



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

CHPC • NUMBER 071 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, September 18, 2017

Chair

The Honourable Hedy Fry

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• (1615)

[English]

The Chair (The Honourable Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I'm calling the meeting to order.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the heritage committee, at its 71st meeting, will study the issue of systemic racism and religious discrimination.

Our first witness is Iqra Khalid, who moved motion 103 that went to the House and was passed, and the committee agreed to study this motion. Without further ado, I will ask Ms. Khalid to begin. I will let her know that she has 10 minutes to speak, and then obviously there will be questions and answers.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair, honourable members, for inviting me to your committee today as you start your study on systemic racism and religious discrimination.

I'm a member of Parliament in one of the most diverse ridings in Canada. I like to say that the whole world is represented in my city of Mississauga. We live beside each other as Canadians. We all, in our different ways, contribute to the building of Canada. We all form part of this beautiful Canadian fabric.

When it comes to the reality on the ground, I often find myself wondering how it is that we can come from so many different places, be of every colour, practise different faiths, and yet collectively be one of the most peaceful countries in the world? Balancing the interests of such a diverse and dynamic group of people as Canadians requires a lot of work. It requires partnerships between our policy-makers, our civil society that acts as watchdogs, our grassroots organizations that provide the programs and services required, and our individual Canadians and the respect they have for one another.

Madam Chair, racism and religious discrimination have no place in Canadian society. We value the differences among Canadians, and we know that diversity is our strength.

A recent survey commissioned by *The Globe and Mail* and conducted by Nanos Research in 2016, suggests that seven in 10 respondents said there's still a lot of racism in Canada. One in five have had racist remarks directed at them, and more than a third have said they have made a racist remark in the company of others.

In 2016 alone, there were cases of discrimination and racism in almost every community in Canada.

On September 20, 2016, the University of Alberta woke up to posters put around their campus, depicting turbaned men of the Sikh faith with racist insults written above them.

In December 2016 in Edmonton, a man went up to two women wearing hijabs, proceeded to pull out a rope from his pocket, tied the rope into a noose, and said, "This is for you."

On August 18, 2016, Andre Bear, a student from Little Pine First Nation in Saskatchewan said, "I remember having white friends when I was growing up, but their parents didn't like me or they would tell me to go home. People weren't allowed to play with me because I was native."

In November of the same year, swastikas and racist slurs were spray-painted on a church with a black pastor in Ottawa.

"Go home" was spray-painted on the Ottawa Muslim Association front doors, and anti-Semitic slurs were spray-painted on synagogues.

On January 29, 2017, six Canadians were gunned down in their place of worship.

Statistics Canada's most recent hate crime data shows that the number of police-reported hate crimes against Muslims increased by 60% in 2015, compared to the previous year. Many Muslim Canadians have told me personally that they do not feel safe practising their faith here in Canada. Statistics Canada data also shows that the number of incidents targeting Jewish Canadians remains the highest among religions targeted, at 178 incidents in 2015 alone. In addition, reported hate crimes targeting black Canadians still made up the largest percentage of the total number of incidents, at 224 incidents in 2015.

Madam Chair, systemic racism and religious discrimination are real. I listen to many stories from people every day. Early last year, an e-petition came to my attention that had over 69,000 Canadians coming together to call on our government to combat Islamophobia.

• (1620)

I was astonished by the numbers. This must be real, I thought, so I decided to do more research. I was even more astounded—and frankly disappointed—to find out that data on this issue was very limited. I struggled to find real numbers. Thus, in light of the limited statistics, the media reports, the concerns raised by Canadians, and the personal stories I heard, I felt that something needed to be done.

As a parliamentarian, I felt the need for more concrete data to reflect on the problem of systemic racism and religious discrimination as a whole in Canada. What could be a better place to study the issue than our own House of Commons, the house of the people? On December 1, 2016, I had the privilege to table motion 103. The motion builds on the support from e-petition 411 and uses the example of Islamophobia to make a larger point about the problem of all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination, which is that we have to find ways to tackle that broader problem in Canada as a whole.

Allow me to state on the record that I am not an expert on the subject matter but rather a believer in our parliamentary process. I trust that this committee will bring the best experts to the table and provide us—Canadians—with a more substantive look at the status of the systemic racism and religious discrimination issue in our Canada.

Due to this, my recommendations to your respected committee will be merely regarding the focus and direction of this committee as you move forward with this study. My recommendations are that this committee take a unified approach to study all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination in Canada; that this committee direct experts to testify on best ways to collect data to contextualize hate crime reports and conduct needs assessments for impacted communities, and, more specifically, how we as parliamentarians and government can support this; and, that this committee direct experts to testify on the best methods of reducing or eliminating systemic racism and religious discrimination in Canada.

I would hope that the outcome of your study provides more concrete recommendations to reducing or eliminating systemic racism and religious discrimination in Canada.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm happy to take questions.

• (1625)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Khalid.

Now we begin the question and answer piece, but I want to recognize a colleague who is in the room. The leader of the Green Party, Elizabeth May, is here as a member of Parliament listening to this testimony.

Thank you, and welcome.

Now we begin the seven-minute round. The seven minutes include questions and answers. I'm going to give you a sign when you have two minutes to go so you can wrap up. I'll begin with the Liberals.

For seven minutes, Ms. Dhillon.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Thank you for joining us today and for your very poignant statement.

First, can you describe the reaction you have seen since this motion was presented and what you have experienced personally?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I think what happened is something that I believe was necessary. Canadians engaged in a conversation that was much needed, and now we're looking at the way forward.

This motion and study is an opportunity for parliamentarians to come together and to be unified in seeing how we can tackle this

issue of systemic racism and religious discrimination. There's a lot to be learned from the statistics, the media reports, and people's personal experiences, including mine. We must use those in our unified approach to combatting systemic racism and religious discrimination and in ensuring all communities that need the help are getting it. I'm really looking forward to the concrete recommendations that this committee will provide for this issue going forward.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Can you give us your thoughts about what's been happening in my home province of Quebec regarding the fire bombings and the mosque shooting? Can you give us your opinion?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I really think that Canadians are realizing what the issue is, which makes this committee's study that much more important.

It gives us and all of you the opportunity to come together to look at these issues, to hear from Canadians, and to hear from experts on what is happening and how we can continue to build those bridges amongst minorities in Canada, amongst our diverse population here in Canada, and also, how we can continue to have and strengthen those partnerships between our policy-makers, our civil society, our grassroots organizations, and Canadians at large. How do we develop that respect we have for each other and how do we as a committee go forward in providing those recommendations?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Why do you think it's important to have statistics on hate crime data collection?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Well, as our Prime Minister and our government always say, good data leads to good policy. When we have that data and are able to contextualize it, we are able to better understand the needs of impacted communities. We are better able to come up with those concrete recommendations and initiatives that our government may take in enhancing and building those partnerships with our civil society, our grassroots organizations, and Canadians at large. That data piece helps us to understand what is happening at the grassroots level, and it helps us to have effective and better policy.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: As parliamentarians, we have many people walking into our offices with various problems. How many have walked in with these concerns or have been victims of racial profiling? Have you seen that?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: A lot of people have walked into not only my offices, but also, I'm sure, those of many of the members around this table.

I'll give you an example. I had a conversation with the local rabbi of my riding, Rabbi Pollack. We had a very lengthy conversation about the discrimination the Jewish community faces in Canada and specifically in my riding. She talked about those trials and tribulations and about how unified a community is can really affect how we can help each other.

Having these kinds of stories really defines how we take this study forward. I think we can do better by Canadians. We can work to enhance and use our diversity as a strength because, quite honestly, it's our future. Our kids of tomorrow are going to need the support that we can provide today.

• (1630)

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Your motion covers all sorts of discrimination against all communities that coexist in Canada. Why do you think this is a very important motion? What exactly would you want us to study here?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I'm not at liberty to restrict the committee. I think the objective of the motion has been completed, in that now a study is taking place. As parliamentarians, this heritage committee is taking ownership of an issue that we are seeing in statistics and media reports and are hearing about from Canadians. The objective of the motion is now complete.

I'm really looking forward to having the committee bringing in experts and understanding from the experts how we can find better ways to collect and contextualize data, and how we as policy-makers, as representatives of the people, can assist in helping to build those bridges amongst different communities here in Canada.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: I want to thank you so much for having the courage to present this motion, for coming here before us, and for trying to help all communities in Canada.

The Chair: I'll go to the Conservatives, with Scott Reid.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Iqra, thank you very much for being here. Before we began, I wanted to go up and shake your hand and ask if you enjoyed your summer and all those collegial things, but unfortunately I didn't get the chance. I'll do it at the end. You're looking well rested anyway, for what it's worth.

I want to ask you this as a starting point. A few years back, I was a co-chair, along with a Liberal MP, Mario Silva, of an informal parliamentary group called the "Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism". We had members from all parties serving on it. Are you familiar with that group?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: No, I'm not.

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay. What I might try to do, then, is get a copy of the report we did. At the time, the study looked into anti-Semitism, obviously, as the name implies, and how to deal with anti-Semitism. One of the bases on which we were looking at it was the assumption that anti-Semitism has historically been a kind of canary in the coal mine for religious or, in some cases, racial discrimination, because as you know, the very worst anti-Semites of all conceived of Judaism not as a religion but a race.

