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## **Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, September 20, 2017**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Hedy Fry**



## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)):** I would like to call to order meeting 72 of the Canadian heritage committee. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are studying systemic racism and religious discrimination.

We'll begin with our first set of witnesses. They are scheduled for one hour, from 3:30 to 4:30. Mr. Tarek Fatah is the founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress, and Michel Juneau-Katsuya is the president and chief executive officer of the Northgate Group.

Gentlemen, welcome. You have 10 minutes to present. I cannot allow you to go any longer than that. Then there will be a question and answer session during which the members will ask you questions.

I shall begin with Mr. Fatah for 10 minutes. Thank you.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah (Founder, Muslim Canadian Congress):** Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen.

I'd like to talk about the issues facing us in the context of what is happening today and yesterday with regard to a Canadian city and a Canadian victim of terrorism and Islamophobia.

Yesterday at the United Nations, a Canadian refugee, Ensaf Haidar, whose husband has been imprisoned in Saudi Arabia on charges of Islamophobia and punished with 10 years in prison and a thousand lashes, spoke out at the UNHCR. *The Times* of London, of course, deemed it fit to publish this story. The Canadian newspapers obviously thought it would be Islamophobic to print anything about a victim who has been accused and jailed for being Islamophobic.

The other issue is the ongoing Montreal trial of two young jihadi terrorists, and perhaps if I were one of the neighbours, I would feel quite uneasy about people saying that Islamophobia is groundless and is merely an irrational reaction to cater to the racist inner self of essentially most mainstream white Canadians.

Listening to Iqra Khalid on Monday, I couldn't help but note that there were two words around which the discussion was centred and around which the Islamist agenda will be pursued in Canada. One was the word "expert". Invoking the word "expert" comes straight from the Islamist hymn book of the last century, dominated by such jihadis as Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb of Egypt, and Syed Maududi of the Jamaat-e-Islami in India and later in Pakistan. These three gentlemen are the Marx, Lenin,

and Trotsky of Islamofascism. Their followers are embedded in almost every urban university and school in North America, and were listed as fronts for the Muslim Brotherhood by the FBI in the Texas terror trial a few years ago.

These orthodox jihadi fanatics claim that only experts—not historians, academics, authors, and certainly not women—could understand the religion of Islam or express an opinion on a controversial matter. Thus it is such experts who defend polygamy, FGM, child marriage, taking sex slaves, and praising armed jihad.

However, the crucial issue in front of you, or in front of Canadians—the essential problem in the room, as they say—is the word "Islamophobia". The *Oxford Dictionary* defines it as "Intense dislike or fear of Islam, esp. as a political force; hostility or prejudice towards Muslims." Then there is the definition by Andrew Cummins, who once said, in a quote that is often misattributed to Christopher Hitchens, that Islamophobia is "a word created by fascists, and used by cowards, to manipulate morons". MP Iqra Khalid defines it as "an irrational fear or hatred of Muslims or Islam".

Being a Muslim, I would say that they may all be correct, given certain circumstances, but in the western world, no one—not *Oxford*, not Mr. Hitchens, and not other critics or defenders—has ever talked about the connotation of the meaning of Islamophobia. This is not the meaning; this is the connotation. Muslims who have formed an organization called, quote-unquote, "Muslims Against M103" believe that Canadian MPs are, if you'll pardon the expression, getting the wool pulled over their eyes. For example, in the Indian subcontinent, where close to half the world's Muslims live, and that's home to many Islamists who tried and failed to introduce sharia law in Ontario's family law system in 2005, the word "Islamophobia" is roughly translated as *Islam dushmani*, or being enemies of Islam. This is as opposed to *Islam pasand*, or being friends of Islam. Unless you place these two one against the other, you won't understand what is actually the connotation behind the explosive use of this word "Islamophobia".

We saw this unfold in Darfur, where black Muslims, half a million, were killed. When more than one million dark-skinned fellow Muslims were killed, the argument presented in 1971 by the Pakistanis or Bangladeshis was that the Bangla Muslims were *Islam dushmani* and Islamophobes, while the Pakistani Muslims were *Islam pasand*, or lovers of Islam.

We have seen this unfold in Darfur with the Janjaweed and in Syria with the oppressive dictatorship of Assad that was declared as an anti-Islamic by the dictators of Saudi Arabia who were considered friends of Islam. Half a million have died so far in the jihad against Islamophobes by Saudis and Qatari friends of Islam. We Muslims who oppose Islamists feel the label “Islamophobia” has been introduced to target us under the M-103 process. The primary purpose is to drown out our voices when we denounce polygamy, female genital mutilation, child marriage, honour killings, armed jihad, racial discrimination which is pervasive wherever Islamophobia is banned, and above all, the burqa, which has nothing to do with Islam but is one straightforward smack in the face of anything that feminists have struggled over for the last 200 years.

We who fled the Islamic world to escape the tyranny of falsely being called Islamophobes and make Canada home now find that enemies have hunted us down, as gullible and well-meaning non-Muslim MPs I would say get the wool pulled over their eyes.

The sad irony of the Islamists' claim of Islamophobia is they and other Muslims who mock Christians and Jews daily. When we read the opening words of the Quran that is the Surah Al-Fatiha five times a day, a minimum of 20 times a day, anyone who prays is mocking Christians and Jews. The same people are coming around to say that there is a lot of Islamophobia in Canada. Surah Al-Fatiha is the Muslim equivalent to the Lord's Prayer in Christianity, where we ask Allah to put us on the right path, not on the path of those who have incurred your wrath, the Jews, or those who have gone astray, the Christians.

If anyone is interested, I have two translations of the Quran with me, where I can produce it, because you will ask this question to the experts who will come here, who will deny flatly to your face that it exists. But it does. This is done every day, five times a day, in 500 mosques around this country. For the Hindus and the Sikhs and the atheists, if they think they got away and they are not cursed, every Friday congregation starts with a prayer that says “Oh, Allah, give victory to Muslims over the 'Qawm al-Kafirun'”, which is the Kufir, which is all of you.

My question for you, ladies and gentlemen, is this. Will the heritage committee declare that any religious prayer asking for Muslim victory over other religions is hateful and thus criminal? If Islamophobia is ever declared a criminal offence in Canada, all of you will have done the tremendous disservice to the 400-year heritage of our country, that of western civilization, which is rooted in the sacrifice back in the 16th century of Martin Luther who stood up against the papacy and its indulgences and ended up excommunicated. If you recognize the role of Martin Luther and the Reformation and the Age of Enlightenment, then how on earth could you take away the right of Muslims to stand up to their own popes who masquerade as experts?

I hope you do realize if you include the words “denounce Islamophobia” in your final proposals, you will infringe on the inalienable right of a Muslim Canadian to critique our religion, which has been a rich tradition that has been stifled by mullahs, kings, and caliphs, by so far, murdering us, beheading us, and by invoking the laws to punish Islamophobia according to sharia-sanctioned beheadings as in the case of the Canadian woman who spoke yesterday at a United—

• (1540)

**The Chair:** One minute, you have one minute.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Pardon? Yes.

Your recommendations should recognize the right of a Muslim to publicly challenge what is rotten in Islamdom and to fight authority in the tradition of Martin Luther and Erasmus and before them, like the 10th century Persian Muslim saint, Mansur Al-Hallaj who was beheaded in Baghdad on charges of Islamophobia by mullahs of that time. The day you criminalize Islamophobia, let me assure you, I will publicly defy that law, mock it, and happily be arrested [*Inaudible—Editor*] in the best traditions of my leader, Mahatma Gandhi.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fatah.

Now we will go to Mr. Juneau-Katsuya, for 10 minutes please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya (President and Chief Executive Officer, The Northgate Group Corp.):** Thank you, Ms. Fry.

[*English*]

Distinguished members of the committee, my introduction will be mainly in French for the sake of functioning a little bit faster. As you can see, I have a sexy French accent. It will probably be a little faster this way.

[*Translation*]

I would like to take this opportunity today to talk specifically about one aspect of the topic under consideration: the rise of the right in Canada and the social damage it could cause to our society.

I acknowledge first of all that racism is not limited to one category of individuals. It has existed from time immemorial and the constant attention of civil society is needed to keep it in check. It has been present in nearly all cultures since the beginning of time. I condemn all forms of extremism, whether on the right, on the left, religious or ideological.

My comments today, however, will focus on the rise of the right which, to my mind and for very objective reasons, represents a greater threat than radical Islam, even though that threat has unfortunately already killed people and will continue to do so for some time.

The rise of the right is a greater threat because it creeps into the thoughts of our fellow citizens so much so that it distorts reality and eventually, over time, withstands dispassionate and measured debate. If left unchecked, this movement will take root so firmly that it will certainly take decades of constant efforts to stamp it out and return to a social climate that provides a safe environment for everyone. I would go even further: the rise of the right has already created victims and we are not far from seeing a form of domestic terrorism that is even worse than the one threatening us currently.

My research and professional experience have shown me that the extreme right, or the alternative right, as some people call it, is not uniform across Canada. There is a wide range of political actions and discourse across the country. I do not have the time to get into all the details, but let me say in general that the discourse of the English-speaking extreme right in western Canada is much closer to that of neo-Nazis and so-called conventional white supremacists than what we see in Quebec among the identity-based right. This can be attributed in part to language, since anglophones have much more contact with American neo-Nazi groups, and to the historical and cultural development of the groups in question.

