusion as a principle within federal anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing policy, including measures to identify and address disproportionate barriers faced by Muslim-led charities and humanitarian organizations in accessing banking and financial services.
- Establish structured consultation between the Department of Finance, CRA, relevant federal institutions, Muslim-led charities, humanitarian organizations and charitable-sector experts when developing or reviewing anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing policies affecting the charitable sector.
- Ensure federal institutions undertake regular assessments of whether policies or enforcement practices disproportionately affect Muslim, Arab, Palestinian or other racialized communities.

Investments in enforcement capacity must be matched by investments in accountability. Public confidence requires not only effective national security and regulatory systems, but also transparent mechanisms for identifying and correcting systemic disparities within those systems. Federal investments should therefore strengthen accountability across the full policy chain.

6. Invest in Equitable Immigration and Humanitarian Pathways for Palestinians Affected by the Crisis in Gaza

Canada's immigration and refugee system is central to the country's economic prosperity, international reputation and humanitarian commitments. The experience of Palestinians affected by the crisis in Gaza has demonstrated significant gaps in Canada's ability to implement humanitarian immigration measures rapidly and equitably during an active conflict.

Although Canada established temporary special measures for extended family members in Gaza, many applicants have faced prolonged processing, difficulties leaving Gaza, biometrics and documentation barriers, family separation, and uncertainty regarding their applications. Palestinian students accepted by Canadian educational institutions have similarly faced challenges obtaining study permits and reaching Canada.

The federal government should dedicate sufficient resources to completing existing Gaza applications, reuniting families, addressing procedural barriers created by the conditions of war, and providing meaningful settlement assistance to Palestinians who reach Canada.

Recommendations (Ministry of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada):

- Allocate dedicated IRCC processing capacity and personnel to complete outstanding applications submitted under the Gaza temporary resident pathway, with priority given to applicants facing prolonged family separation and heightened vulnerability.
- Establish and publish clear processing targets and service standards for outstanding Gaza-related immigration applications.
- Establish flexible procedures for Palestinian applicants affected by the crisis in Gaza who cannot reasonably obtain biometrics, passports or other required documentation.
- Invest in family reunification mechanisms that minimize prolonged separation.
- Provide sufficient settlement resources for individuals arriving through humanitarian pathways.
- Allocate dedicated processing capacity for Palestinian students and scholars accepted by Canadian educational institutions, including expedited study-permit processing and measures addressing conflict-related documentation and biometrics barriers.
- Establish transparent reporting on processing outcomes, delays and implementation of special humanitarian immigration measures.

Humanitarian immigration programs must be designed so that their practical implementation matches their stated objectives.

7. Invest in Humanitarian Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction in Gaza, Syria, and Sudan

Ongoing crises in Gaza, Syria and Sudan have created severe humanitarian needs, widespread displacement, and significant damage to civilian infrastructure and essential services. Canada's response should extend beyond short-term emergency assistance toward sustained humanitarian, recovery and development policies that respond to the distinct circumstances of

each context. Canadian assistance should prioritize affected communities, strengthen essential civilian institutions and services, and be delivered consistently with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Recommendations:

- Establish multi-year Canadian humanitarian, recovery and reconstruction funding for Gaza, Syria and Sudan, with dedicated investments in healthcare, education, water, sanitation, housing, food security and other essential civilian infrastructure and services.
- Create dedicated funding mechanisms for credible local, Canadian Muslim and other Canadian humanitarian and relief organizations with demonstrated experience delivering assistance in Gaza, Syria and Sudan, alongside established multilateral organizations.
- Build the capacity of locally led humanitarian and civil society organizations by providing multi-year funding for community-based relief, recovery and development initiatives and strengthening their ability to deliver essential services.
- Establish a dedicated health-sector recovery and capacity-building initiative to rebuild and rehabilitate healthcare infrastructure, strengthen local health systems, expand healthcare workforce training, and restore access to essential medical services, with particular attention to the extensive destruction of Gaza's healthcare system.
- Create funding streams for longer-term community and economic recovery that rebuild educational and civil institutions, restore livelihoods, strengthen food security and create pathways from emergency humanitarian assistance toward sustainable development.
- Establish humanitarian access mechanisms within Canada's international assistance and diplomatic engagement to address barriers to the delivery of humanitarian assistance and recovery programming in conflict-affected and hard-to-reach communities.
- Create a formal review mechanism for Canadian sanctions affecting Syria and lift measures that impede legitimate humanitarian assistance, civilian recovery, reconstruction, financial transactions and access to essential goods and services, while maintaining targeted measures against individuals responsible for serious human rights violations where appropriate.
- Establish clear humanitarian and reconstruction exemptions within Canada's sanctions framework so that credible humanitarian organizations, financial institutions, diaspora communities and development actors can undertake legitimate civilian relief and recovery activities without unnecessary regulatory barriers.
- Build a formal partnership and consultation framework between Global Affairs Canada, credible Canadian Muslim humanitarian and relief organizations, local civil society and affected diaspora communities to incorporate their operational experience and regional expertise into the design and delivery of Canadian humanitarian and reconstruction initiatives.
- Establish transparent monitoring and public reporting requirements for Canadian humanitarian and reconstruction funding, including funding allocations, implementing organizations, geographic distribution, project outcomes and barriers to humanitarian delivery.

Canada's contribution should move beyond emergency relief toward sustained recovery, dignity and long-term development for affected communities in Gaza, Syria and Sudan.

8. Establish Sustainable Federal–Muslim Community Engagement

Effective policymaking requires meaningful engagement with communities affected by federal decisions. Consultation with Muslim communities is too often reactive, occurring after a crisis or after significant policy decisions have already been made. A more structured approach would allow federal departments to identify unintended consequences earlier and benefit from community expertise during policy development.

Recommendations:

- Establish structured and recurring engagement between relevant federal departments and Muslim civil society organizations.
- Provide resources to support meaningful community participation in federal consultations.
- Build representation requirements into federal engagement mechanisms to include Muslim organizations from different regions, racial and cultural backgrounds, professional sectors and areas of expertise.
- Require departments developing policies with significant implications for Muslim communities to undertake meaningful consultation at an early stage.
- Establish transparent mechanisms for departments to report how community recommendations were considered and incorporated.

Community engagement should be treated as part of effective policymaking rather than as a response to controversy or crisis.

Conclusion

The federal government has established important programs and institutions to address racism, hate, community security and Islamophobia. The next stage must focus on ensuring these commitments produce measurable and equitable outcomes. The 2026–2027 federal budget provides an opportunity to strengthen existing investments while addressing gaps in community access, institutional accountability and long-term sustainability. CMPAC encourages the Government of Canada to prioritize dedicated resources to combat Islamophobia, strengthen the security of Muslim institutions, improve federal accountability, protect civil liberties, ensure equitable humanitarian and immigration policies. CMPAC further encourages meaningful federal investment in humanitarian relief, recovery and reconstruction in Gaza, Syria, and Sudan.

These investments should not be understood solely as expenditures directed toward individual communities. They are investments in safer communities, stronger public institutions, social cohesion, equality before the law and public confidence in Canada's democratic system. A federal budget that meaningfully addresses these priorities would demonstrate Canada's commitment to ensuring that Muslim communities can participate fully and safely in Canadian society while strengthening the institutions and principles that protect all Canadians.