At any rate, we were looking at this as the canary in the coal mine for other forms of discrimination, hatred, and hate-motivated violence. We had a few recommendations that I think might prove useful in the context of the report that your motion could lead to from this committee. In terms of what was included, I want to ask you what you think about these recommendations as potential ideas, given that you've thought a lot about this general subject matter over the past few months.

We felt that there was room for improvement in better unified police reporting on statistics of violence and other hate-motivated acts.

We were dealing, of course, with synagogues, because this was about Jews, and we recommended better federal funding for security around synagogues. I'm expressing a prejudice here, I guess.... I think there's a very strong case for this in the context of mosques as well, given the fact that we saw those terrible events, those murders in Quebec City, at a mosque.

Do you think there would be profit in us pursuing this kind of security-related research as part of our agenda in response to your motion?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: That's fantastic. I'm so glad that you've put so much thought into what these recommendations would look like.

As I stated earlier, I am not an expert on the subject matter, and I defer to the direct experts who will come before this committee to inform committee members on what would be the best way forward and what these concrete recommendations could be. I'm very glad that you have worked very hard on this issue over your past number of years. I know that you're quite a learned man yourself. I'm looking forward to a unified approach as to how we can combat systemic racism and religious discrimination—all forms of it—here in Canada.

• (1635)

Mr. Scott Reid: Thank you.

As you will recall, back in February, your motion 103 was debated. The day after the first hour of debate, a second motion, very similar but introduced by my colleague from Cypress Hills-Grasslands, who is sitting beside me today, was also debated. It was very similar in wording. It did not use the word "Islamophobia", but it did contain a few passages that were absent from motion 103. It specifically included the following words:

That the House: (a) recognize that Canadian society is not immune to the climate of hate and fear exemplified by the recent and senseless violent acts at a Quebec City mosque;

(b) condemn all forms of systemic racism, religious intolerance, and discrimination of Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, and other religious communities;

When you were asked about this, you said, "Well, I agree with most of this. After all, I wrote 98% of it." This is the 2% you didn't write. I'm going to guess that you also agree with this part. Would I be correct?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I'm not understanding your question.

Mr. Scott Reid: This is the part of the motion that was introduced the day after motion 103 was debated in the House of Commons. Much of that wording was lifted directly from motion 103.

This was the part that was not lifted from motion 103. It was added in. We felt that it was important. I'm just trying to establish.... I have a suspicion that you actually agree as well with this part that I just read: that we should try to fight against discrimination against Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, and all religious communities, and also that we should single out senseless acts of violence as the paradigmatic thing against which we are fighting.

Are you comfortable with being in agreement with those things?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Of course. I am here before this committee by invitation as it commences a study on systemic racism and religious discrimination—all forms of it. I'm really looking forward to how this committee tackles this issue, looking for that testimony of experts from all across the board to see how we can better define the relationships we have between each other as Canadians and how we can work together.

I will give an example. I've had many conversations with a lot of people in my riding. One day I was sitting with Erin Mills United Church, and some of the members of that church expressed that they were first-generation immigrants from Portugal. They spoke about the issues that they faced. We talked at length about what kind of issues communities face, not only when they are newcomers here in Canada, but also as minorities that are impacted, that need that extra help, that are vulnerable. We came to a conclusion as we spoke: if you remove the type or the identity of the person—race, creed, religion—and look at the body of the type of discrimination, it seems that all minorities have gone through it at some point.

It's so important for this committee and for us as parliamentarians to take on this task at a time when Canada really needs to work hard to build those bridges, to work together between us as policy-makers and between our grassroots organizations, our civil society, and Canadians at large. The experts who will come before this committee will, I'm sure, inform this committee on all types of systemic racism and religious discrimination. I'm sure that the recommendations that will be provided will be fantabulous and will work towards a better and stronger Canada.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Your time is up now, Scott.

Now I go to Jenny Kwan of the NDP.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much, Ms. Khalid, for bringing this motion before us.

The issue before us is a very serious one, particularly in this climate of hate, I would call it, especially looking south of the border where so much effort is being made to normalize hate and discrimination. It is extremely disheartening to me as a person of colour, a woman, and someone who has lived experiences of discrimination in the past and continues to from time to time as well. To see how far we have come and the setback that we're now experiencing.... Some days, thinking about the situation that we face today literally makes me want to weep. With that being said, I think the work before our committee is very important, and I think there is much to be done.

In terms of addressing the issue of how, as we see in our community, some are working so hard to normalize hate and discrimination—I'm sure you have experienced that as well—do you have any suggestions on how the government can tackle that? None of us are experts per se, but that said, I might add that those with lived experiences are perhaps the best experts. I would love to hear what actions you think the government should take, from a lived-experience point of view, to deal with this issue.

● (1640)

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you very much, Ms. Kwan, for that question and for recognizing the seriousness of this issue that we are talking about today.

When it comes to understanding what issues Canadians face, what better way to understand these issues than to actually go to Canadians themselves to talk about these issues and to have conversations with them to try to understand what impact systemic racism and religious discrimination may have on them?

I remember reading an article in *The Globe and Mail* that suggested that young, male Chinese Canadians have a harder time getting employment as opposed to their non-Chinese counterparts. It was suggested in that article that it is because of that name, because of the name of person that this type of discrimination occurs. It's those kinds of incidents. When we have the data, when we are able to collect the data, I think that we will be better able to understand the totality of what systemic racism and religious discrimination looks like in Canada. This is why it was one of my recommendations that we find good ways to collect that data and to contextualize hate crime reports; it will allow us to understand what the communities need. Like I said, to really understand, we have to go to Canadians and listen to what they have to say.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: There's no question that we need to collect data. I would agree with that. I think that's one aspect of it, although not the only aspect.

Just on the question around data, of course, I've come across data that indicates, for example, that for people who come here, who are racialized immigrants, if you will, the economic impact for them is quite significant. In fact, even as of today, from my understanding, immigrants make less than their counterparts, male or female. We still have some ways to go to equalize that. There are some issues around institutionalized discrimination, if you will, or racism, embedded within our system, which has created this outcome.

Would you agree, then, that part of the work of this committee, in terms of recommendations to government to take action on this, is also to address those kinds of institutionalized aspects in impacting a very important component for people of colour, that being their financial opportunities?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: You raise a great point, Ms. Kwan. I myself am a first-generation immigrant, and I watched my parents go through that struggle. As a member of Parliament, I am approached by many newcomers who are also having a difficult time finding employment, for example, or having culture shock, or really integrating themselves in Canadian society. I know that our federal government has been doing a lot to help those newcomers. We are a country that values our diversity, and we really show it to be our strength. There are programs that help those newcomers, but we can always do more.

In terms of what you talk about, understanding other ways to collect that data, I really think there will be great experts who will come before this committee to help advise the committee on how we can collect that data and how we can continue to work towards tackling systemic racism and religious discrimination.

• (1645)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I'm sorry, perhaps I'm not explaining myself. I'm talking about beyond collecting data. I'm talking about action that needs to be taken, about action that needs to address the socio-economic discrimination that exists for people from the immigrant community, people of colour.

To that end, we have all heard these stories. For example, people with credentials come from a different country and their credentials are not recognized. We need to break down the systemic barriers with respect to that so that their credentials are recognized and they can be employed in their field, which they have already spent a lot of time on.

That would be part of, I would hope, the study and the recommendations that are required. Would you agree with that, yes or no?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I think it's up to the committee to decide on which direction the committee should go—

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Sorry, I'm just going to interrupt. Do you not have an opinion on that? Do you not think that this is part of this? This is your motion we are studying. Do you not think this is an important part of the work that we should be undertaking?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Ms. Kwan, the objective of the motion was to bring forward this study. It is upon this committee as a whole to take that unified approach to study the issue, to work with each other to find those recommendations that will assist us as policy-makers to work together and to build those bridges amongst Canadians.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: There's no doubt that we will work with a unified approach. I fully hope that and anticipate that, but I was hoping to get an opinion from you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I now go to the Liberals.

Darrell Samson, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much for being here and for bringing forward this motion. I think it's extremely important. Systemic racism is evident. We need to be talking about it, and this is one way. When you talk about these issues, you bring forward data. You do needs

assessments, and then solutions should come forward so that we can do better, which is important.

I don't want to take too much time, because I'd like to leave time for a question from Madam May here, and maybe my colleague as well. Just very quickly, since the passing of the motion, Parliament and the media have been focusing on Islamophobia and the combatting of anti-Muslim sentiments. Is the focus much greater than that for you? Perhaps you can quickly explain.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Most definitely, Mr. Samson. The focus of the motion, the intention of the motion, was all along to look at all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination in Canada, to see how we can build bridges amongst communities, how we can build on those partnerships between our policy-makers, our civil society grassroots organizations, and Canadians at large, and how we can strengthen those ties.

Islamophobia was used as an example, but it is not the content of the whole motion. The motion is really now the study, I hope, and this committee will take charge...to be inclusive, to include all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination, and to hear from all communities that are impacted.

Mr. Darrell Samson: I am extremely happy to hear you say that, because we need to be focusing on all those issues. I represent a large number of black African Nova Scotians, who have had a very tough time for a very long time. Systemic discrimination has been evident and still is today. How important do you feel it is to combat anti-black racism and the rise of white supremacy?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: It is very important. As I said earlier, it's really about working with those communities that are impacted. I believe I quoted over 200 incidents across Canada reported by Statistics Canada that have black Canadians as targets for hate crimes. I think this is something that you, as a committee, should take upon yourselves. I hope that this community specifically will also be included in the study as a whole.