In the 1990s, when I was still with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, my group and I were tasked with analyzing extreme right threats in Canada. We observed, among other things, the rise of the right in Europe. Specialized studies pointed to insecurity as a crucial factor contributing to the rise of the radical right. Insecurity is also a very important factor in my presentation. If not properly addressed by civilian leaders, this insecurity gives ardent supporters of the right a way to tap into all levels of society, especially the most vulnerable. In fact, the most vulnerable individuals are often people who feel insecure. The discourse of the right is often demagogic and riddled with lies that stir up insecurity and fear. The rise of populist discourse and the era of fake news and “alternative facts” have contributed a great deal to that insecurity taking root.

This is decisive for the future. The issue is identifying the predominant discourse that is accepted by the public. Right now, the picture is very sad. Since the alt-right discourse has not been neutralized by counter-discourse from our political leaders, it has taken root and become dangerous, precisely because some people now consider it socially tolerable if not acceptable. This becomes particularly dangerous when the insidious discourse that it conveys relies on fear-based arguments to make people believe that there is a legitimate purpose, namely, to protect their interests. That is the mask that the right cheerfully uses, despite there being no factual basis.

I deplore the current lack of leadership and concrete measures by our political leaders, from all parties and orders of government, to offer a counter-discourse to the allegations and outright lies perpetuated by agitators on the right.

While respecting the right to free speech, perhaps it is time to examine the degree of acceptability of the aberrations of certain opinion leaders or agitators. Canada's great tolerance has perhaps become our Achilles heel. We can count on the fingers of one hand the measures that prosecutors have taken to enforce the law when extremists have used extreme language. That extreme language is repeated in all kinds of public platforms, by political leaders or groups who, in a rather opportunistic way, use the situation to try to win a few votes and do not hesitate to provoke insecurity and indignation among certain citizens.

I will conclude by talking about the presence of these insidious messages in the public sphere. It has apparently become an simple way to express views, whether through social media or the more conventional media. I am talking about agitators of all kinds who, in the name of criticism and the right to spread their opinion, feed into discourse that fuels insecurity. It is especially deplorable and

troubling that we are still dealing with this phenomenon, which is growing in the public sphere.

This phenomenon must be broadly denounced by companies, professional monitoring and accreditation associations, as well as members of the public and anyone on the Internet. We must also hold to account those who have more direct access to the public. It is generalized inaction that could have serious consequences right across the country. In spite of the denouncements, vicious, hateful and even false messages keep being repeated, and the public ends up believing them. Consider for example that the police now estimate that, in Quebec alone, there are between 50,000 and 55,000 people who belong to or support the identity-based right. There are more than 15 known groups that publicly assert that they are part of the identity-based right. One of these groups, which wants to acquire weapons and do military training, was recently denounced when it was reported on in the media. What objective do these people have? That is the question.

The day after the killings in Quebec City on January 29, 2017, the director of the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence clearly stated in an interview on the TVA network that their offices in Montreal had received over 600 calls in the previous nine months, that 20% of them were from the greater Quebec City area, and that they were almost all related to problems involving the extreme right.

Do we need more statistics or another killing before we take action?

In short, our society has far too many years been troubled by various major issues. Finding scapegoats is convenient and almost instinctive when there is widespread insecurity. History has taught us lessons about the danger of the rise of all forms of extremism. Let us review these lessons because history has unfortunately started to repeat itself and time is starting to run out.

● (1550)

[English]

**The Chair:** That was two minutes short of your time. Thank you so much.

Now we'll begin with the rounds of questions and answers. The first round is going to be a seven-minute segment.

I would like everybody to be as tight as they can in making their points and in responding.

We will begin with Mr. Darrell Samson from the Liberals for seven minutes.

[Translation]

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

Both presentations were very interesting.

I would, of course, like to ask Mr. Juneau-Katsuya a few questions.

You have a tremendous amount of experience in this area so your presentation today was most informative. You talked about your past experience and your views, and shared your expertise, which is the most valuable. That is what I would like to know more about.

Based on your experience, can you tell us how you see the current climate in Quebec in this regard?

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** It is very volatile and very dangerous. In Quebec, the climate is becoming increasingly acrimonious because the identity-based right has been able to gain a certain legitimacy. The ideas that are repeated and very cheerfully covered by the media readily reach the ears of the average person. I would even say that the problem begins when—and this has already happened—good and normal Canadians start to say that those people are not completely wrong and that they like what they are saying. There is a certain contamination now and an erosion of Canadians' values and spirit. We are unfortunately very close to the day when, in these identity-based groups, in Quebec in particular, certain more extreme and more fiery members will feel that things are not moving fast enough and will decide to take up arms or commit acts such as those committed at the mosque.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** If that is the situation now, what set all of this in motion? In the past 30, 40 or 50 years, something has been uprooted. Can you give us a quick description of the situation today?

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** It is insecurity. As I touched on in my presentation, the element of insecurity is probably at the crux of the analysis.

For many years, Canada has welcomed immigrants. Canada has been very generous in welcoming many people. Unfortunately, certain critics of the role of immigrants and the impact of immigrants on Canadian society were not appropriate. Over time, this filled the public with resentment and made them unhappy.

After the events of September 11, 2001, fear became widespread and the media hammered away at a certain community, and I stress the words “a certain community”. Let us look at the facts.

If I asked you how many attacks or explosions radical Islam has perpetrated in Canada since September 11, 2001, the answer would be zero. If I rephrased the question, however, and asked how many explosions or bombings extremists have perpetrated since September 11, 2001, the answer would be more than thirty. In fact, four of those acts were in Quebec, one in Ontario, and the rest in Alberta or British Columbia. These acts were all committed by politically motivated extremists, whether they are anti-establishment, anti-G7, anti-G20, anti-Parti Québécois, anti-American or radical environmentalists.

Why are we not talking about radical environmentalists? Unfortunately, exaggerated media coverage has distorted reality to some extent, which the identity-based right capitalizes on in the way it does things.

• (1555)

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you for your remarks.

Since I have one minute left, I will ask you another question.

[English]

**The Chair:** It's three minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Oh, okay.

You have clearly described the path it has taken, so now we can think of the next steps.

In your expert opinion, what steps or possible solutions should we consider to move in that direction?

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** The first thing is the discourse of our political leaders. Regardless of their party or order of government, their discourse must be firm, reassuring, and supported by the facts. For too long, people have simply denounced the radicalization process. Why is it that it took a municipal government, the city of Montreal, to open the first and only de-radicalization centre that exists in Canada right now when we have been talking about this for more than a decade?

Secondly, the people who notice that a young person is becoming radicalized— whether it be right-wing, left-wing, religious or ideological radicalism—need resources. The police cannot help at that stage because their role is to conduct investigations in order to stop dangerous people and bring them to court. Similarly, the police are not social workers or psychologists. Parents, educators, teachers or friends who have noticed something must be able to consult specialists with the necessary knowledge. That could be via a toll-free phone line or at decentralized centres. Those specialists will be able to help and guide them and perhaps encourage them to go to the police.

These two elements must be considered. First, we need a counter-discourse to neutralize the right-wing discourse. Secondly, access is needed as soon as possible to people who can help us de-radicalize people who might be in the process of becoming radicalized.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** You have 45 seconds. Did you wish to direct your question to anybody else?

[Translation]

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** What can we do at the school level? Maybe we should look at developing a strategy for primary schools. The sooner the better, of course.

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** I think the school programs should include exercises and work that help to bring people together.

What I'm going to say may leave me open to criticism. At this time, certain provinces have separated public schools from religious schools. For example, here in Ontario, there are Catholic school boards. Schools of this denomination tend to have a certain ethnic grouping, whereas public schools are multicultural.

•(1600)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Juneau-Katsuya. I'm so sorry.

We'll move now to the Conservatives. David Anderson, for seven minutes, please.

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Chair, I'm going to share my time with Mr. Reid, so we will have a chance for a couple of us to ask questions here.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here. Mr. Fatah, we started with one definition from our last witness and went to two definitions last meeting. We've gone to about four or five definitions now of Islamophobia, words used popularly. I'm wondering, as a committee, do we need to arrive at a concrete definition of this term or is that pretty much impossible? Is it something we should not be spending our time on?

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Well, it's impossible, because the moment you start to speak the truth, you will be called a racist. It's a dead end. You have to admit that a vast majority of this population are simply terrified at addressing any issue. Here I am telling you that 500 mosques 20 times a day are ridiculing Jews and Christians and those mullahs come in to tell you that there is Islamophobia. I dare anyone to come up and ask, not do anything, but ask that you take away the charitable status of a mosque in which hatred toward Jews and Christians is pervasive. If it comes to Hindus, you won't even know the language of what is uttered about the Buddhists or the Hindus. And atheists, my God. I'm astounded at what goes on. I have recorded things. I've gone to 50 mosques and I have everything on tape of what is said. Even when hatred toward non-Muslims comes up, in Quebec in many mosques, you know that. In Toronto, downtown mosques, organizations like ISNA and ICNA identify as fronts of the Muslim Brotherhood. We are no longer in the era of Ed Broadbent or Jean Chrétien, where people could say what they wanted to. We've descended into ethnic vote-bank politics.

