

Toronto Women's City Alliance

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April 18<sup>th</sup> 2013

Executive Committee  
City of Toronto

**Re: Item EX31.2**

Dear Mayor and Councillors of the Executive Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of Toronto Women's City Alliance (TWCA) about the proposed changes to the city of Toronto's Anti-Harassment/ Discrimination Policies and accompanying forms. We appreciate and commend the need to update current policies addressing discrimination, harassment and hate to ensure that policies and procedures enabling equality at and in the City of Toronto are further strengthened.

However, we do not support the use of these policy instruments as a means to silence groups such as QuAIA nor to censor the words, "Israeli Apartheid". As diverse women of Toronto we are well aware of the impacts of silencing, of the lack of voice, and of exclusion in its myriad forms. Silencing those whose opinions you do not like or who you want to control does not promote a culture and politics of democracy, inclusion and equality. Ask a woman, she knows what this means. Silencing one group or some language will inevitably open the door to more censorship and banning. If you attempt to silence QuAIA now, who will be next? Different visions, analysis, thoughts and opinions are what democracy ensures and strengthens diverse communities and cities. As women, we want to see the deepening of democracy and not its curtailment.

In this spirit we recommend that you adopt the revised *Declaration of Compliance with Anti- Harassment/Discrimination Legislation and City Policy*, the *Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy* and the *Hate Activity Policy* **only after** the changes we recommend below have been made. Our suggestions are to further ensure that the amended policies are also inclusive of diverse women and the implications of multiple and intersecting discriminations.

Appendix A, Declaration of Compliance with Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Legislation and City Policy. Either the words used in the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, line 6 should be "All forms of discrimination, harassment, hate and inaccessibility" or sexism should be added to the current list. Furthermore, these changes should be consistent everywhere in the policies and forms this discrepancy exists.

Appendix C, Hate Activities Policy, we recommend that women be included as an example of a constituency in Toronto that also experiences hate violence. We are referring to the 1st page of the proposed Hate Activities Policy under 'Background Information'. Additionally, sex should be listed as a category under 'Hate Propaganda'.

Should you have questions or need further clarification, please do contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Prabha Khosla".

Prabha Khosla for Toronto Women's City Alliance