Mr. Darrell Samson: This is very important. I thank you once again for that.

Ms. May, maybe you want to ask a question.

The Chair: Darrell, you have so kindly decided to share your time with Ms. May and Mr. Virani.

Ms. May, I don't know how much you can share, because you have only four minutes left, but go ahead.

• (1650)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be very brief, and I'd love to share the time with my friend Mr. Virani.

It's very generous of you, Darrell. Thank you.

I have never seen such fomented anger, concern, and misconceptions about any motion before Parliament as applied to motion 103. I just want to put to you some of the things. I have wonderful constituents, good-hearted, nice people, who sent me emails asking whether these things were true, and how I could vote for motion 103. Since I voted for it, I would like to put to you, as the author, whether you agree with me that none of these things could possibly happen due to motion 103. I put to you that I have told my constituents that there is no way motion 103 is going to limit free speech, that there is no way motion 103 is going to bring in sharia law to Canada, and that there is no way motion 103 is going to place Islam at a more protected status than other religions. If you want to comment on it, I would appreciate your view on whether there is any way motion 103 could be used in these fashions.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: You're right. There are a lot of misconceptions, but we have to look forward. We have to look at what this study will do, which is to give people the ability to speak out where they may not have been able to speak out before. There is no legislation, from my end, that is going to come out of this. It is really up to the committee to decide which way to go. My only recommendation to the committee, as I outlined before, is to work together, collect that data, find ways to collect that data, and tackle this issue as a whole.

Ms. Elizabeth May: With my final, brief comment, I just want to associate myself with everything my friend Jenny Kwan said. We are living in a time when, to my horror, white supremacy is being normalized as something that people identify with, such as the young naval officers who showed up at the Mi'kmaq protest in Halifax. These are things for which I hope this committee can find ways to recommend action. We are a society that has traditionally, at least in our recent history, not always.... We've had episodes of anti-Semitism and anti-Asian laws, regulations, and rules that go way back, but we need to take a firm stand and take action that will eliminate, to the greatest extent possible, racism and religious discrimination in this country. I thank you for bringing your motion forward.

Thank you for the time.

The Chair: Thank you.

I think we have one minutes and 30 seconds for Arif.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Thank you, Ms. Khalid, for your courage in bringing this motion forward and for testifying here today.

Building on Ms. May's question, I've had a lot of people come to me and ask, "Are you chilling my ability to raise a legitimate question about a faith?" I've said to them, no. One can openly question whether we should have female priests, as a questioning of the Catholic faith, for example. One should be able to legitimately debate aspects of the dietary restrictions on Muslims, for example. But Islamophobia, to me, means uttering death threats, assaulting, hatred, threats of violence towards people, and vandalism of their places of worship. I just want you to comment on that, and how you've responded to that kind of criticism in terms of how you see Islamophobia, because, to me, it has never been a complicated term.

The Chair: Ms. Khalid, you have 20 seconds in which to make that comment.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I look forward to how this committee tackles that issue.

The Chair: Now we go to the second round, but given that Ms. Khalid has until five o'clock, we only have seven minutes. This is supposed to be a five-minute round, so as the chair, I am going to make it a three-minute round. I'm going to have Mr. Sweet from the Conservatives next, then Mr. Vandal from the Liberals. Three minutes, please.

Mr. David Anderson: Point of order, Madam Chair. I'd just like to raise the point that we didn't start until almost 4:15, so I'm just wondering if we're going to extend this session so that we get the full hour with this witness.

The Chair: We'll have another 15 minutes, then. We'll start with Mr. Sweet.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): I appreciate the opportunity to be on this committee and to participate in this study. I also want to commend Ms. Khalid. It just so happens that my colleagues here beside me all serve on the Subcommittee on International Human Rights. Mr. Reid doesn't anymore, but he chaired that subcommittee for the better part of a decade. Ms. Khalid joins us and people who are dedicated to human rights, freedom, the rule of law, and certainly the fight against racism.

I want to begin my questions by saying that I'm glad we've had the ability to work together for the last couple of years. I believe that no matter how you may perceive my question, all your intentions have been good and for the betterment of all people.

At the expense of being the one who identifies the elephant in the room, I don't think it would be overreaching to say that everybody in this room agrees with the anti-racism aspect of M-103 and the defence of religious freedom aspect of M-103. The concern I highlighted in my speech, and I believe that Mr. Anderson did as well in the chamber, was in regard to the etymology of the term "Islamophobia" itself. I just wanted to know if you were concerned at all about this term. It's been around for a very short period of time. It hasn't really stood the test of any kind of academic rigour.

Are you concerned—and you've already heard from other colleagues, so it's not something new—that there's a large percentage of people in Canada who are concerned that their speech would be stifled if something like "Islamophobia" wasn't really defined? I'm wondering if you have any concerns in that regard, and I wonder what your definition of Islamophobia is.

• (1655)

Ms. Iqra Khalid: It's been a pleasure to serve on the international human rights subcommittee with you tackling issues of equality and ensuring that people's rights are maintained and respected.

The definition of Islamophobia I subscribe to is an irrational fear or hatred of Muslims or Islam that leads to discrimination. The committee is now commencing this study on all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination. I'm looking forward to having this committee engage experts on how we can help impacted communities and how we can work with impacted communities, not just of the Muslim faith but of the Jewish faith as well as indigenous communities, black Canadians, Chinese Canadians, and all minorities impacted here in Canada. How can we can work together with them as policy-makers to build those bridges and to tackle the difficult issue of systemic racism and religious discrimination here in Canada? I think it's about building those bridges.

Canada is a very diverse country. As I said in my statement, I feel that the whole world is represented in my city of Mississauga. Last I checked, there were about 43 different languages spoken in that city, which goes to show how diverse we are as Canadians.

When we are looking at a study that tries to tackle systemic racism and religious discrimination in Canada, we really are looking to hear from those who are impacted. I think that the committee has reached out to a lot of different impacted communities.

I'm looking forward to following the progress of this committee and the recommendations that come from your hard work here.

Mr. David Sweet: So right now you wouldn't want to direct the committee, but you would encourage the committee to focus not on the Islamophobia aspect of it but on the broader aspect of racism—in terms of race, religion, etc.—with regard to every single community, and to make sure the study was broad in that regard?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: That is the text of the motion. I believe it directs or asks the heritage committee to study the issue of all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination, including Islamophobia.

Mr. David Sweet: I just want to remind you of the discussion that we had, about that being exactly the amendment that we wanted on the original motion, to make sure it included all racism without focusing on the one.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sweet.

Now we go to Mr. Vandal for the Liberals for five minutes.

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Thank you.

Thank you, Iqra. First, I want to compliment you on your courage in bringing this forward and your leadership in penning your motion and having this important discussion.

Are you aware that the Canadian Race Relations Foundation defined Islamophobia as “expressions of fear and negative stereotypes, bias, or acts of hostility towards the religion of Islam and individual Muslims”? In addition, the Ontario Human Rights Commission describes Islamophobia as “stereotypes, bias or acts of hostility towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general”.

•(1700)

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Yes.

Mr. Dan Vandal: I'm sure you're aware of that.

I'm going to continue the theme that was started by Ms. May. Your motion includes the following:

(a) recognize the need to quell the increasing climate of public hate and fear; (b) condemn Islamophobia and all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination and... (i) develop a whole-of-government approach to reducing or eliminating systemic racism and religious discrimination including Islamophobia.

I know you've been threatened. People have called your office. They have sent you emails. They have not been very kind to you. People have called my office and complained that they don't want sharia law. They don't want their freedom of speech curtailed. Based on your lived experience, do you have any idea why this whole motion, which was well developed, just spun out of control into a bunch of basically lies, things that it was not? Do you have an opinion on that?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I think the conversation that Canadians have had over the past number of months was a very important conversation. I think it is a great way to lead up to this study. I'm very humbled and honoured that this study has commenced and that we are sitting here today ready to tackle this issue, to face all of the challenges that we do as Canadians, as a diverse group of people.

I think this study will give many Canadians like me, who may belong to a community or a minority or who identify themselves as such, that opportunity to speak, to raise their voice where their voice may not have been heard before. I think this study will enhance that freedom of speech, will really help to bring to light those voices, and will really give a microphone to those voices that haven't been heard before.

I think the opportunity and the challenge really lie with this committee to engage Canadians, all Canadians, in this conversation and to continue that conversation and to come up with recommendations as to how we can take those conversations and transform them into solid recommendations that we can use to better build those bridges amongst Canadians.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Do you feel that certain segments of the news media played a role in whipping up people's anxieties and fears and hate so that they would call this committee and express their outrage based on information that was completely false?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I'm sure they did. However, I think we can use the attention of Canadians, their ability or their interest to engage in this conversation as a positive; and this committee can really use their experiences to enhance the committee's opinions of all types of minorities, of all Canadians, and use that to inform it in its recommendations.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we have Mr. Anderson for the Conservatives.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Khalid, for being here today.

You talked a little bit earlier about visiting with some of the faith communities, and you talked about how they can't remove their creed, their distinctions, or whatever. A faith community by definition basically holds values that are different from the society around it and believes that it should be able to maintain those distinctive tenets without any interference. As you thought through this and went through the debate on this issue, do you think that we need to consider provisions in order to accomplish that, to be able to protect the faith communities in Canada so that they can then live out their distinctions without interference?