You wondered how I got about 6,000 votes in Regent Park. How am I going to say four-year-old girls should be wrapped in cloth? The two gangs in Regent Park, the two murders that took place yesterday, one is the Hael gang and the other is the Klein gang. We have Somali female gangs in Ajax.

I'm saying our MPs are held back, and our MPPs as well.

We don't have a Fatima, who is not prepared anymore.

You cannot define it, because the word is a fraud.

**Mr. David Anderson:** On the other side of the equation, we have numerous attacks on faith communities across Canada. We've talked about this—

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Absolutely.

**Mr. David Anderson:** —about these levels of attacks. What do you suggest? How do we address that?

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Here's the—

**Mr. David Anderson:** It's a reality, so how do we address it?

**The Chair:** Mr. Fatah, you have to allow Mr. Anderson to finish his question, please. Thank you.

**Mr. David Anderson:** No, that's fine.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** You address issues of bigotry against Muslims or Jews or Hindus or the aboriginal. You embrace the ideas of W.E. B. Du Bois in fighting racism. You cannot apply that to ideas and say that because there is bigotry toward Muslims, and I have witnessed that, and even now bar anyone from discussing the ideology that created hatred toward it.

Would you blame anyone in Montreal today who is following the terror trial that is going on there? Any ordinary citizen, non-political person, is asking questions of me or coming over and asking what's gone wrong with you guys. I'm a Muslim, I know that. I've studied more and written about this. It is the apolitical ideology of Islamism that has to be addressed. Not a single Iman today has been asked to denounce the doctrine of armed jihad. All you ask of him is to denounce terrorism. Of course he will. You ask him, "Do you denounce the action of armed jihad which has been going on for a thousand years, which emptied Egypt of every Fatimite and dispersed them to Yemen, India, and central Asia?" We're talking about the Ismailis in the Dawoodi Bohras. We don't know about it.

They're killing Syrians. Why? Because Saudi Arabia says they're non-Muslims. Where is this ideology coming from? ISNA, ICNA, MSA, all identified by all our security agencies as fronts for the Muslim Brotherhood. Hatred toward Shias, hatred toward Ahmadiyyas, hatred toward black people, so Islamophobia is not to be tolerated. If it was Muslimophobia, then I would say, halleluja, let's get along.

What Irwin Cotler said of anti-Muslim bigotry, that is the question we should be debating.

•(1605)

**Mr. David Anderson:** I need to stop you so Mr. Reid can have his time.

**The Chair:** I believe you have two minutes.

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

I'd like to pursue the direction you were taking. The issue we saw in the Quebec City shootings, the murders this January was, whatever the ideological manifestation may have been—we still don't know all the details of what was going on in the mind of the murderer—it manifested itself as anti-Muslim hatred.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Yes.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Anti-Muslim activity is a legitimate thing to go after.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Absolutely, I agree.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Part of the point I think you're trying to make is that if we avoid the word "Islamophobia" and emphasize the need to attack or prevent anti-Muslim bigotry and hatred and actions based on it then that would be a good public policy.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** That would be practical policy strictly in how Irwin Cotler labelled it. How to address it? Parliament is being manipulated by some very smart people.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** While I do not accept that most Canadians are bigoted in this respect or any other—I just don't think that's the nature of our people—there is clearly some, we don't know how much, anti-Muslim activity that may spring up spontaneously; it may be organized. To focus on trying to crack down on that kind of activity is a legitimate act. Do you agree?

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** All right.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** I'll give you just one reason why Canada has the lowest—

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds, Mr. Fatah.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** —hatred against Muslims compared to the United Kingdom and the United States: Canada is the only country where Muslims took up the fight against sharia law in 2005. We said we would oppose it. We fulfilled the appetite of people saying Muslims are good people and they stand up for Canadian values.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fatah.

We now go to Ms. Kwan from the NDP for seven minutes.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** I thank our witnesses for their presentations.

Mr. Juneau-Katsuya, you said something on the issue that I think is really critical and that is the issue around how people are playing on our insecurity and fears. One of the issues that is happening right now I worry about: this motion in itself. There are people out there who are playing on this insecurity and fear, and they're fanning more fear and hate with this motion. That of course is not the premise of why we're here. We need to get a handle on that.

You also mentioned another important issue, that there is a vacuum of leadership in trying to counter the alt-right and fake news. I'd like to seek your advice for this committee on what specific actions you think we need to take as parliamentarians, as leaders in our own community, to address this very dangerous situation you identified that is very much emerging and being normalized, especially with people across the United States and with the U.S. President himself.

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** I think Canada is an excellent example of multiculturalism and the ability of different cultures, different religions, different people to come together and live together. We probably have every ethnic group under the sun right here in Canada, represented one way or the other.

The challenge we're currently facing is the lack of motivation for someone to speak out when it's time to speak out. It took the event in Quebec City on January 29 to get the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of Quebec, and the Mayor of Quebec City to finally come out and say that we have to be careful what we say. I use the example of Quebec because we had a very dramatic event that took place there. The lives of six families over there have been changed for the rest of their lives. This area is partly targeted by what we call trash radio. There is a lot of trash-talk taking place by people who feel empowered on air to say whatever they want. This has been going on since the mid-1990s.

We have institutions in Canada like the CRTC that issue licences for those radio stations. There have been a multitude of complaints

and many times the radio hosts and stations have been seen as guilty, if I may use that word, of bigotry, racism, Islamophobia, sexism, and even encouraging violence against certain groups. Why are we waiting to take the licences away from these guys? It's one action that could be done. Coming back to the responsibilities that political leaders and individual Canadians have, we have to speak out when somebody around the dinner table says something inappropriate. We have to tell them that they ought to rethink what they said, that if they really believe this, they have a problem and we need to talk about it. The lack of debate and discussion gives an opportunity for the right wing to fill up a discourse that wasn't there before. We have to explain better why we should receive refugees. We do need to receive the refugees, and this brings us back to a bigger problem: how come the situation in the Middle East got so bad that we are now forced to take these refugees?

When I was with CSIS in the early 1990s, I tried to warn people about exactly what we are living through today, and unfortunately that report was shelved. There is a lack of action and a lack of political backbone. We need to make decisions that are sometimes difficult, but we definitely need to state what Canadian values are about. To come back to what I was just saying, I believe we have the necessary laws and regulations in place. We just need to enforce them when people are going too far in their discourses.

• (1610)

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** We mentioned there was a report. I'm a new MP around this table, and I wonder whether you can share that report with the committee through the chair. It would be good to see what ideas you had back then and to see its classification.

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** It's classified and it's still with CSIS. I don't have access to it. They probably threw it out by now.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I see. I didn't realize it was a classified document.

Let's talk about action. You also mentioned that the Quebec municipal government in Montreal has the only deradicalization school in the country. The government talks about coming forward with a program on deradicalization. Can you give me the top three recommendations you think the government should act on?

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** Definitely decentralize as much as possible, bring in experts to explain what is currently happening in Canada and to talk about best practices, and make professional resources available to the general public so they can privately call and seek expert advice on how to proceed with young persons who are changing their behaviour and maybe radicalizing themselves.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** This I gather should be a national strategy, right?

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** Correct.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** It should be for communities across the country, not just in Quebec, and it should contain the approaches and resources necessary to get the job done.

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** Absolutely, but we need to work on two fronts. We need to have a consistent message across the country. We need to work within the community and to find capable leaders. We need Imams who understand. We currently have a problem. We have people who went to Syria and are starting to come back to Canada. They witnessed fighting, and they might have been trained. They might even still have the idea of hurting us. If an Imam discovered somebody like this, would the Imam be prepared to tackle the issue of deradicalization? I don't think so. We need to speak to more of these people, to work closer with the community. We need to work on two levels: a cross-Canada program, but decentralized and brought to the ground level as much as possible.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Juneau-Katsuya.

We are now going to Ms. Dhillon from the Liberals for seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Thank you for being here today.

Mrs. Chair, I'll share my speaking time with Mr. Virani.

My questions are for Mr. Juneau-Katsuya. Has there been an increase in violence and hate toward Muslims in Canada, and especially in Quebec?

•(1615)

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** Yes. There has been an increase in Quebec and in Canada. The statistics are clear in this regard. Obviously, the spikes have been more significant when attacks have occurred.

Discontent and insecurity are starting to become prevalent and omnipresent in all classes of society. They emerge at various levels, such as when a person insults a woman who is wearing a head scarf, writes graffiti on walls, or worse, launches an attack like the one in Quebec City.

I've been working in investigations for 40 years. I'm an experienced investigator. I find it absurd that the Quebec City police haven't yet been able to control the security issue surrounding the mosque. A few weeks ago, we heard about the torching of the Quebec City mosque president's car. The mosque has been targeted for years. Why have the Quebec City police not yet been able to make a single arrest?

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** What are the reasons for this?

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** We need to start asking ourselves questions. Without saying that it's the answer, I think we could start asking ourselves questions about the systemic racism in our society. There's also the fact that this matter doesn't necessarily interest the police.

When a mayor doesn't even acknowledge that the attack in Quebec City was terrorism, there's a problem. When the director of the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence in Montreal clearly states that Quebec is the second location in Canada from where he receives the most calls about radicalization, but the mayor says he doesn't need an office for the centre in his city, there's a problem.

