

Restoring Belonging: Ending Islamophobia, Anti-Arab and Anti-Palestinian Racism

Prepared by MCRO from *Combatting Hate* (Senate Human Rights Committee, 2023); *Islamophobia on the Rise* (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2024); *Documenting the "Palestine Exception"* (Islamophobia Research Hub, York University, 2025); and *The Survey of Muslims in Canada* (Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Toronto, 2026).

Key message.

Muslims in Canada are deeply invested in the country, yet their sense of belonging is eroding under hate, systemic bias and the silencing of their voices.

SMiC, pp. 7–8, 74; *Combatting Hate*, pp. 9–14; *Islamophobia on the Rise*, pp. 5–13

Canada has the most targeted murders of Muslims of any G7 country, from the Quebec City mosque in 2017 to the London, Ontario family attack in 2021 (*Islamophobia on the Rise*, p. 7; *Combatting Hate*, p. 9).

Belonging in Canada

84% of first-generation Muslim immigrants would choose Canada again (SMiC, pp. 87–88)	52% say their Canadian identity is very important to them (SMiC, p. 8)	48% say their sense of belonging weakened since Oct. 7, 2023 (SMiC, p. 74)	44% say it has become harder to be Muslim in Canada in recent years (SMiC, p. 105)
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Belonging and voice: Muslims and non-Muslims

Measure (Survey of Muslims in Canada)	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Sense of belonging weakened since October 7, 2023 (p. 74)	48%	24%
Sense of belonging weakened over the past five years (p. 72)	40%	34%
Canadian-born who would prefer to live in another country (p. 89)	48%	29%
Not at all worried about government surveillance because of religion (p. 14)	32%	71%

58%: Canadian-born Muslim women who would rather live in another country, against 35% of Muslim men (SMiC, p. 89). Asked why it has become harder to be Muslim, Muslims most often named Islamophobia, media influence, racism, lack of understanding and political influence (SMiC, p. 107).

What is eroding belonging

Hate, systemic bias and silencing, as documented in parliamentary studies, community case data and national survey data.

1,800%

rise in Islamophobia cases reported to NCCM in the year after Oct. 7, 2023 (Palestine Exception, p. 7)

98%

of people prosecuted under anti-terrorism provisions were Muslim or linked to Muslim groups (Combatting Hate, p. 46)

75%

of CRA review-division charity revocations, 2008–2015, were Muslim charities, under 1% of all charities (Combatting Hate, p. 51)

345

reports to the Muslim Legal Support Centre of job loss or forced leave for supporting Palestine in six months (Palestine Exception, p. 7)

89%

of reported Islamophobic posts that major platforms failed to act on, according to the Center for Countering Digital Hate (Islamophobia on the Rise, p. 13)

Women who wear the hijab are the most frequent targets (Combatting Hate, pp. 15–16): 73% of Muslim women in Quebec have not felt as safe in public since Bill 21 (Combatting Hate, p. 56). And 42% of Muslims often self-censor out of fear of how people will react (SMiC, p. 14).

Blueprints for an action plan

The reports set out areas for action (Combatting Hate, pp. 12–14; Islamophobia on the Rise, pp. 41–44; Palestine Exception, pp. 52–54).

Federal

Implement the Senate's 13 recommendations and the 2021 Summit commitments in full.

Fund police hate crime units and a federal hate-reporting hotline.

Review national security law and CRA charity audits for bias.

Provinces

Independent units to hear complaints about police handling of hate crimes.

A legal remedy (tort) to protect against doxing.

Curriculum and training on Palestinian culture, identity and history.

Leaders and platforms

Denounce Islamophobia, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism clearly.

Recognize anti-Palestinian racism as a distinct form of racism.

Transparency and accountability for social media platforms.

The data gap.

Only about 1% of the hate crimes Canadians report experiencing appear in police statistics, and Canada does not yet collect the disaggregated data needed to measure intersectional Islamophobia.

Combatting Hate, pp. 14, 21

Who does what

Parliament's committees and community researchers direct their recommendations to federal and provincial governments, agencies and leaders (Combating Hate, pp. 12–14; Islamophobia on the Rise, pp. 41–44; Palestine Exception, pp. 52–54).

1 · WHO MUST ACT

The bodies with the duty or power to fix it

Government of Canada

FEDERAL

- Implement all Senate recommendations and 2021 Summit commitments (Islamophobia on the Rise, p. 41)
- Recognize discrimination towards Palestinians as a distinct form of discrimination, and plan to combat it (Islamophobia on the Rise, p. 42)
- Create a national fund for victims of hate (Palestine Exception, p. 53)

Parliament and federal agencies

SECURITY AND CRA

- A parliamentary review of the national security framework with a focus on systemic Islamophobia (Combating Hate, p. 13)
- CRA to publish data on audits of religious organizations (Combating Hate, p. 13)
- An independent body to hear charity appeals (Combating Hate, p. 13)

Provinces and territories

PROVINCIAL

- Independent hate crime accountability units (Palestine Exception, p. 53)
- A tort to protect against doxing (Palestine Exception, p. 54)
- Dedicated police hate crime units, with federal support (Islamophobia on the Rise, p. 43)

Political and institutional leaders

LEADERSHIP

- Denounce Islamophobia, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism unequivocally (Islamophobia on the Rise, p. 42)
- Affirm the right to criticize foreign governments (NCCM testimony, Islamophobia on the Rise, p. 35)
- Be held accountable for spreading disinformation (Palestine Exception, p. 52)

2 · WHO CAN PUSH FOR IT

Find your group: what to ask for, and who to ask

Community members

- Know your Charter rights to religion, expression and peaceful assembly*
- Report hate incidents; most never reach police statistics (Combating Hate, p. 21)

Take it to → police, community hate-reporting lines, your MP*

Mosques and community organizations

- Seek a simpler Security Infrastructure Program (Combating Hate, p. 12), with a liaison in emergencies (Islamophobia on the Rise, p. 43)
- Help shape government initiatives that build understanding, through consultation (Islamophobia on the Rise, p. 42)

Take it to → Public Safety Canada, Canadian Heritage, your MP*

Researchers and data advocates

- Press for disaggregated data on intersectional Islamophobia (Combating Hate, p. 14)
- Seek funding for community-led research (Islamophobia on the Rise, p. 43)

Take it to → Statistics Canada, Canadian Heritage*

Legal clinics and civil liberties groups

- Support people who lose jobs or face discipline for lawful advocacy*
- Press for a doxing tort and hate crime accountability units (Palestine Exception, pp. 53–54)

Take it to → provincial attorneys general, MPs*

* MCRO suggestion, not named in the reports. Many figures are reported to Parliament by witnesses or drawn from community case data; survey figures are estimates for adults aged 18 and over.

ABOUT MCRO

The Muslim Communities Research Observatory is an independent research observatory. We collect and synthesize rigorous research on Muslim communities, turn it into policy briefs, dashboards and toolkits, and help leaders and organizations put that evidence to work. Contact: Amira Elghawaby · amira.elghawaby@mcro.ca

Sources: Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights (2023). *Combating Hate: Islamophobia and Its Impact on Muslims in Canada*. House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights (2024). *Islamophobia on the Rise*. Islamophobia Research Hub (2025). *Documenting the "Palestine Exception"*. York University. Shah, S., & Nabi, S. (2026). *The Survey of Muslims in Canada* (SMiC). University of Toronto. Page numbers refer to those reports.