• (1705)

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I will begin my answer by saying that it is an honour to serve with you on the international human rights subcommittee. You have always raised the issue of equality for everybody, regardless of which faith they practise. I thank you for your leadership on religious freedoms and for all of the work that you've done with that.

I want to say that the beauty of Canada is our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are a secular nation that protects the rights of people to practise whichever religion they wish. They should not be discriminated against based on what they look like, what their shell looks like, or what orientation they are, what gender they belong to.

Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms does that. When we as a committee now— I keep wanting to include myself in this. When you as a committee study this, you're going to look at all of these issues. How do we enhance those rights that are already enshrined in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms? How do we ensure that Canadians are free and that their charter rights are protected? How do we ensure, as a committee, that we are continuing to build bridges among Canadians? How are we helping those impacted communities get the help that they need? How do we collect data? How are we working together to tackle the issues of systemic racism and religious discrimination?

Mr. David Anderson: Okay. I think that both of us would have liked to have found ourselves on the same side of the vote in the House on this issue.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: And we are.

Mr. David Anderson: We did try to make an amendment that we hoped would have been acceptable to the government, but it wasn't. However, I've appreciated working with you.

You're talking about faith communities realizing and seeing the rights that they have, but there's another side to that equation: people want to have the right to critique those very communities. Do we need to do anything in order to improve people's capacity in Canada to be able to critique honestly and fairly those communities that are different from the one in which they live?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I think that is a very important question. Where do we draw the line between one person's rights and another's? I think that, being the secular, strong nation that it is, Canada protects everybody's freedom to speak and everybody's freedom to practise whichever faith they belong to. The onus is on this committee. In studying systemic racism and religious discrimination in the coming weeks and months, how do we ensure that all rights are protected? How do we ensure that we are continuing to build those bridges and to increase those partnerships between different communities with

diverse interests and complementing or contrasting interests? How do we, as policy-makers, come together to better build those partnerships and bridges among Canadians? I'm really looking forward to the recommendations that come out of this report.

Mr. David Anderson: Do you have any suggestions on legislative changes that we might take a look at that you feel are important or necessary? Have you thought of anything? Do you have anything that you would suggest? You're the witness here, and it's good that we're going to do our work, but do you have any suggestions? You mentioned the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and realizing those rights that we each have, but do you have any suggestions for the committee about legislative direction that we might suggest?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I think the whole goal of the motion was for this study to take place. I'm very happy to have been invited here, to come and commence this study. I'm really looking forward to what experts and what Canadians really have to say on this matter, and how it will form a part of the report and the recommendations.

The Chair: I think we should move on because we will shortchange the next group. I want to thank Ms. Khalid for coming and answering the questions so generously, and I thank everyone for participating.

We will break for about a minute while the other groups come in.

Thank you.

• (1710)

(Pause)

• (1715)

The Chair: We'll call the meeting to order.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), this is the heritage committee's study of systemic racism and religious discrimination.

We have four groups of witnesses. They are from the Department of Canadian Heritage, represented by Jenifer Aitken and Jérôme Moisan; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, represented by Gilles Michaud; the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, represented by Ritu Banerjee; and the Treasury Board Secretariat, represented by Carl Trotter and Margaret Van Amelsvoort-Thoms.

As you know, the usual protocol is that you will act as a group, so there will be four groups. You have 10 minutes to present. Then we will go through a round of questions from the group.

I shall begin with the Department of Canadian Heritage, Ms. Aitken and Monsieur Moisan.

Ms. Jenifer Aitken (Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Planning and Corporate Affairs, Department of Canadian Heritage): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

I want to thank the committee for inviting me to appear today to support their efforts.

My name is Jenifer Aitken, and I'm the assistant deputy minister of strategic policy, planning and corporate affairs at Canadian Heritage.

The main focus of my remarks will be on providing the committee with an overview of the different tools and initiatives that Canadian Heritage employs to counter various forms of racism and discrimination.

[*English*]

To begin, let me highlight the extent of the diversity of our country. According to Statistics Canada's population projections, by 2036 Canada could see between 34.7% and 39.9% of individuals among the working-age population belonging to a visible minority group, compared with 19.6% in 2011. Additionally, the number of people affiliated with non-Christian religions could almost double to between 13% and 16% of the population, compared with 9% in 2011.

As the previous speaker mentioned, recent police-reported hate crime statistics demonstrate a 5% increase in reported incidents from 2014 to 2015. While hate crimes targeting black and Jewish populations remain the most common types of hate crimes related to race or ethnicity and religion, hate crimes against those of the Muslim faith increased by 61%, from 99 in 2014 to 159 in 2015.

While there are challenges, there is room for optimism. For instance, 87% of Canadians 15 years of age and older report that they are proud to be Canadian, and visible minorities express very high levels of pride in Canada. That comes from the general social survey of 2013. Furthermore, in a 2011 report, Canada was found to be the top-ranking OECD country on a measure of tolerance with respect to community acceptance of minority groups and migrants, with a score of 84% compared with an OECD average of 61%.

Taken together, this information provides the context for the Canadian Heritage programs that promote inclusion and address racism. The mandate of the Department of Canadian Heritage is centred on fostering and promoting Canadian identity and values, cultural development, and heritage. Canadian Heritage is proud to have contributed to Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to inspire a new and ambitious vision for a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive Canada, and to recognize the rich and unique contributions of a diverse population.

In fact, one of the four thematic areas of the commemorations is diversity and inclusion. The Government of Canada is supporting hundreds of initiatives across the country that highlight this important theme—for example, celebrating the presence of people of African ancestry in Saskatchewan; a digital storytelling project by the Afghan Women's Counseling and Integration Community Support Organization, which conveys the journeys and settlement experiences of refugees from different parts of the world; and a festival called *We Are Canadians, Too!*, in which first-generation Asian Canadian youth share their experiences and perspectives.

The mandate of Canadian Heritage specifically includes responsibility for the Multiculturalism Act, which is grounded in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and is part of a broader legislative framework that includes the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Citizenship Act, and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act recognizes the diversity of Canadians in regards to race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and outlines the government's multiculturalism policy.

To implement Canada's multiculturalism policy, the program strives to fulfill three key objectives. These objectives are to build an integrated and socially inclusive society; to improve the responsiveness of institutions to the needs of a diverse population; and to actively engage in discussions on multiculturalism and diversity at the international level.

[*English*]

Inter-Action, Canada's multiculturalism grants and contributions program, has an annual budget of \$5.5 million in funding for projects that promote respect for diversity by encouraging positive interaction between cultural, religious, and ethnic communities in Canada. An additional \$3 million is allocated for community-based events that foster intercultural and interfaith understanding and raise awareness of the contribution of minority groups to Canadian society.

Since April 2015, Inter-Action has supported 26 projects that were approved for at least \$9 million in total funding for initiatives that target interfaith and intercultural understanding and/or racism and discrimination. More than 200 community-led initiatives were supported in 2016-17.

In February of this year, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced a new call for applications for the multiculturalism Inter-Action program with funding priority given to projects that work toward the elimination of discrimination, racism, and prejudice; provide opportunities for youth community engagement; and bring people together through art, culture, and sport.

[*Translation*]

Public outreach and promotion activities are also a key component of the program. Key activities include the celebration of Asian Heritage Month in May and Black History Month in February. To commemorate and launch Black History Month and Asian Heritage Month, the program organizes events featuring community and political leaders, which honour the legacy and significant contributions of these diverse groups to Canada.

[*English*]

The multiculturalism program also publishes an annual report to Parliament on the operation of the act, which highlights activities undertaken by federal institutions to apply multiculturalism principles in the previous year.

The program also supports the nationally standardized data collection strategy on hate-motivated crime. To promote a better understanding of the extent to which hate crimes are occurring in Canada, Statistics Canada produces annual analytical “Juristat” reports, examining the nature and extent of police-reported hate crime in Canada.

Canadian Heritage also coordinates and supports the government's participation in a number of international bodies and initiatives, including the 2010 Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combatting Antisemitism, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The department has also recently announced the reinstatement of the court challenges program, in collaboration with the Department of Justice. This program will provide funding to advance test cases of national significance related to Charter rights, including language and equality rights, as well as the Charter's fundamental freedoms, democratic rights, and life, liberty, and security of the person.

[Translation]

The Canadian government is also looking forward to the upcoming inauguration of the National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa. Implemented through the National Holocaust Monument Act, which received royal assent in March 2011, the monument will serve as a symbol of Canadian values and diversity. It will be erected in memory of the innocent men, women and children who perished during the Holocaust.

• (1725)

[English]

Finally, I'd like to mention the portfolio agencies with which Canadian Heritage works.

Canadian Heritage benefits from engaging with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, an arm's-length crown corporation that reports to the Minister of Canadian Heritage in her role as the minister responsible for the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. The work of the foundation contributes to the elimination of racism and all forms of racial discrimination.

Another portfolio organization that I would mention is the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. Its purpose is to explore the subject of human rights, promote respect for others, and encourage reflection and dialogue.

[Translation]

Madam Chair and committee members, in conclusion, Canadian Heritage fully supports the government's commitment to diversity and inclusion and to countering all forms of racism and discrimination. This is a key priority for both the multiculturalism program and other departmental initiatives.

[English]

As such, we look forward to this committee's findings as we continue our efforts to promote an equitable Canada with respect for diversity and inclusion.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Aitken.