It's a bit like a shameful family secret. There's something we don't want to say or admit. As long as we can forget about it or slip it under the rug, we act as though it doesn't exist. Unfortunately, this phenomenon exists and the evidence is bloody.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** In recent years, has racial profiling by airport authorities or police forces increased? I'm talking about the procedure that enables the authorities to stop and frisk people.

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** Racial profiling is always a very sensitive issue for investigators.

The investigators use indicators. I'll provide a completely different example. I'm working on a drug case and I must catch drug smugglers. Obviously, some countries are more likely than others to export drugs. Can I be accused of racial profiling because I pay more attention to a plane arriving from Jamaica than a plane arriving from Japan? We need to pay attention to this type of view, since the investigators clearly have a job to do.

We must ask ourselves whether a certain racial behaviour has been established in the system in general. I'll go back to the insecurity factor I referred to earlier. This insecurity is increasingly omnipresent and is maintained in part by media coverage and in part by the rise of the right. Therefore, I imagine that, in the collective unconscious, there's a certain reticence to welcome people who are perceived as belonging to another culture or religion.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** Unfortunately, it's the reality. We're walking down the street and we can be stopped because we're displaying "suspicious" behaviour. This can also raise people's level of insecurity.

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** Absolutely. I don't want to minimize the challenge faced by the different communities, in particular the Muslim communities or the Central Asian communities.

When I started working here in Ottawa, I participated in a meeting in which there were a number of anglophones. I was told to "speak white" because I was speaking in French to a colleague who was also francophone. It's omnipresent and it's part of human nature. The issue at stake is the way civil society reacts to all this.

•(1620)

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** I'll now let Mr. Virani ask questions.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** I have a question for Mr. Fatah.

I listened to your interventions very attentively. Part of your intervention seems to be about the whole generation of motion M-103 and how it was an ill-conceived idea to even embark upon the study, particularly the study of Islamophobia.

One of the critiques we heard at length in Parliament at the time of the passage of the motion, and the critique that I think you're echoing today, is how it somehow stifles people's legitimate criticism about the tenets of their religion.

While I would admit that I disagree with virtually everything you've said in your opening discourse and response to questions, I defend your right to say it. That's something that's protected under our Constitution, under section 2(b), which I've litigated as a constitutional lawyer.

I have a simple question. Isn't your presence here today proof in and of itself that we are embarking upon a study that is promoting discussion about all forms of racism and discrimination, including Islamophobia, as opposed to stifling it?

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Your diatribe against me itself proves that had it not been for the Conservatives, I would not have been here, and any attempt to talk to any Liberal at this stage, where the national director of the party has his own leanings, the national spokesperson has his own, the citizenship minister has his own agenda....

We know very well we didn't come into politics yesterday for any reason. Someone like me has spent 45 years fighting Islamism, and you should know that very well.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fatah, direct your responses through the chair, please, and not directly to Mr. Virani.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** I shouldn't look at him. Is that what you're saying?

**The Chair:** You can look at him, but make sure you speak through the chair. Don't say "you" when you're speaking to him.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Is that the issue here?

**The Chair:** Yes, you have to come through the chair for questions and answers—

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** I understand. Okay, fair enough.

**The Chair:** —because it may tend to get personal when you go one on one with a person.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** It's already personal—

**The Chair:** Continue, Mr. Fatah, because your time is running out.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Certainly, I understand.

On the issue of Islamic presence in Canada, in the corridors of power, it's quite evident for anyone to suggest that they had no position during the fight over sharia laws in position in Ontario, and today come up and say that....

They need to answer the question of where they were when this was happening, when the minister of Islamic sharia from the Government of Pakistan managed to become a citizen of Canada and then propagate the sharia councils that exist over here.

The point being—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fatah.

We're now one minute and 20 seconds over on this segment. We have to end the discourse right now and move on.

We're going into a second round of five minutes each.

Mr. Fatah, if one of the questioners would like to give you the time to finish your response, you may be able to get it in then.

The next one, for five minutes, is Mr. Scott Reid of the Conservatives.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** I think it's actually Mr. Sweet of the Conservatives.

**The Chair:** Mr. Sweet, for five minutes.

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Thank you.

Mr. Fatah, continue your answer.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Madam Chair, I find it quite disturbing that despite the evidence I produce over here of how Jews and Christians are attacked in Muslim mosques, it doesn't seem to ring a bell with anyone.

Now, if the members of the governing party, the members of Parliament over here, are quite comfortable supporting the very people and institutions that generate hate, not just against Jews or Christians, but Hindus and atheists and Sikhs, then we are at a stage where we are playing politics with the approach. We are not talking about what the future of Canada will be and what sort of an issue is there.

I would have hoped that somebody would ask what's the difference between a Muslim and an Islamist. That could have been defined, but that does not seem to be the interest of the governing party. What it seems is that we have established who we will allow to do what, and in the urban—

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Mr. Fatah, this is a parliamentary committee made up of all three political parties. This committee has agreed to study this issue, and I think we should focus on the questions without becoming political about it.

● (1625)

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** I understand. I'm permitted to answer. Because the question was asked and I was not permitted to answer, I have been given the time, so I'm bringing it forward to all of you that you have no right to take away my right to critique the papacy that exists within us, where people right at the top dictate your children's names or where you sit.

All of this is being done without anyone else knowing. The ability to lie while speaking the truth and saying that truth and lies are the same is from 1984. The more you assent to it by denigrating the critics of the mullahs as if we are the problem, while the people of the Muslim Brotherhood have come here to establish in every university and they are not considered the problem.... If parliamentarians are happy with those who wanted sharia in Canada and Quebec and are unhappy with those who fought it, that is an upside-down world.

As a group of parliamentarians you should, if you invited me, not scoff at what I'm saying simply because of a political perspective that one has about what needs to be said or not said. Do all the Muslims who are against motion 103 have to be of a certain character for you to accept us as genuine Muslims? Do we have to appear a certain way for you to be certain that we are experts? We are all experts. We have the Quranic right to critique our faith and to determine, in terms of those who have been expelled from their religion and killed, that it will not happen in this country ever.

**The Chair:** You have two minutes, Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you, Chair.

Insecurity has come up so I want to see if I can get an answer from Mr. Fatah as well as Mr. Juneau-Katsuya. In the context of our discussion right now on this motion that's presently at hand, in order to diminish the feeling of insecurity amongst the general population, should we treat all racism, prejudice, bigotry, and fomenting of hatred openly, consistently and equally? That is my question.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** Absolutely: criminalize it, and send people, with harsh sentences, who in their language use it against communities or persons.... No matter whether you believe horses can fly, monkeys can fly, or snakes can speak, one has the right to do what was done by Martin Luther in the 15th century. We need to stand up for human beings, for people and their rights. We need to be able to challenge ideas and ideologies without the fear that we will be called "racist" or "bigoted" simply because we find it absolutely ridiculous that today, in this day and age, there are animal sacrifices going on in my faith in homes and living rooms. There is no authority under any religion to authorize that. Or, people are having kingdoms in the Middle East or royal leaders somewhere who determine our future. This is the 21st century. We do not need imams to tell us.

That is the insecurity. We came here to get away from feudalism, the mafia of the mullahs, and we are being portrayed as the villains. It is our insecurity: who will we go to when you let loose the mullahs on us?

**The Chair:** You have 20 seconds.

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** From a national security and law enforcement point of view, I think we need to bring the bar to a more reasonable level. I think there has been a lot of shyness and political correctness in the prosecuting process, letting things, under the blanket of free discourse and freedom of speech, go too far. I think we have the law. We have the regulations. We might need to tidy it up a little, but not much.

We have the instruments currently, and we need to be capable of prosecuting the people who go too far without taking away the possibility of having a debate. We need to be able to criticize what needs to be criticized in order to identify what are the Canadian values and what kind of society our society wants to be.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm going to Pierre Breton for five minutes. We're going to the five-minute segments, guys. I know it's difficult, so I just wanted to warn you.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll share my speaking time with Mr. Virani.

My question is for Mr. Juneau-Katsuya, and it concerns education. My colleague Mr. Samson addressed the issue earlier.

I have three children who attended a very multicultural school. Many communities were represented at the school. The experience was a great asset for my children. I'll use this example. Their friends weren't the "Muslim person", "Spanish person" or "Russian person". Their friends' names were Botista, Igor or Abida. These people were their friends, and they came to our place. That's the environment my children grew up in. The school used this asset. The presence of these communities back home enriched our own community.

I really want you to speak to us about education. Back home, immigration is more recent. The fact remains that it's part of the daily lives of our children. It's a bit like a computer, which has been part of their lives since birth. These children are their friends. In my view, the schools are increasingly adapting to this situation.

Regardless, I want you to say how you think our system could be even better prepared and how it could help us.

• (1630)

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** We won't reinvent what already exists under the sun. Human nature and school boards work according to the carrot system. However, it would be good to establish a program aimed specifically at encouraging multiculturalism. We could also address the origin of certain communities, the history of peoples and other topics of that nature. These topics are already addressed in part in certain courses, such as social sciences, history or geography. However, they could be covered as part of a program. I admit that I'm improvising a bit here, but the idea would be to support initiatives with tangible things, even if it means providing funding, literature or other things. These concrete programs or activities could then be launched and they would help people discover those around them. Issues arise when we don't know the people around us. The places where there's little contact between communities of diverse origin have the highest levels of racist activities and hate crimes. We must look at this.

