

THE RISE IN ISLAMOPHOBIA

WHAT IS ISLAMOPHOBIA?

noun. An unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore, fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.

Islamophobia manifests itself in different ways:



Hate crimes



Increased police scrutiny and security profiling



Discrimination in employment

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND RACE

A significant number of the world's Muslims are from racialized communities. Those who "appear" Muslim—people from South Asian, Middle Eastern or Somali backgrounds, for example, or due to their clothing or physical appearance—are vulnerable to being attacked or targeted.

"When you're Arab and Muslim, the categories can get conflated. When I've spoken to media, there's been a distinct interest in looking at Islam as 'those brown people from over there.'"

Maytha Alhassen
University of Southern California Provost Ph.D.
Fellow in American Studies and Ethnicity



"Islamophobia manifests itself through the surface characteristics of race. We wrongly think we can judge another's character by the colour of their skin, the style of their clothing, or the Middle Eastern sound of their name. This is not a vigilance worth protecting; this is a racism, a societal evil that needs to be opposed."

Stephen Goeman
Interfaith activist



ISLAM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA IN CANADA

February 23, 2017: The Ontario legislature unanimously **passed an anti-Islamophobia motion** to condemn the growing tide of anti-Muslim rhetoric and sentiments and all forms of Islamophobia.

Attorney General
Yasir Naqvi



"The day after the shooting in Quebec, a father called my community office asking ... is it safe for him to send his son to school. That's not the society we live in. That's not the society we're building. Parents should not be fearful for a nanosecond whether they should send their children to school because of their faith."

3.2%

of the population in Canada is Muslim (7.7% in the Greater Toronto Area)



Islam is the second largest religion in Canada, after Christianity

+44%

increase in reported anti-Muslim hate crimes since 2012

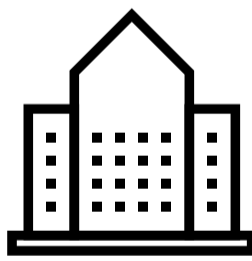
There has been an increase in:



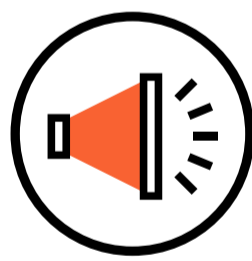
Verbal attacks



Physical attacks



Attacks on property and institutions



Hate propaganda and demonstrations



Threats

LAO'S RACIALIZED COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) is developing a **Racialized Communities Strategy**. In the first phase, we've been talking to people working in different communities to find out (among other things) what types of legal issues are impacting them and whether there are gaps in our services.

As we move forward with the development of the Racialized Communities Strategy, we will look at ways we can offer services that combat racism in the justice system.

What we are currently working on:

- ▶ researching the link between race and Islamophobia
- ▶ supporting test cases that challenge the Safe Third Country Agreement
- ▶ make our materials and services more accessible in languages often spoken by Muslim people

LAO condemns Islamophobia and racism in all its forms. We will continue to combat systemic racism in the justice system.

SOURCES



legalaid.on.ca/rcs

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