I'll go now to Commissioner Michaud from our Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

[Translation]

D/Commr Gilles Michaud (Deputy Commissioner, Federal Policing , Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee as part of its study of motion 103.

[Translation]

My name is Gilles Michaud. I'm the deputy commissioner of federal policing for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

[English]

The RCMP has a long-standing commitment and adherence to bias-free policing. In practice, this means that in the performance of their duties RCMP employees treat all individuals equally in accordance with the law and without abusing their authority, regardless of an individual's race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, citizenship, family status, socio-economic status, or a conviction for which a pardon has been granted.

Creating respect and valuing diversity is essential for the RCMP, as it is for any law enforcement agency. The RCMP places a high priority on building and developing effective partnerships with communities and other law enforcement agencies to build trust. These relationships are all the more important given that there remain individuals in the country who do not share our values of inclusion and diversity and hold views that are rooted in bigotry and prejudice. Holding and/or espousing these views is not of itself illegal; however, when such beliefs lead to or inspire violence, law enforcement must and does act.

The process by which individuals become convinced that violence against others is a legitimate way to advance their cause is known as “radicalization to violence”. In Canada, this most often manifests as acts of violence against some type of identifiable group, referred to as hate crime. The Criminal Code contains specific offences related to hate: sections 318, 319, and 430. Common offences include, but are not limited to, intimidation, harassment, mischief, and uttering threats against persons or property. There are no Criminal Code provisions for violent hate crimes, just sentencing requirements.

Section 718.2 of the code encourages judges to treat violent offences such as murder as hate crimes if there is evidence that the act was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor. Therefore, some type of primary activity must be investigated for hate sentencing requirements to be considered.

Given the nature of these offences, the responsibility for these investigations falls to the police force of jurisdiction in communities across the country. As you know, the RCMP acts as the provincial or territorial police of jurisdiction in eight provinces, three territories, and over 150 municipalities through our contract and aboriginal policing services. Contract policing is provided through police services agreements, which are negotiated between the federal government and the provinces, territories, and municipalities.

As the police of jurisdiction, the RCMP leads hate crime investigations. The RCMP also provides training and education. For instance, the RCMP national youth services program offers a variety of education and awareness resources on topics relating to ideological violence, as posted on the website of the Centre for Youth Crime Prevention. Resources are designed for police officers, parents, and persons working with youth to engage and empower them to make positive decisions.

Education programs such as this are essential in combatting hate crimes, as they encourage victims to report incidents so law enforcement can initiate investigations. Reporting of hate crimes is essential in order for the RCMP and all law enforcement agencies to respond to and disrupt acts of ideological violence, as well as to understand the magnitude of the problem in our communities across the country.

● (1730)

In areas where the RCMP is the police of jurisdiction, reported hate crimes went up from 160 in 2014 to 206 in 2015, an increase of 46 incidents. The majority of the cases reported appear to be motivated by race, ethnicity, or religion.

[Translation]

The priorities of the RCMP's federal policing program include some of the more sophisticated and complicated types of criminal activity in Canada relating to serious and organized crime, cybercrime, national security and protective policing.

Given the role of the police force of jurisdiction and the need to act within the parameters set out in the Criminal Code, federal policing's role in investigating ideological violence is largely limited to instances where an individual or group moves toward acts of terrorism as defined in section 83.01 of the Criminal Code.

Our investigations are guided by the definition of terrorism as outlined in section 83.01 of the Criminal Code. The definition is important to note. Section 83.01 of the Criminal Code defines terrorism as an act committed "in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause" with the intention of "intimidating the public, or a segment of the public with regard to its security, including its economic security."

Therefore, for federal policing personnel to pursue a terrorism investigation, there must be an indication of an ideological basis and motivation for the act, as well as potential intent.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Michaud, you have three minutes left, and I note that you have a lot of pages. I'm going to have to cut you off at 10 minutes, so if you need to wing it, please do so.

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Certainly, ma'am.

[Translation]

For charges to be laid, we must establish sufficient evidence to demonstrate motivation and intent.

[English]

Federal policing's efforts to address ideological violence are not limited to investigation, if and when an individual moves towards acts of terrorism or other sophisticated crimes. We make every effort to counter the violent ideologies that lead to violence, a process we call radicalization to violence. We use that term deliberately. It is not illegal to have radical thoughts. It is only when someone is moved to violence that law enforcement must act. Radicalization to violence is not limited to a single ethnic group, religion, socio-economic class, or political world view. Federal policing's counter-radicalization to violence efforts are primarily focused on preventing acts of terrorism. However, these efforts are also helpful in preventing all forms of ideological violence, as they help us and our partners to identify the people at risk of moving towards violence, and help identify measures that can be taken to get them off that path.

The RCMP continues to dedicate resources and develop training to respond to all forms of radicalization to violence.

I thank you for your time and would like to reiterate our commitment to working with the committee as you proceed with your study.

● (1735)

The Chair: Thank you very much. You did have one more minute left, Mr. Michaud. I kind of feel like I was leaning on you there.

The next group will be the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, with Ms. Banerjee.

Ms. Ritu Banerjee (Senior Director, Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for the invitation to appear and to discuss Public Safety Canada's role in addressing systemic racism and religious discrimination, including Islamophobia.

Specifically, I will be speaking about the role of the Canada Centre for Canadian Engagement and the Prevention of Violence, which was formally launched by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness this June. I'll be talking about our role in the context of addressing radicalization to violence and issues of hate, and also about some research outcomes and programming.

[Translation]

The Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence was established to coordinate a more effective approach to countering violent extremism, which can include hate crimes and hate incidents.

Canada is viewed by many around the world as a model of peace, stability and diversity. However, our country isn't immune to racist violence and hatred. The tragic shooting at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec in Sainte-Foy; efforts to stop a potential bomber in Strathroy-Caradoc, Ontario; and the people who have been motivated to travel to conflict zones to support terrorist groups show us that there is no single ideology or cause of radicalization to violence.

[English]

In our view, radicalization to violence is a process through which a person adopts a belief or ideology that justifies violence to achieve a political, religious, or ideological objective. Violent beliefs or ideologies can be premised on intolerance or hatred towards an ethnic, religious, or cultural group. In this context, radicalization to violence may not only lead to terrorist activity but may also lead to hate crimes against certain groups. The Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence provides national leadership and coordination on efforts to prevent radicalization to violence in three areas: first, we try to advance key policy priorities, such as the development of the national strategy to counter radicalization to violence; second, we support action-oriented research; and finally, we look to invest in local-level programming through the recently launched community resilience fund. To support its mandate, the centre has commenced engaging broadly with different levels of government, civil society, academia, the private sector, and most importantly Canadians, to discuss its work and help shape the development of this national strategy to counter radicalization to violence. Deep and meaningful engagement will help inform programming, research, and policy priorities. Coordinating efforts across all levels to ensure that Canadians have the full range of tools and mechanisms to address the array of threats facing our communities, including hate crimes and violent extremism, is our key priority.

Over the past few years, the department has funded research initiatives to improve our knowledge and evidence base on a range of issues related to extremist violence, including both terrorist activity and far-right violence. Several studies have examined best practices in developing alternative narratives aimed at diminishing expressions of hatred and violent extremism online. Examples of best practices include the use of humour and the building of empathy between speakers and recipients of hate speech to shift the conversation away from expressions of hate and de-escalate the risk of violence. Other best practices highlight the need for alternative narrative campaigns to be sustainable, to use appropriate platforms to reach the targeted audience, and to better understand the needs of a particular audience.

Public Safety Canada has also funded and supported a number of studies pertaining to right-wing extremism in Canada. In 2016, academics Barbara Perry and Ryan Scrivens published an in-depth portrait of the right-wing extremism movement in Canada. One of

the findings of the report recommends using a multi-agency effort by partnering law enforcement with anti-hate community organizations to better address the threat. A second study on “The Future of Right-Wing Terrorism in Canada” was authored by Richard Parent and James Ellis as part of a working paper series by the Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society, also known as TSAS. The study points to Canada's democratic institutions, its support for diversity, and its policies of multiculturalism as resources against extreme right-wing ideas and movements. These studies provide critical information to inform on how best to design our approaches to counter violent extremism, including violence motivated by hatred.

● (1740)

[Translation]

Budget 2016 provided ongoing funding to create the community resilience fund, which gives financial assistance to organizations undertaking programming and research to address radicalization to violence in Canada.

The fund will be a key element of the Canada Centre's efforts to build domestic capacity at the local level and develop research. Four key priority areas for the fund have been identified. These are intervention programming; performance measurement and evaluation tools; action-oriented research; and youth engagement and the development of alternative narratives.

The fund's current call for proposals is open until October 1, 2017. We hope to receive many proposals.

[English]

The centre is currently supporting a number of programming initiatives to help build local resources and services. One example is Project Someone, and that means “social media education every day”. It's based out of Montreal, and provides tools and training for educators who want to promote discussions on and awareness of hate speech through art and multimedia platforms.

Other examples of programming include support to multi-agency hubs to conduct interventions with at-risk individuals, and developing needs assessments on capabilities, vulnerabilities, and skills gaps in communities in the online space.

We are funding the development of the Canada evidence-based practitioners' network, which aims to support the growing community of professional practitioners and civil society actors in Canada who are involved in assessment, prevention, and intervention with individuals at risk of violent radicalization. Our approach is to support local solutions to local problems using local actors, as we feel this is a more effective way to support communities.