All parents know that children are sponges. They're ready to absorb everything and they don't necessarily see evil. I remember a Benetton advertisement from a few years ago. It showed a small white boy and a small black boy, who were both naked and who were looking at each other. The question asked in the advertisement was when they would learn to hate each other. In fact, hate is something learned. Education must be used as much as possible to counter this phenomenon.

The fact that we're constantly bombarded with fake news, fake facts or "alternative facts" is an issue that we're facing and that we can't dismiss. Today, young people are always on social media. It takes about 15 minutes to write fake news, but it takes months to counter it.

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** Mr. Virani, you can take over.

[*English*]

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Mr. Juneau-Katsuya, you mentioned the rise of the right, the anglophone side and the francophone side. On the anglophone side, would you perceive Rebel Media and sites of that nature to be amplifying the message of the extreme right?

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** You also talked about social media. If there was a tweet that said, "Alexandre was not alone. His Muslim accomplice has been made state witness to avoid any talk of MuslimOnMuslim terror", is that the kind of tweet that you think needs to be corrected because it's spreading misinformation?

**Mr. Michel Juneau-Katsuya:** It needs to be denounced and, if possible, prosecuted, because here this is defamation.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** That's enough.

Mr. Fatah, that's your tweet. Do you have any comment with respect to what Mr. Juneau-Katsuya just said? You never corrected that tweet.

**Mr. Tarek Fatah:** I wouldn't correct it, because I am reporting what was reported in the newspapers at the time, that there were two people who were shouting "*Allahu Akbar*". That is what witnesses said. What happened after that, I am not privy to that. I am reporting what I had [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

**The Chair:** Excuse me, there may be a phone or something sitting right next to the microphone.

Anyway, you've gone over time. I'm sorry. I'm going to have to close this round now because we have to move on. We were supposed to finish at 4:30. We've gone five minutes over.

I would like to thank our witnesses for coming.

I would like to move on. We'll take a short break to get the next panel up.

Thank you.

•(1630) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•(1635)

**The Chair:** I would like to ask committee members to sit down. Everybody should tell us every time they will be sharing time because otherwise, we don't know. Don't just do it in between and let me know, because it really throws off our timing.

Now we are on the second part, which will end at 5:30. We have with us the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Government of Ontario for less than an hour because we are starting late.

I want to welcome the witnesses. Thank you for being here. You have 10 minutes per group, not per person, to present. You can make a decision, for instance, Ms. Mandhane or Mr. Azmi, as to who will speak or if you want to split the 10 minutes and then we will go to a question and answer session. Similarly with Mr. Khenti, Mr. Erry, and Mr. Williams, you will make a decision who will present.

I want to begin now with the Ontario Human Rights Commission for 10 minutes.

**Ms. Renu Mandhane (Chief Commissioner, Ontario Human Rights Commission):** Thank you, Madam Chair, for inviting me to speak today.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging that we're on the traditional territory of the Algonquins of Ontario and by recognizing the long history of first nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Canada.

Every day, people tell me about their experiences of discrimination. For them the existence of racism isn't an idea to be debated; it's a lived reality. In our recent consultation on racial profiling in Ontario, one black man said, "Out shopping, I am the probable shoplifter. Taking a walk, I am the probable wife snatcher or burglar."

Over 50 years ago, the government created the Ontario Human Rights Commission to address anti-black racism and anti-Semitism, and unfortunately we're still in business today and still uncovering

forms of discrimination that have been hidden from public scrutiny for too long.

Up until recently, many Canadians, including me, knew very little about the history of colonialism and the ongoing impact of intergenerational trauma on indigenous people and families. For example, one woman told us, "I work as a midwife, primarily with aboriginal women, and have lost track of how many racist assumptions and mistreatments I've observed based on race."

The Ontario Human Rights Commission works to challenge, expose, and ultimately end entrenched and widespread structures and systems of discrimination through education, policy development, public inquiries, and litigation. We have detailed policies on discrimination based on race and creed.

Since 9/11, we've seen a rise in discrimination against Muslim people or people who are perceived to be Muslim. We have heard concern that the term "Islamophobia" is vague or that it could be interpreted to include any criticism of the Muslim faith. In our policy on creed, we defined "Islamophobia" as "racism, stereotypes, prejudice, fear or acts of hostility directed towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general".

We've used this definition for many years without controversy. It's a straightforward definition that is completely in line with other terms we routinely use in human rights law, terms like anti-black racism, anti-Semitism, or transphobia.

There's growing evidence that discrimination and harassment, and even criminal activity against people who are Muslim, is on the rise. Earlier this year, Statistics Canada reported that the number of police-reported hate crimes against Muslims jumped 60% in one year. Muslim people were the second-most targeted group, after Jewish people.

Beyond individual acts of intolerance, Islamophobia can lead to viewing and treating Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic, and societal level. For example, another woman who often works in the Middle East told us, "It usually goes like this: After check-in at the airport, I go to the security area. My carry-on will pass through the security belt, and I will pass through the scanner, both without a hitch. Even so, almost every time, I'll be told, 'You've been randomly selected for additional screenings.' It's only a few extra seconds or minutes, but I've started to feel like replying back, 'It's not random when it's every single time.'"

Stereotypes of Muslims as a threat to security or Canadian values have been particularly pronounced and have contributed to a hybrid of racial and religious profiling.

From the commission's perspective, it is vital for our leaders to recognize the ideological foundations of hate and discrimination, and to name this in a clear fashion. That's why it is important to call out Islamophobia, anti-black racism, anti-Semitism, and anti-indigenous racism.

The adoption of motion M-103 is a good example of the Government of Canada playing a leadership role in terms of both calling out racism and calling for action. This motion is similar to motion M-630, which condemned the rise in anti-Semitism and was unanimously adopted in 2015. There has been a lot of discussion about the potential for motions like M-103 to limit free speech, which is a fundamental freedom under the charter.

● (1640)

M-103 does not limit expression. It does not prohibit any conduct whatsoever. It does not prevent people from saying what they think. It's a starting point for dealing with a problem that can quickly escalate and cause deadly harm like we saw in the shootings at the Quebec City mosque.

Most Canadians accept that the charter protects speech that may be offensive so long as it doesn't rise to the level of a hate crime or constitute harassment under human rights law, but the guarantee of free speech certainly cannot mean that the government's hands are tied in terms of addressing the very real harms caused by racism, whether it is mistrust of public institutions, physical or mental harm to individuals, or long-term damage to a community's collective well-being.

In the face of these harms, the government can and must lead by calling out racism and putting policies and programs in place to send a strong, consistent message that racism and Islamophobia are damaging to individuals, communities, and ultimately to all of us who wish to live in peace and harmony.

We need to send a collective message that while the Constitution protects freedom of expression, it also guarantees equality, regardless of race and religion. The government has the power to take action to protect people who are harmed by racism and Islamophobia, and we call on it to boldly do so.

There is considerable scope for the government to develop positions, policies, and programs that promote inclusion and respect, especially for racial and religious minorities. These types of actions are consistent with the values of Canadians and with the charter. Indeed, the Government of Ontario has recently taken steps to do this by establishing an anti-racism directorate to apply an anti-racism lens in developing, implementing, and evaluating government policies, programs, and services.

Ontario has also introduced legislation that makes it possible to require the collection of human rights-based data in key areas like policing, education, and child welfare. If the government follows through and mandates this collection, data like this will help to identify systemic discrimination that is often hidden, and to chart progress against eradicating it.

We call on the Government of Canada to take similar steps. First, the government must continue to unequivocally call out Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-black racism, and anti-indigenous racism.

Second, it needs to establish and appropriately fund anti-hate and anti-racism initiatives in programs. There are many options for doing this, such as adding an anti-racism stream to the Canadian Heritage grants program, or updating the government's action plan on racism and reporting on progress against it.

Third, the government must take concrete steps to identify and eliminate systemic discrimination, including mandating the collection of human rights-based data across government services. For over 20 years, the government has required federal departments to conduct gender-based impact assessments. Our final recommendation is to require impact analysis based on race.

Just over a year ago while visiting Ottawa, then president Obama proclaimed, "The world needs more Canada." There is much work to be done before we can rightfully hold ourselves up as this model for other nations to emulate. Let's give the world more of the Canada that we all aspire to, one where everyone's human rights are a lived reality, and let us not be hobbled in our efforts by those who are more concerned with defining racism than ending it.

Thank you.

● (1645)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now I will go to the Government of Ontario.

Mr. Erry, please begin. You have 10 minutes.

**Mr. Sam Erry (Associate Deputy Minister, Cabinet Office, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Division, Government of Ontario):** Good afternoon, Madam Chair, and members. Thank you for the invitation to present today. I'm honoured to be here before the committee to talk about the leadership role Ontario is taking to address systemic racism and advance social inclusion.

My name is Sam Erry, and I'm the associate deputy minister for the inclusion, diversity and anti-racism division in the cabinet office in the Ontario public service. I'm joined on my right by Akwatu Khenti, who is the assistant deputy minister of the anti-racism directorate, and Chris Williams, who is a senior research adviser in our organization. Our division is strategically situated in Ontario's cabinet office to accord it high priority and lend strength to its whole-of-government approach.

