CONDOLENCE MOTION

Moved by: Councillor Vincent Crisanti

Seconded by: Councillor Peter Milczyn

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti on Wednesday, March 2, 2011.

Mr. Bhatti, Pakistan's only Christian cabinet minister, was assassinated after urging reforms to the country's draconian blasphemy laws. One of his siblings, Peter Bhatti, and members of his extended family, are residents of the City of Toronto and the surrounding area.

A liberal and a leader in the ruling Pakistan People's Party, Mr. Bhatti was travelling to work when his vehicle was sprayed with bullets. His assailants escaped.

Shahbaz Bhatti’s death reminds us of the dangers facing both political leaders and minorities the world over. Mr. Bhatti served his country with distinction, integrity and a view that interfaith dialogue ought to be embraced, not shied away from. When he assumed office in 2008, Mr. Bhatti said he wanted to send "a message of hope to the people living a life of disappointment, disillusionment and despair." We look forward to this message ringing true for successive generations.

We are fortunate in the City of Toronto for the opportunity to engage peacefully in constructive and respectful discourse regardless of political, religious or ideological differences. We hope for and urge the same for our brothers and sisters around the world.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Shahbaz Bhatti’s family.

March 9, 2011