We are working with partners across Canada and internationally to share best practices, increase understanding of violent extremism, fund innovative projects and initiatives, and improve our ability to measure and evaluate results to demonstrate accountability to Canadians.

In addition to the community resilience fund, Public Safety Canada also has the communities at risk: security infrastructure program, which is commonly referred to as SIP. SIP will invest \$10 million over the next five years with \$2 million annually to help support not-for-profit organizations with their security infrastructure improvement needs. This can help communities that feel they are at risk of hate crimes improve the security of their places of worship, community centres, and educational institutions.

In conclusion, I'd just like to reiterate that hatred and radicalization to violence are interconnected issues that require many perspectives, a strong evidence base, and firm commitment on the part of all levels of government and Canadians to address them. Ongoing engagement with Canadians will help us better understand how we can best support and improve capacity at the local level to overcome the influence of violent ideologies and hateful beliefs. We are committed to working extensively with Canadians and with colleagues at every level of government to address this issue. I look forward to discussing this issue with you today and reading the outcomes of your study.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now I'm going to go to Mr. Trottier.

Mr. Carl Trottier (Assistant Deputy Minister, Governance, Planning and Policy Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat): Thank you for inviting us today to speak to you about recruitment retention programs and all the best practices the Government of Canada has to promote and support the diverse workforce and inclusive workplace.

The office of the chief human resources officer where I work supports the Treasury Board Secretariat as the employer. It is responsible for workplace and workforce policies, and terms and conditions of employment. It provides institutions with data, information, and advice on a range of HR-related issues. The work we do assists federal organizations to fulfill their responsibility for HR management, including recruitment and retention.

• (1745)

[Translation]

The Public Service Commission of Canada plays two major roles. One is the role of oversight to ensure the integrity of the hiring process. The other consists of providing a range of recruitment and assessment services to organizations.

Finally, the Canada School of Public Service has a full suite of learning and development programs, including orientation training for new recruits and other courses that incorporate information on employment equity.

A number of policy instruments also help reduce barriers and support the full participation of all groups in the workplace. These include the employment equity policy, the policy on the duty to accommodate persons with disabilities in the federal public service, and the policy on harassment prevention and resolution.

As part of our accommodation strategy, we also offer employees quiet rooms, which may be used for prayer.

All four employment equity designated groups, meaning women, aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities, continue to exceed their workforce availability for the public service as a whole for the fourth year in a row. However, more remains to be done to reflect the people we serve and to strengthen a culture of diversity and inclusion. To that end, we have certain initiatives under way.

[English]

This past summer, 99 students, including 19 from outside of the national capital region, and 20 departments and agencies participated in the indigenous youth summer employment opportunity. Developed through a partnership established last year with the Assembly of First Nations, the program places indigenous, post-secondary students from across the country in meaningful summer jobs in a variety of departments and agencies. Through the youth with disabilities summer employment opportunity, 18 students who self-identified as having a disability were hired by seven departments.

In April 2017, the office of the chief human resources officer released tools that highlight best practices and guidance related to the onboarding experience. These tools, developed with the Canada School of Public Service and 12 departments and agencies, aim to help make the deputy minister's student pledge a reality and to reflect the government's commitment to improve how we recruit, onboard, and develop our student workforce.

More than 13,000 students were hired this summer across Canada by the public service. All of these students were invited to complete a new student exit survey. The analysis of the survey will be used to improve the experience for students in the future.

We are also partnering with LiveWorkPlay, a Canadian charitable organization that, among other things, connects people with intellectual disabilities with work. LiveWorkPlay has 18 successful pilot projects in eight public service organizations.

[Translation]

The Treasury Board Secretariat also supports deputy head champions who help advance specific priorities for the employment equity groups.

[English]

These deputies lead the work of departmental champions and chairs. Their work includes identifying barriers and priorities for action, education and awareness, and sharing their best practices. They are at the various stages of developing recommendations and action plans to support employment equity objectives.

When we looked at the challenges faced by each of the designated groups, there are some clear overarching themes, such as inclusiveness, engagement, respect, and particular opportunity for development and advancement.

[Translation]

We acknowledge that we have low representation in the executive category among three of the designated groups. These groups are women, aboriginal people and members of visible minorities.

Our executive leadership development programs optimize diversity and accelerate the development of high-potential leaders within the executive ranks. Diversity is leveraged to every extent possible when selecting cohort participants.

[English]

Last November, the President of the Treasury Board announced the creation of a joint task force to bring together both government and union representatives to explore new ways to strengthen diversity and inclusion in the public service. The task force mandate goes beyond employment equity to focus on how we can build a more diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace. The task force has consulted with employees and stakeholders across the public service. A progress update was issued in June 2017. The final report with specific recommendations for diversity and inclusion is expected to be released this fall.

• (1750)

[Translation]

One approach we're taking to reduce barriers to hiring minority and economically disadvantaged groups is to implement a new name-blind recruitment strategy. We've been working with the Public Service Commission of Canada on this pilot, which will provide insight on the effect of name-blind recruitment in the federal public service context.

The pilot will compare outcomes associated with the traditional screening of job applicants versus screening in which managers are blinded to the applicant's name. The pilot will involve external selection processes from 16 participating departments. The pilot's final report will be released by the Public Service Commission of Canada at the end of 2017.

[English]

I know time is limited, so I'll stop there and allow for questions.

The Chair: You actually have about three more minutes, but thank you anyway, Mr. Trotter.

We will begin the questions. This is a seven-minute round.

Ms. Dabrusin begins for the Liberals.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): First of all, I'd like to thank all of you for your presentations. That was a really wonderful global start, and there was a lot of information for us to pull from.

My first question is directed to Ms. Aitken. I don't need the answer verbally right now, but it's a request for you to provide to us in writing a breakdown over the past 15 years—why don't we bring it back to 2000—of the funding that has been provided to multiculturalism in the heritage department, and a breakdown of the programs for which the funding was provided.

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: As I am sure you know, the program was recently welcomed back into Canadian Heritage after having been at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada since 2009 or 2010, I believe. That will require some coordination between the two departments, so I appreciate your request being in writing. Also, I think it could be quite an extensive response.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Actually, I will stay with you. Most of my questions right now are going to be about hate crimes data, because that forms part of this study. In some earlier questions, we talked about unified standards or a unified definition for hate crimes. I believe that, in your opening comments, you talked about the multiculturalism program supporting a nationally standardized data collection strategy on hate-motivated crime. I want to ask you a bit about that.

First, which department runs that strategy?

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: It's run by Statistics Canada. Although Canadian Heritage supports the initiative, it's really Statistics Canada. What they collect is police-reported hate crimes. They collect information from municipal and provincial police forces, as well as from the RCMP.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: When was the last report generated through this?

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: The last report that was published applies to the year 2015, but it was published earlier this year.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: For this strategy, is there a unified definition that is now being used for hate-motivated crimes?

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: If you look at the publications from Statistics Canada, you'll see that they describe what they mean by "hate crimes" in terms of the statistics they collect:

Hate crimes refer to criminal offences motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor, such as profession or political beliefs.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I did look at the StatsCan surveys, but I wasn't sure the police reporting up to StatsCan were all using the same definition. That was the part I didn't have an answer to.

• (1755)

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: Other than the StatsCan definition, possibly my colleague from the RCMP could provide you with some further information about what the police do.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I'll go straight to you, if I may. How does the RCMP define hate crimes when it is collecting data?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Basically, the way it works is that we have what we call UCR codes that are utilized, which are based on StatsCan, and they provide us with the definitions by which we report on those statistics.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: When you collect the data internally, do you collect it using that definition?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Yes, we do.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: In your statement, you referred to an increase in reported hate crimes. From 2014 to 2015, there was an increase. Has there been any study to determine whether that is because more hate crimes were reported, or whether it reflects a greater incidence of hate crimes?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: No, I am not aware of any studies that were conducted to analyze that trend at all.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: So it's not clear whether it is one or the other.

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Exactly.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: The other question I have is about intersectionality. I have a question for Ms. Aitken as well, but you might be able to tell me from the RCMP side. If there is a hate-motivated crime against a person who has two different minority situations—for example, somebody who is part of the LGBTQ2 community, but who is also a person of colour—how is it tracked? Is it tracked collecting both possible bases for the hate crime?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: That's a very good question. I couldn't answer as to how that would be reported, because it would be left up to the police officer who is responding to the event, depending on what he scores on his report. It could be either way, but I would be venturing into unknown territory to say that it's either/or or both.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Would you be able to perhaps provide me with any policies you have that direct officers on how to record that?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Yes, I could look into that.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Okay.

[Translation]

Mr. Moisan, do you have anything to add?

Mr. Jérôme Moisan (Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Research Branch, Department of Canadian Heritage): Some colleagues from Statistics Canada work directly with the police forces and give them training. They're surely aware of the distinctions they must make, and they give tools to the police forces to that effect.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Okay.

Mr. Jérôme Moisan: I would urge the committee to invite them

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I have only 30 seconds left and I have one more question.

[English]

My last question is for you, Ms. Banerjee. You referred to "The Future of Right-Wing Terrorism in Canada". Do you think it would be helpful, when collecting hate crime data, to also be collecting data on who the suspects are or the people who are found to be committing these crimes?