Members, we've heard for decades from community partners about the socio-economic disparities that exist for indigenous, black, and racialized people in Ontario. This is all the more important because, by 2031, an estimated 40% of Ontario's population will be racialized.

Ontario is also home to the largest population of indigenous people in the country, and indigenous youth are the province's fastest-growing population.

The available research tells an emotional and compelling story. From child welfare, educational achievement, criminal justice, and corrections through to employment and political representation, the patterns confirm inequity in the distribution of socio-economic benefits. Here are some examples.

A York University study of the Toronto District School Board revealed that black students are twice as likely to be enrolled in applied courses instead of academic ones, compared to students from other racial backgrounds. The same study found that black students are more than twice as likely as white students to have been suspended at least once during high school.

We also see this in the child welfare sector. At least 25% of children in care in Ontario at any given time are indigenous, yet only 3% of Ontario's child population is indigenous.

Systemic racism is often caused by conscious or unconscious biases in policies, practices, and procedures that privilege or disadvantage particular groups of people based on perceptions of race. It's not always intentional, but whether or not it's intentional has little bearing on the inequitable outcomes indigenous and racialized people experience.

We also know that many racialized people are facing racism due to their religion. We've seen horrible incidents of hate and violence that remind us that issues such as Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are real and unacceptable. It goes without saying that there is no place for religious discrimination or any form of systemic racism, not just in Ontario, but across Canada.

Tackling the systemic institutional barriers that prevent indigenous and racialized people from achieving their full potential is not only a moral imperative, it's also an economic imperative.

I want to share with you why anti-racism is the best approach to truly ameliorate the harms of systemic racism. As you know, there are a range of approaches out there, and there are evidence-based reasons for choosing anti-racism.

As Canadians, we are well socialized in the concept of multiculturalism. When we think about diversity, we're celebrating people's individual differences and perspectives. Building a diverse society and focusing on raising awareness about diversity are good and necessary things to do, but they are not sufficient to change the deeply entrenched inequities for indigenous and racialized people, and other groups. The diversity approach has failed to change the power imbalances that result in privilege for some groups and disadvantage for others.

The anti-racism approach acknowledges and addresses the fact that indigenous youth are more likely to end up in the child welfare system or jail, and the fact that many racialized youth, particularly young black men, are more likely than white kids to drop out of high school and empirically less likely to be represented amongst the ranks of our CEOs and senior leaders.

Anti-racism is not diversity. When the Ontario government launched the anti-racism directorate, it was clear that it had to target the root causes that are leading to these inequitable outcomes experienced by indigenous and racialized people.

Anti-racism is a proactive process of change. That means we don't just avoid being racist, we take active steps to transform institutional structures, including public policies, programs, and services, that sustain racial inequity.

Anti-racism starts by acknowledging racism and recognizing that racism creates privilege for members of the dominant group and disadvantages for others as a result of histories of slavery, colonization, and other forms of oppression and hatred. This means we honour the Ontario government's commitment to reconciliation with first nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

For the directorate, it also means we fully acknowledge intersectionality. This is important, because racism is experienced differently by various racialized groups and within groups along intersectional lines, including gender identity, creed, class, sexual orientation, history of colonization, or other personal attributes.

● (1650)

When the anti-racism directorate was launched in February 2016, we were not starting from scratch. Our work builds on decades of research and reports such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, "The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence" report, and the "Stephen Lewis Report on Race Relations in Ontario". Our work also relies heavily on community collaboration. The community's passion for and commitment to racial justice pushed systemic racism into the spotlight.

The mandate of the anti-racism directorate began by hearing directly from indigenous and racialized people through 10 open public meetings across Ontario, from Windsor to Thunder Bay to Ottawa. The Ontario government followed that up in March 2017 by launching a three-year anti-racism strategic plan, called "A Better Way Forward", which targets systemic racism by building a foundational anti-racism approach in the way government develops policies, programs, and services.

The directorate is now working across government to ensure that anti-racism is embedded in everything we do, because an evidence-based, whole-of-government approach is a highly effective way to address systemic barriers and advance racial equity. Our strategic plan is our road map and plan for action.

Another important mechanism to ensure Ontario's anti-racism work is sustainable and accountable to the public over the long run is the Anti-Racism Act, which was passed in the legislature on June 1, 2017. The act is unprecedented nationally. It establishes the anti-racism directorate in legislation. It requires the government to maintain an anti-racism strategy and mandates community engagement through multi-year plans.

It requires the development of an anti-racism impact assessment framework, which is a tool to better understand the root causes of systemic barriers and propose solutions to address these barriers. It requires the establishment of race-based data standards and guidelines. We know that data collection is a critical first step, because without data we can't identify the core problem and where the change needs to be made.

We are currently developing a race data standard for the collection, use, analysis, disclosure, and public reporting of this aggregated race-based data across government and its institutions. This framework will ensure that data is collected and used consistently and that there are privacy protections in place to prevent the misuse of personal information.

Through the development process we've been actively engaging our ministry and community partners, as well as the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Information and Privacy Commissioner, for their feedback and advice.

As you know, there has been a growing tide of anti-Muslim rhetoric and sentiments in a post-9/11 era. A Statistics Canada report released earlier this year showed that from 2014 to 2015 there was a 61% increase in anti-Muslim hate. This is also mirrored in public opinion. A 2017 Angus Reid poll shows that 60% of Canadians agree that Canadian Muslims face a lot of discrimination in their daily lives.

We saw a tragic example of Islamophobia earlier this year when six people were killed and 19 injured during a shooting rampage at the Quebec City Islamic centre.

All roads lead to the conclusion that Islamophobia is a serious and urgent problem. The anti-racism strategic plan includes initiatives to address Islamophobia head-on. One of our strategic imperatives is to work collaboratively with the community and Muslim leaders both to respond to and to prevent further increases in Islamophobia.

We believe that greater public awareness and understanding of Islamophobia will serve to curb current positive trends in this regard. In addition to public awareness, we work with the Ministry of Education and school boards to strengthen and promote educational resources for kindergarten to grade 12 students that aim to address Islamophobia.

The Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is also working to explore the collection and publication of data from police services on reported Islamophobia.

The Honourable Michael Coteau, the Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism, has acknowledged that Islamophobia is real and has devastating impacts. He also knows how important it is to demonstrate visible, inclusive leadership within the community. Therefore, Minister Coteau has recently established a minister's

consultation group on anti-racism, including a subcommittee that focuses exclusively on Islamophobia. The Islamophobia subcommittee provides an important community perspective on supporting and implementing our strategic plan. The group also provides input on the causes and impacts of Islamophobia, and supports public awareness initiatives on the topic.

As I said earlier, we're taking a whole-of-government approach, and this is just some of what's happening across Ontario.

In conclusion, members, through "A Better Way Forward", Ontario has a focused plan of action to address systemic racism and advance racial equity. I'm pleased to inform you that in August of this year I had the privilege of presenting at the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the committee acknowledged Ontario's leadership in developing a comprehensive strategic plan and a legislative framework.

• (1655)

Members, these are early days for us, but we continue to collaborate with our committee partners and, through a whole-of-government approach, to effect change in government and its public institutions.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Erry.

Now we're going to the question-and-answer period, but I'd like to warn the committee that simple mathematics says that if we only have one round, it's a seven-minute round. I would also like to ask the committee members, if you're going to share your time with anyone, please let us know right away.

Also, I'm going to ask the committee to stay for two minutes at the end of this meeting, because we have some in camera work to do.

We begin with Ms. Dabrusin from the Liberals, for seven minutes, please.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.):** My questions are for the Government of Ontario representatives.

I want to thank both of you. I think it's important to hear all that you are doing in Ontario. I'm from Ontario myself. I'm really impressed to see what's being done.

Mr. Erry, I want to focus on what you were talking about. You were talking about the evidence-based strategy and data collection. As my first point, I was looking at the mandate letter for Minister Coteau, which refers to a racial equity impact assessment tool. Could you tell me what that is?

• (1700)

**Mr. Sam Erry:** Thank you for the question.

The racial equity impact assessment tool is a tool that was pioneered in the United States. There are certain progressive jurisdictions in the United States that have already implemented this tool in policy-making and in program and budget decisions. These are jurisdictions such as Washington state, the City of Portland, Minneapolis.

We took a hard look at this tool, since it has already been road-tested and has had success and there is empirical evidence to demonstrate so. We've looked at that tool and have tried to customize it in an Ontario context.

The tool has a couple of key elements. First of all, we all carry bias as individuals; as professionals we carry bias, given the model that we're socialized into, in the context of the work we do. One thing this tool does is it helps you better understand your bias as you employ the tool.

If you think about a piece of legislation or policy that the government would be interested in reviewing or developing, you would apply this tool at the front end. For those who are policy practitioners, this is not an add-on; it fits very nicely into the policy cycle that most public services execute in this country. The tool allows you to understand that bias.

It also allows you to understand the bias that we respectively carry relative to stakeholder engagement. Many people have much to say on many issues, but because we generally tend to deal with a certain group of stakeholders, those voices aren't coming to the table; the process doesn't allow for it. There are thus open government engagement tools built into the tool to allow for muted or marginalized voices to come to the table and have their say concerning the impact of a particular policy or program.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Do you have anything in writing that describes this tool or sets out how it works, and would you be able to provide that information to us?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** Yes, absolutely.

