

# EX3.3.3

to: The Hon. John Tory, Executive Committee and Toronto City Councillors:

***RE: EX3-3, Administrative Inquiry on Hate Sponsored Rallies, March 21, 2019***

I make this deputation on behalf of Just Peace Advocates, a Canadian based independent human rights organization promoting **Just Peace/Paix Juste** through the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The work of Just Peace Advocates is based on the principle -- that the people of Palestine are entitled to same rights as all people. I trust Mayor Tory, and members of the Toronto Executive Council agree with this principle.

It is appropriate we are here today as Just Peace Advocates' focus is on protection of the civil and constitutional rights of those who speak out for freedom, equity and justice.

In this regard, we appreciate the opportunity to provide a civil society voice focused on government, institutional and society's accountability to the rule of law, and to the standards of international human rights and humanitarian law for the rights of all people.

The November 28, 2017 Motion of the City of Toronto Executive Committee calling for the Review that is being considered today was to include scholars and experts on constitutional law, the charter and human rights. We note that in the report back there is no list of what experts or stakeholders were consulted. What we do know is that the suggestions of experts provided to the city staff were ignored and dismissed.

Rather than a meaningful consultation with stakeholders and experts, a generic survey was offered. This survey did not allow for informed fact-gathering, with city staff indicating that it did yield useful information. This is very alarming, and seems to show not only a lack of transparency but also a lack of genuine desire to look at the current alarming situation of racism and hate in this city, in particular related to Islamophobia and racism.

In the original material associated with the November 28, 2017 Executive Committee motion, there was indication of concern about white supremacists and neo-nazi rallies in our city. This is a concern we share--the rise of white supremacy, facism and racial oriented hate. Ironically Al-Quds day was referenced and in fact highlighted as the key event of concern. With today's motion, the entire focus is now on Al-Quds Day. I say this is ironic, because the Islamophobia that has risen through the white supremacists, neo-nazi and alt-right actions in our city, in the country and around the world are in fact the major concern.

Even as we are meeting today the citizens of the city are gathering on the commons outside in Nathan Phillips Square to show, along with people across

Turtle Island and around the world solidarity on the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. Surely, here in city council, we would hope that this same solidarity will be shown by voting against this racist, hate-oriented motion put forward targeting the rights of civil liberty of the very people who are most impacted by the hate associated with Islamophobia.

Al Quds or Jerusalem Day is an annual, international Muslim-sponsored event that happens in the holy month of Ramadan just before Eid and is designated to both educate and encourage people of conscience to work for just peace for the people of Palestine. Al Quds days in Toronto are inclusive events bringing together people of various faiths and non-faiths, that include Muslims, Christians, Jews and atheists.

These events are in the public interest, and are based on support for international law and human rights. Just as civil society is outside today in the square, calling for a JUST SOCIETY for all, including Indigenous self-determination, gender justice, and an end to racism, it is hoped this council will follow this lead and vote NO to this motion focused on Al Quds Day.

For the record, I mention that there has been no indication in the background provided to city council executive of the many hate rallies held by right wing, Islamophobic, national, hate groups in this city over the last 2+ years, with most of these on city property. Based on my records, I would point out the following anti-Islam hate rallies held in the city.

These include on January 28, March 25, April 22, May 27, August 11, October 21, and November 25, 2017 at Nathan Phillips Square. Nov. 4 in Kew Gardens in the Beaches. The January 27, 2018 anti-Islam rally which was moved to Mel Lastman Square as it was going to happen at the same time as the first year remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque massacre. Feb 24, and April 28, 2018 at Mel Lastman Square, and May 9 at 301 University. June 9, 2018, also at 301 University, the same day as the peaceful Al-Quds Day rally. September 8 at 301 University, November 10, 2018 at Mel Lastman Square, and most recently just a couple of weeks ago, Feb. 23 at 301 University.

I request that you seriously consider looking into these hate-filled white supremacy, Islamophobic events, including the involvement of some of the groups/individuals involved in bringing this motion forward to attack Al Quds Day. This is where the city needs to be focusing to address the hate and discrimination within the city, especially in light of yet another massacre of Muslims last week.

To pass the motion before you is in fact to attack the victim of these bullies. I appeal to you to do the right thing. Vote NO, and in doing so to stand with human rights, inclusiveness, civil liberties, and international law.

Those who believe in civil liberties, human rights, inclusiveness, and international law will reject this hate-sponsored motion.

Submitted:

Karen Rodman (Rev)

Voluntary Executive Director

Just Peace Advocates

[Karen.rodman@justpeaceadvocates.ca](mailto:Karen.rodman@justpeaceadvocates.ca)

March 19, 2019