Ms. Ritu Banerjee: To be honest, again, this is probably something for which StatsCan can provide further guidance in terms of what information police are reporting out. They do provide some information on the context of each particular case. I'm not sure from our perspective, when we're assessing threats, or when the security intelligence community is assessing threats, how that necessarily links back to it. We're looking at global threats in particular.

From our perspective, we take advice from the security intelligence community in terms of what's a priority. We'll respond from a global policy perspective to make sure that programs and research are looking at all types of threats.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Banerjee.

I will now go to David Anderson from the Conservatives, for seven minutes.

Mr. David Anderson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank our guests for being here with us today.

Deputy Commissioner, I'd just like to talk to you a little about and follow up on Ms. Dabrusin's questions. Do you think there's any need, or any desire or interest, for us to reduce the protection for faith communities across Canada right now? I read that one third of the reported hate crimes in Canada are motivated by hatred of a religion. Would you suggest that this would be a good time to reduce the protections that faith communities have?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Again, we look at criminal activities in and around those religious sites or communities. We will work with whatever law exists in order to make sure they're safe. We do work with them on a regular basis around threat assessments.

It's not necessarily just enshrined in law. It's also enshrined in the work and the relationship we have with these communities, trying to enable them to raise their awareness around security threats that may exist. Some of the police forces of jurisdictions will even provide guidance to them around how to better protect themselves.

• (1800)

Mr. David Anderson: We have Criminal Code provisions right now that prohibit interference with clergy when they're performing their functions as clergy. They prohibit assault or interference with clergymen who are going to or are performing a religious ceremony, prohibit disrupting religious gatherings or worship, and prohibit disturbing or disrupting worship services. Do you think those are good provisions to have in place to protect faith communities in Canada?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Again, that's not for me to decide. It would be for the government to decide what type of laws they want us to uphold.

Mr. David Anderson: Okay, well, I can see what you're doing here, because this is actually something the government has said they're going to be removing from the Criminal Code. Bill C-51 takes out those four provisions. Do you see any reason at this time why we would be removing those protections from faith communities?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Not that I see. Not that I'm aware of.

Mr. David Anderson: You're not going to comment on that.

Can you take us through your response to an incident? Let's say something happens at a synagogue or a mosque. How do you deal with that? What is the procedure or protocol for the RCMP in dealing with that?

Again, following up on Ms. Dabrusin's comments, at what point would that then be declared a hate crime?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: From our perspective, when a call comes in, police officers are dispatched to the site. We'll conduct interviews of individuals—the victims, the people who might have noticed or who can provide us with information around the related crime—and if a suspect is identified, we'll follow where the evidence leads us.

Then, when we're looking at hate crimes, based on a definition by Stats Canada, that will be the trigger for us to then report it as a hate crime or not. This is based on the information we've collected from the witnesses, from the victims, and even from the suspect or suspects. When it comes to ideology and understanding why a crime was committed, sometimes it's the information that was collected from the suspect.

Mr. David Anderson: Does that typically appear, then, when you charge, or is it ahead of time? I'm just wondering at what point you declare this to be a hate crime. Is it when the charges are laid?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Not necessarily. Some investigations may lead to no charges, yet it can still be, not a hate crime, but hatred in nature. If we're unable to prove all the elements of the offence, we won't be able to lay charges. It doesn't prevent us, though, from indicating that the incident was based on hatred.

Mr. David Anderson: You mentioned terrorism, as well, in your report. At what point would you say that this is maybe a hate crime but it's also a terrorism incident?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: That's a very good question. For us, it's really the intent behind the actions. First of all, it has to be driven by ideology. It is when the intent is to try to instill fear in the broader community and not necessarily in one specific individual. When they're trying to pass a political, religious, or ideological message to a broader community, that's when we start to look at that section 83.01 part of the Criminal Code.

Mr. David Anderson: Okay.

We heard a little bit about SIP, which we put in place. Do you have any other extra support you give to religious communities or to religious institutions?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: It is not necessarily for religious communities per se. We have it for all communities where we have community engagement to basically raise awareness and help them identify pathways or other services that could help them. From a front-line policing perspective, we do community engagement on a

regular basis. In our overall operational policing activities, we have community engagement. It's not just for religious communities.

• (1805)

Mr. David Anderson: Okay. I think have about a minute left.

The Chair: You have a minute and a half.

Mr. David Anderson: Then we can have an even better discussion here.

I want to come back to Ms. Aitken's statement. You talk about Canada being among the top-ranking OECD countries on a measure of tolerance with respect to community acceptance and minority groups and migrants. We have a score of 84% compared to an OECD average of 61%, so it is considerably higher. I am just wondering if you can square the circle, because we're talking today about systemic racial discrimination and systemic religious discrimination across Canada. How do we square that circle? The whole motion is about studying these systemic issues, yet your information seems to say that Canada is doing pretty well. I don't know what the marking system is. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: I'm not sure how much I can help you with that. As I said in my remarks, there are areas of concern, such as statistics that show an increase in hate crimes, for instance, and there are positive things. There are many indications of positive things in diversity and the inclusiveness of Canadian society. The Canadian Heritage programs that contribute to that sense of belonging and pride in Canada are very important, from our department's point of view. Those facts are true as well. It's not one or the other, I guess.

Mr. David Anderson: I think my time is up, but I can keep going.

The Chair: No, you're finished. Thank you very much.

Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thanks very much, Madam Chair, and I want to thank all the officials as well for appearing before our committee.

I have many questions, so I'm going to start with the statistics, because I think they are important.

My first question is to the deputy commissioner. Based on the data you shared with us, I'm wondering how many of those incidents are prosecuted. If they are in fact prosecuted, how many of them are successful in terms of outcome, and if they are successful, what is the sentencing?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Unfortunately, I don't have that information at hand, but I could come back with a written response to that question if you want.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: I would love to have that information, because I think that would be very useful. It would be good to get that information as a year-to-year comparison so we can see how things have evolved. I understand that the data is only available up to two years ago and that there's no more current data than that.

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Yes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Okay. If we can get that data as you collect it...to also break it down in terms of what kinds of hate crimes we are talking about, so that we have a sense of it, not a general sense of hate crimes all together. For example, is it on the basis of religious discrimination and hate, and if so, which faith? That kind of information would be very useful and helpful.

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Yes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Ms. Aitken, on the government action, you listed a host of different programming and different things like that. I think Ms. Banerjee also offered some information around that as well. Is there a comprehensive approach, a government action plan, if you will, that targets systemic discrimination and religious discrimination? Is there any such plan?

For example, Canada had a five-year plan, Canada's action plan against racism. There was an evaluation on it. Then there was some promise about renewing it, and of course nothing happened. I'm wondering what has happened to that plan. Is there any work being done with respect to that? Is there any government action on a government plan on the whole to address this rising issue that we now face in Canada?

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: The action plan that you're referring to was a five-year plan, and it did sunset. It was an umbrella for a number of initiatives. There were several initiatives that were part of that plan and continue today, such as the statistics collection that we've been talking about, and several others. Diversity and inclusion is a priority of the government, and there are many initiatives. There isn't anything at the moment that's called the action plan of the Government of Canada.

Ms. Ritu Banerjee: Maybe I can just add that we are committed to developing a national strategy to counter radicalization to violence. We're hopeful that the strategy will be developed by next year. Part of us getting to the development of the strategy is an engagement process over the next few months.

• (1810)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you for that.

I think that there are two aspects that we're talking about. Counter-radicalization is really important work. There's no question about that, but the day-to-day experience, the lived experience of systemic discrimination and religious discrimination is very real. The work that you're doing on it may be within a different realm of the radicalization. I think that we need both. I hope that the government will take a look with respect to that.

It would be great for this committee to get the information on that action plan, the Canada action plan on racism, to find out what aspect of that plan is continuing in terms of programming, how much is being put towards it, what stage it is at, and which parts are not continuing. There was an evaluation done, and there is important information. Maybe we could build on that work going forward, coming out of this committee, and maybe in other realms. I wonder whether or not that's information that could be shared with this committee.

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: Yes, that is something that we could provide.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Fabulous.

I just want to build on this. I appreciate the work that's being done on collecting data. StatCan is providing some information, but we also know that there's a lot of data that is not being collected. I come across constituents all the time who share their stories with me around their lived experience of discrimination. Sometimes it's systemic discrimination and discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs. In fact, most recently I came across a young woman who told me that her employer told her that because she wears a niqab, if she wanted to get more hours of work she should not wear it. That's a lived experience. She hadn't reported it to the police or anything like that, but that's real. It has great implications in terms of economic impact for people as well.

I wonder if anybody can share with the committee—maybe not at this moment because I have less than two minutes now—your ideas and suggestions on how to collect that data, including data that's online. There's a lot of hate going on, I'm sad to say, including the stuff that goes on online. How do we track that and how do we deal with that in an effective way that brings in accountability for people who seem to think that they can just hide behind a faceless and fake name?

Maybe I'll lead with Ms. Aitken to see whether or not there are some ways in which the government can offer...or suggestions at a later time to provide us with ways of collecting data, beyond what is being reported to StatCan.

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: One point I might make there is when you talk about discrimination. All of the provinces have human rights codes and there's a Canada human rights code as well. That's one place where the information about discrimination is collected.

From a Canadian Heritage point of view, a lot of the information we try to collect is about a sense of belonging and inclusion, so I'm not sure whether we would be the right place for more data on discrimination, but I'm happy to consider it and provide what we can.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: If you can consider it, that would be very helpful.