In Ontario, because we have to be different, we're going to call it the anti-racism impact assessment.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Wonderful.

I was looking at your strategic plan. You refer to the data points that you were talking about. I guess most of this is still in its development stage. I saw here that to address racial inequities we need better race-based, disaggregated data, and you were talking about the collection process. Is it already in place? Is the data already being collected, or is it still being put together?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** As I mentioned, for most of this work it's early days for us. No data, no problem, no solution. We want to have an evidence-based conversation so that policy-makers and decision-makers such as yourselves have a clear sense of where exactly the problem lies and how to diagnose it properly and therefore put the right investments and solutions against it.

We are developing a race-based data standard that unpacks many of the categories StatsCan currently has. For example, if you're black, you tick off black right now, but that doesn't say whether you're continental African black, Caribbean black.... We're going to

unpack those categories so that we can better understand the demographics and then say, "Okay, the problem is over here."

To answer your question directly, we're developing the standard right now. We're piloting it with our partner ministries in health, the justice sector, children and youth services, and education. Once that pilot is complete, we'll come back and give our best advice to Minister Coteau and the government.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Are there any guidelines that you can provide to us on what that pilot is based on so we can have an idea of how you're collecting that information?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** Sure.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** That would be great.

You mentioned intersectionality. When you're collecting data, how are you tracking intersectionality as part of this research? Are you tracking that as part of your general disaggregated data selection?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** Yes. The way the categories are constituted, we're making sure that all the dimensions of race are covered, or as many as possible. Race is a complex thing and it's a social construct, so we also need to look at identity-based data. Our Ministry of Children and Youth Services is developing an identity-based framework as well. The two will complement each other, and we can be reasonably comfortable that we've covered as much as possible..

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Can you share the identity-based framework as well? I would love a copy of that.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** If you submit that to the chair, we will distribute it to everyone. Thank you.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** I know that my friend Mr. Vandal had a question as well. He has about a minute and a half.

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

Renu Mandhane, I note that you referenced the origins of M-103, and I note that you referenced some of the discussions around M-103. I know the originator of the motion had many people calling her, threatening her. I had people calling me thinking that their freedom of speech was somehow on the line.

Where does this come from? Why were people so shaken up or so concerned that freedom of speech was on the line and that sharia law was coming? Can you comment on that?

**The Chair:** You have 40 seconds to do so, Ms. Mandhane.

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** Somehow any time you talk about Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism, you quickly get into conversations about whether this limits legitimate criticism of religion. I think it's really important that we maintain that marketplace of ideas and that we do have space to criticize religion and develop our own Canadian identity. Often these are red herrings that distract from our main goal, which is to move forward and to adopt the kinds of policies and programs that Ontario has.

**The Chair:** I would like to reiterate, please let me know if you're sharing time. It never works out and we always go over, and then it kills our timelines here because we have to leave at a certain time.

Thank you.

Now I'll go to David Anderson, for the Conservatives.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Madam Chair, I'm going to share time with both my colleagues, so we'll see how this works out. I'm going to ask some fairly quick questions.

**The Chair:** If you divide by three, you can get two minutes.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Thank you to our witnesses for coming today.

Ms. Mandhane, our motion is dealing with systemic racism and religious discrimination. You had a short definition, but I notice in your longer definition you talk about "a contemporary and emerging form of racism in Canada has been termed Islamophobia". Do you use racism and religious discrimination interchangeably? Do we assume both things are included in that?

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** I think that racism and religious discrimination are distinct concepts for some people, but I think when you're talking Islamophobia, often the manifestation of race is what people react to. I've faced Islamophobia. I'm not Muslim, but people are reacting to my race. I think that's why these terms get considered together. But I'd caution against parsing experiences, because most racialized people experience discrimination in an intersectional way, because they're a woman or because they're young or old, etc., and it's not helpful to try to parse these different forms because ultimately all the things we're suggesting need to happen would address both of them.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I would disagree, because I think we found out from the debate that it was important that these things be defined so that Canadians understand what we're talking about in the legislature.

How do you deal with competing rights? We're dealing with that more and more in our society, secular faith issues, but what principles do you use?

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** We actually have a 50-page policy on it. I'd be happy to share that with the chair, because we have developed a protocol for how to assess the different rights and try to come to a compromise solution.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Okay, I'd like to see that.

**The Chair:** You've actually done the two minutes.

Mr. Sweet, go ahead.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you for your testimony.

The data collection aspect I'm really excited about. It was actually a recommendation from the committee, the coalition to combat anti-Semitism, back in 2011. There are some very good models out there, people who are already collecting data on universities and co-operating with law enforcement.

You were talking about a tool "for muted or marginalized voices". The concluding comment from the commissioner was that we don't want to be hobbled in our efforts because we get sidetracked in defining words and racism. I think one of the muted or marginalized voices here may be Muslims Against M-103, and we had somebody testify just before you. Are they not a legitimate voice that should be heard in this?

● (1710)

**Mr. Sam Erry:** Thank you for the question.

I just want to clarify the context in which I made that comment. I was talking about the power of the tool called the anti-racism impact assessment. The tool speaks to how you engage with communities, and it ranges from information sharing to empowerment, and everything in between. Ontario has developed an open engagement framework. The context is that, if you want everyone in society to contribute to a conversation, there are different ways of employing that tool.

**Mr. David Sweet:** This is a minority within a minority. They feel like they are being sidelined right now because their voices are not being heard. Are they a legitimate group to be listened to?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** I think everyone is a legitimate group to be listened to. The tool will allow for that. It will allow for those who would not—

**Mr. David Sweet:** If they have a concern about the definition, that "Islamophobia" could be used against them, as well as protect some, then shouldn't we listen to that? Is that something that's going to be delaying us inordinately? Shouldn't we get it right, if we're talking about racism?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** This tool is about being inclusive and bringing as many perspectives to the table as possible. That is the purpose of that, when we develop policy, programming, or services. This tool is not designed to be exclusive. It helps us in the policy development process, to bring all those voices together and understand the different perspectives.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Having everybody understand the term is important, then.

**Mr. Sam Erry:** We're not absolute experts, but, respectfully, I think semantics can take us in many directions. I think what we're talking about is anti-Muslim hate and so on.

**Mr. David Sweet:** I agree. I think that term is very safe and does not have anywhere near the lightning rods that "Islamophobia" has from the other community that's within the Muslim community here in Canada.

**Mr. Sam Erry:** Sure.

**The Chair:** Mr. Reid, you have two minutes.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Thank you.

I have a feeling that I am intruding on a response, Mr. Erry, that you were going to give, so if you find a way of working it into the question I'm asking on a different subject, please feel free.

My question relates to the concept of racialization. Racialization, as a term, is based on the assumption that race is a social construction, which I think modern genetics has demonstrated to be the case. That might not have been evident before they understood how genes work. This raises a question. When you are trying to collect measurable data, you have to have some kind of objective framework. If you are trying to measure how many people are above or below a certain height, for example, there is an objective measure to work with. Here, we are dealing with something that is subjective, whether it's considered from the point of view of self-identity or from someone else's projection onto a third party. How do you square that circle?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** Thanks for that very good question.

We have employed three professors from York University who are experts in this and who have helped us put together this race-based standard. They've looked at it cross-jurisdictionally, internationally, and otherwise as to what is the best way to slice and dice and to have this conversation. We've come up with a draft standard that has a series of categories, which frankly are bringing us more into the 21st century, versus our 19th century nomenclature that we're all stuck with. That's the first thing.

To that, we're adding things like intersectionality. We're adding things like the identity-based information as well. All of this is tied to.... Because the standard is not just about collecting, but about what you do with the information and how you analyze this information, one of the things we're looking at, for example, relative to the black community in our anti-black racism strategy is, how do we reduce disparities?

There are, and I don't want to get too theoretical here, mathematical models and formulas that say given this kind of dataset and given what you're seeing here, if you want to solve this problem, there are disparity indices and so on. There is a science behind this. This is not soft stuff. There are people who are practising this. There's a lot of good evidence in those jurisdictions in the U.S. that I pointed to.

It's not a perfect science. All we're saying is that we need to bring in a new methodology and a framework that recognizes our society today. We then look at these disparities and ask how we remove these disparities. Then there's a very calculated way in which you approach that. The data then adds to your programming, your investments, and so on, and then you reduce those disparities.

• (1715)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Erry.

We've gone over time on this one, so now I'm going to go to Jenny Kwan, please, for seven minutes.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I would like to thank all the witnesses for their presentations.

Commissioner, I particularly enjoyed your presentation. In regard to your recommendations, you mentioned that it is time now for us to come forward with a lens across all government departments, a lens on race, or on anti-racism, if you will. I wonder if you could expand on that to see how governments can implement this recommendation.

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** I think what's interesting is that gender impact analysis is a very common analysis both in Canada and internationally. The idea, as others have discussed, is to start to look at policies and start to project the disparate impact that they may have on different communities at the front end, rather than waiting for that to materialize.