The Chair: I'm sorry, we're gone over time now. Thank you. Perhaps on another round, Ms. Kwan.

Now I go to Mr. Breton and Mr. Vandal. You're splitting your time I understand.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll start, and then share my speaking time with my colleague Dan Vandal.

Thank you everyone for being here today to contribute to this important study.

I'm interested in the multiculturalism policy, Ms. Aitken. I live in a rural region. In my constituency, 119 nationalities are found and 40 languages are spoken. We consider this an asset. It's extraordinary that all these nationalities are found in our region.

I want to know whether the multiculturalism policy is applied differently in the regions, in comparison with the major centres. If applicable, I want to know how the policy is adapted to the reality of rural regions.

In our region, immigration has increased significantly only in the last 10 to 12 years. Things are proceeding relatively well.

That said, I have the impression that much more effort is made to raise awareness in the major cities. In rural regions, we hear much less talk about the matter.

I want to know how people outside the major centres will be informed of the multiculturalism policy and how the policy will be adapted to the regions.

• (1815)

[English]

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: The policy of multiculturalism is a policy for Canada. The programs that operate under the policy provide funding for projects and for events, and quite a number of those things that are funded are in the regions. I couldn't give you an exact breakdown right now, but they are spread out across Canada. Certainly, the programs support events and projects that would be specific to regions and to different parts of the country at different locations and so on.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton: In this case, we're talking more specifically about the inter-action program. I imagine that the locations of the events and the purposes for which the money is used are public information. I think it would be useful for the committee to be able to provide a breakdown and to compare the situation in major centres with the situation in rural regions. We would appreciate it if you could provide this information to the committee.

Since there's not enough time to provide an answer, I'll leave the floor to Mr. Vandal.

[English]

Mr. Dan Vandal: I have a question for Ritu Banerjee. How long has the community resilience fund been around?

Ms. Ritu Banerjee: Budget 2016 announced the funding, so \$35 million over five years with \$10 million ongoing. It started in 2016. The money came in at the end of 2016. Each year for the next five years it's a gradual increment for the community resilience fund.

Mr. Dan Vandal: So it's a brand new program that was brought in in 2016?

Ms. Ritu Banerjee: Yes.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Okay, I was not aware of that. That's excellent news.

Could you tell me a bit more about the community resilience fund and the communities at risk: security infrastructure fund?

Ms. Ritu Banerjee: The security infrastructure fund, or SIF, is a separate program that has been around for many years, I think four or five years, and got renewed in the last budget. That's \$2 million a year for the next five years, and that's more specific to institutions, primarily religious or educational institutions that want mechanisms

to beef up their security—surveillance, fences, perimeters. It's physical security to protect specific establishments.

The community resilience fund is different. It's really there to address issues related to radicalization and violence more broadly.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Could we get a breakdown in writing about the funding over the last four years for the communities at risk fund?

Ms. Ritu Banerjee: Yes.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Thank you.

Mr. Michaud, what does the RCMP do to build relationships with indigenous communities across Canada?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: We have different programs that exist within the indigenous communities that we serve across the country. Like I said earlier, some of it is on our day-to-day operations and engagements with the communities. We also have mentoring projects with some of the communities for the youth who may be at risk. All of our members who work in those communities are usually involved in the communities themselves outside of their work, so they will be involved as coaches and in different community events. Those are the ways that we try to build the relationship with those communities. Speaking specifically on a program that may exist nationally—I'm not in charge of the aboriginal policing program—I could ask that program if there's anything else that we're doing, if you're interested.

• (1820)

Mr. Dan Vandal: Okay. How long have those initiatives been ongoing?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: The ones that I'm referring to have been ongoing since we've been policing in those communities, but if we have a national program, I'd have to go back and check and get back to you.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Would you be able to present that to us or send that to us in writing?

D/Commr Gilles Michaud: Yes.

Mr. Dan Vandal: That would be good. Thank you.

The Chair: I'm going to take the opportunity to ask a couple of questions.

In the 1990s, Canada took intersectionality to the world stage. We talked about the various discriminations that occur because of the various components that make you a minority. I am surprised that there is no study, working with the RCMP, etc., when you have a case, to look at whether intersectionality is a big part of that. That would give us a lot of data. I'm hoping that you would start working on this. We have been using the term intersectionality in the last two years; we need to put some teeth into it and get some data. Maybe Ms. Banerjee, and Statistics Canada, and even Treasury Board, can start looking at this, because it would be able to tunnel down into the nature of systemic discrimination.

Ms. Aitken, you said that you didn't have an action plan. Ms. Kwan asked you that. I know that when I was minister for multiculturalism, we had a very active action plan. You are governed by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act per se. You're supposed to make sure that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act is carried out. Programs and projects are fine, but what are you doing in your department within Heritage Canada, under the act, to ensure that minorities, regardless of their ethnicity, race, religion, etc. are able to participate fully? The mandate of the act is to participate fully in the economic, social, political, and cultural life of the country. Is anything proactively being done to ensure that happens?

When I was the minister for multiculturalism, we worked very closely with Statistics Canada, not just to find out what they are finding out, but to actually put questions to Statistics Canada, so that they could again tunnel down to intersectionality to get at the root of it. Systemic, institutionalized racism and religious discrimination is quite often propagated by institutions, unwittingly or otherwise. When we hear people say that the RCMP, especially in certain parts of this country, pick a fight with aboriginal people, and will racialize them, as they do with certain black communities, we need to be able to find out if that is actually true and if so, how are we getting information on that.

I wonder if multiculturalism programs should be more proactive in terms of getting information and working closely with others.

By the way, I want to say, Ms. Banerjee, I love what you're doing in your sector. I think it's important.

Ms. Jenifer Aitken: I would like to go back and make sure that I wasn't unclear. With respect to the Multiculturalism Act, the program under the act certainly is active. In May of this year, the minister announced a call for proposals with a specific focus on projects that work toward eliminating racial discrimination, as well as projects for youth for community engagement and bringing people together through our culture or sport. That is the most recent call for proposals under the program. I didn't mean to suggest that we weren't doing that.

I might ask my colleague to respond to your question about working together with Statistics Canada.

The Chair: I didn't just mean projects. I think projects and programs are great, but I wanted to talk about proactively ensuring that we foster or we give marginalized communities the ability to be able to participate fully. What are the barriers they face? How can you help them with the skills and tools? That's the use I'm asking about because that was a big part of multiculturalism at one time.

• (1825)

Mr. Jérôme Moisan: We're working with a lot of the departments to raise awareness. We have champions in every department. We give them tools. What are the questions you need to ask yourself when you develop policies and programs? If you were in the minority group where issues of intersectionality matter, how should you go about your policies and programs?

Even within Canadian Heritage, dealing with diversity is not only about the multiculturalism program. We have a range of arts and culture programs that support a lot of festivals, a lot of museum exhibits, and so on that talk about full participation. The fact that we're seeing people from a range of communities on your TV screen, or on stages in theatres, is also about full participation. Within the department we're not limiting ourselves when we talk about full participation in the multiculturalism program.

As to working with Statistics Canada, we're engaging constantly with them about new tools, new ideas, things they could study. I think they have their own challenges in what can be found in a statistical study, as opposed to another type of research, to say where the real discrimination happens. There are limits to the statistical versus other types of research. That's why we also work with other academics who are looking into these issues, so we get other perspectives on the issues of discrimination. We're very active in monitoring and working with academics so we understand better what the situation is now on the ground in terms of discrimination.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Banerjee.

Ms. Ritu Banerjee: I don't have anything specific to add, other than to say that in our context, we are supporting a range of research that's more focused on the effectiveness of specific programming countering radicalization to violence. For example, we're supporting programming that's led by local law enforcement to look at at-risk youth and find different social service providers that are better placed to address the issues of that radicalized youth, rather than have them go further into the criminal justice system. So these are hub models, but we are also supporting researchers at Ryerson, for example, and the University of Alberta to study, assess, and evaluate those models to see if they're effective and they're actually working. There are three models in particular. That's our approach in terms of the data; it's looking at metrics to see what programming is affected in Canada. Again, our context is a little narrower than what multiculturalism and Canadian Heritage is looking at; what's actually working.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I want to thank everyone for coming and presenting and being engaged.

Mr. David Sweet: Madam Chair, there is still one more rotation for us.

The Chair: It is now 6:30. Mr. Anderson does not wish to see us lengthen this.

Mr. David Anderson: In the future if the chair is going to ask questions, she should take it out of the Liberals' time because Mr. Sweet just lost his opportunity to ask questions today. We're very happy to have you ask questions but it should come out of the time of the Liberal Party. They had the last 12 minutes here, and Mr. Sweet missed his opportunity to ask questions.

The Chair: The chair makes the decision on whether we think we can give everybody in a second round a chance. In this instance, only Mr. Sweet would have had a chance; nobody else would have on a second round because of the time. We spent an extra 15 minutes on the first round with Ms. Khalid and that took time out of this as well.

Mr. David Anderson: That's all fine, but the point is that the Liberal Party got the extra five minutes, Mr. Sweet did not. It wasn't

as if we didn't have the five minutes. We do not want to see this happen again.

The Chair: I have never had the chair being seen as a member of the committee in terms of questions. I don't usually ask questions, but I really wanted to get some information. We can discuss that at another time.

To everyone who is going to send written responses, please send them to the clerk so that every member of the committee can get a copy of those written responses.

Thank you so very much for coming.

The meeting is adjourned.

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