How do you do that? I think the first thing is that you have to be engaged with communities. You have to understand what their concerns are and what they want to see in the future. If we're talking about child welfare and over-apprehension, the data will tell you about over-apprehension, but it doesn't really tell you why, so it's about having those conversations to understand what communities'

concerns are and then developing a tool that allows you to assess policies and programs against the concern and the disparity you're seeing.

Again, as Sam mentioned, these tools are very technical. There are people who develop these tools. That's what they do. Our recommendation is that we start to move to that evidence-based approach where we actually take out the rhetoric and start to really look at how to reduce the disparities that definitely exist.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** To build on that, because we have various reports and information that already have been provided to show, for example, the disparity in terms of this impact financially and economically, particularly for the immigrant community, I wonder whether or not you can share with us your thoughts about it. One of the real issues is that these kinds of impacts are long term, not just short term. Most recently, I had a constituent tell me that it's not just the hurt feelings, it's intergenerational in terms of the impacts and the economic outcomes for them. I wonder if you could expand on that for me.

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** Yes. I think the TRC report has really given us an opportunity and a greater understanding as Canadians of intergenerational trauma and what the outcomes of that are. I think we're starting to understand what the intergenerational trauma of slavery has been in the United States and in Canada as well.

It is really important to understand that there are discrete measurable harms associated with racism. This isn't just about hurt feelings. The harms are social exclusion and economic exclusion, but there are even studies that show there are psychological and physical harms associated with sustained exposure to racism. We need to move past these hurt feelings—or, on the flip side, that it's a few bad apples—and start to acknowledge that this is harmful for all of us. It impacts our economy and it impacts people's feelings of belonging, which are ultimately essential for all of our safety and security.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Just to get at recommendations, we had a Canada action plan against racism. It is now sunsetted. There was an evaluation on it and then not much has been done with respect to it. In your recommendation, you touched on it just briefly. Would you recommend that the government renew and refresh the Canada action plan against racism and then resource it? We can have all these plans we want, but if we don't resource them to implement them, they don't amount to a pile of beans.

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** The last plan was in 2005, so certainly I think it's due for a refreshing. I think what's really important in these plans is that the government set out benchmarks for how it's going to report publicly on progress against the plan, because we see a lot of plans that, quite frankly, look wonderful but without resources and without a commitment to be transparent about how you're going to measure progress against the plan, it's very hard for the public to understand the value of the plan and how we're moving forward. There needs to be a longer-term initiative.

• (1720)

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** To build on that, we're talking about the need to do this across the nation, so there needs to be a national plan. Ontario has some programs in place and so on. Would you say that the federal government needs to be doing this proactively with all the provinces and territories so that we can actually have a cohesive and coherent national plan?

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** Yes. I think even bringing together all the ministers of justice or ministers responsible for human rights or ministers responsible for anti-racism to talk about common areas of concern and how to attack those across the country in a concerted evidence-based way would be a huge real mark of success for this government. As many of you know, we haven't had a federal-provincial-territorial meeting related to human rights for over 30 years. These are concrete steps through which the federal government can show a real leadership role.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** On the question of lived experiences, we talk about those a lot and many of them are not even reported.

Mr. Erry, you talked about some data collection and so on. How do we find ways to validate people's lived experiences that are often not even on the radar but that are very real and are happening on the ground? Also, how do we tackle those issues that are surfacing in the social media network? There is so much spreading of hate and racism in social media, and it is very difficult to grapple with it. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations?

I'll open that up to both Mr. Erry and the commissioner.

**The Chair:** I'm afraid you have only 30 seconds in which to answer that.

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** All I would say is that I think what is really important as we move towards the government collecting quantitative data is that we analyze that data with the qualitative data, the lived experiences that are there. Otherwise, that data can be analyzed in a way that isn't consistent with people's experiences, and we can't lose sight of moving to an entirely empirical view of racism. Unless we couple that with people's lived experiences, we won't be able to understand the data in a meaningful way.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now I will move to the final person in the round, Mr. Virani, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Thank you to all of the guests who are here. It's good to see a constituent on the panel as well. I have a couple of questions for Ms. Mandhane that follow a bit from what Ms. Kwan was just asking about.

Can you talk to us a little bit about particular news outlets, alternative or fake news and what those are doing to foment the climate we're in? How can we produce better social cohesion by addressing some of those outlets, at the same time respecting what you call the free marketplace of ideas, which I think is an important cherished idea?

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** I think first of all that, at an individual institutional and leadership level, we need to counter that with our own narratives and our own views. I think we are very scared of using the word "racism" but I think that we do need to be bold and to counter those narratives. I have to say that we're in a new era where

everyone's ideas are of equal weight. On social media you can kind of lose sight of the fact that these very vocal voices don't often represent the majority of Canadians. How do we bring the majority of Canadians, and not just racialized Canadians, into this conversation so that they can talk about their concerns about racism, lack of inclusion and economic prosperity?

I think there is room for the government to enforce the hate laws that it does have. We have seen very little enforcement of laws against hate crimes under the Criminal Code. I think if we want to avoid what we're seeing in the United States, we really need to start thinking about defining hate in a way that captures the lived experience of people who experience it.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Just on that point, since there are quite a few lawyers in the room, we've heard and will be hearing from witnesses who talk about incitement to hatred and the requirement of the attorney general's consent to lay that charge. What are your views on that? That's open to anyone on the panel.

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** I have talked to our attorney general about that, and how there needs to be a boldness on the part of our elected officials to call hate hate when they see it. Lawyers know if we never put the law, it's not going change. In terms of being worried about old case law from 20 years ago that defined "hate" in a very narrow way, I think this is a new era and we need to use the tools that we have already created, that Parliament has agreed to, to challenge the very real hatred that we are seeing, not only in the media, but just generally, online and otherwise.

• (1725)

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Your colleague, Mr. Azmi, was actually in my riding at a town hall. I've had other events since then where I personally feel—I'm not sure if others feel the same way—there seems to be an emboldened attitude for those who would be extremely critical. There's videotaping, there's aggressive questioning, there's what I consider virtual bullying from people who are voicing extreme views. What do any of you feel is fuelling that? What is emboldening people? We heard a lot from Mr. Juneau-Katsuya on the previous panel about the need for leadership from elected officials to combat issues like that. What's emboldening people to take extreme views and voice them quite freely? How do we combat that? Is it an elected official response or are there other responses that are appropriate?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** I think some sort of an answer lies at various levels. The misogynists, the homophobes, the racists, they're always there. There's something in the air that's allowing them to come right out today and express those views more loudly than they normally would, because traditionally, they've been cowards and hide wherever they're hiding. I think the voices of those who are in leadership positions, elected or otherwise, CEOs, to come right out, call it what it is, and call those people out is absolutely critical. I think the other thing is all of us as individuals need to reflect on our values and ask, is this consistent with my personal values and is this something that I would tolerate, and then step up and address this issue. I think all of us are empowered to deal with that. Whether it's family members who have the casual jokes on the weekend, or whatever the case may be, we need to personally step up and be accountable on this issue. Anti-racism is everybody's business. It's not just the business of the anti-racism directorate.

I think there is something in the air, but just to your previous question as well, we need to really think about public education and awareness. We need to think about public education and awareness in a very evidence-based way and use as many channels as we can to achieve a higher level of consciousness in the country, in the province, and also a special focus in the early years. We're waiting too late, respectfully, to have these conversations. We need to talk about this in grade one, in grade two, and so on, because there's a lot of hate spewing in playgrounds. I live in Markham, Ontario, and was appalled to see the swastikas and the KKK spray-painted on, of all places, a slide in a playground for kids. You know it's not the kids from school. You know it's not those kids, but somebody is doing this. We need to start early, and take some personal responsibility around this as well.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Could I just ask three rapid-fire questions? One, can you provide us with the document "A Better Way Forward"? You already have?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** We had it circulated.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Okay. Then I have two very quick questions.

Are other provinces interested in what you're doing at the Ontario anti-racism directorate?

Ms. Mandhane, since hate crimes are on the rise against Jews and Muslims, do you think there's a role to play for interfaith dialogue, and building up that in terms of addressing this newest, most violent form of discrimination?

**Mr. Sam Erry:** Alberta and Quebec have reached out to us and are interested in this particular approach and thinking about how we would go about putting a plan together like this, obviously relative to their context.

**Ms. Renu Mandhane:** In terms of interfaith dialogue, certainly I think there's strength in solidarity. There always is. The greatest human rights battles have been won when people come together across their own identities. I have seen the power of that. There are a lot of interfaith groups, especially Muslim and Jewish interfaith

groups. Those are the kinds of community grants I'm talking about, spurring those alternative conversations and allowing them to have public space that counters the public space that's been claimed by people who would rather talk about hatred and exclusion.

**The Chair:** I want to thank the witnesses for coming and giving us their time, and for the engagement of our committee. I would like to thank you.

I want the committee, as you're getting ready to leave—it's not an in camera thing—to deal with one piece of business, and that is the vice-chair from the Conservatives. We have a name.

Mr. Anderson.

● (1730)

**Mr. David Anderson:** I'd like to nominate Mr. Peter Van Loan.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Michael MacPherson):** It has been moved by Mr. David Anderson that Mr. Peter Van Loan be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions? Seeing none, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Peter Van Loan duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** I would like to entertain a motion to adjourn please. Mr. Anderson.

**Mr. David Anderson:** I so move.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.







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