

**City Council****Motion without Notice**

MM24.24	ACTION			Ward:All
---------	--------	--	--	----------

**Endorsing the Charter for Inclusive Communities - by Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy**

*\* This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

*\* This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

**Recommendations**

Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy, recommends that:

1. City Council endorse the National Council of Canadian Muslims' Charter for Inclusive Communities, as outlined below:

**Charter for Inclusive Communities****Preamble**

The recent rise in anti-Muslim incidents in Canada is disturbing and risks eroding the strength of our country's rich social fabric. When Muslim women are attacked in the streets, when mosques are vandalized or when people face prejudice in their workplace or school, it is not only Canadian Muslims that suffer; Canadian society as a whole is weakened because our values of equality, respect, justice and dignity for all are threatened.

Hate crimes against Muslims have risen dramatically in recent years both in Canada, and around the world. Given the unfortunate climate of fear that seems to have entered some segments of public life, it appears that this trend is increasing.

Islamophobia is real and it is wrong, despite what some may say to downplay it or dismiss it. This type of hate and discrimination tells Canadian Muslims that they do not belong by isolating them and their communities through stigmatization and casting them as outsiders and the 'other'.

**Our Commitment**

By signing this Charter, we commit to standing up for the rights and dignity of everyone in order to promote inclusive, just, and respectful communities in Canada.

We strongly affirm that:

- Islamophobia, like all other forms of racism, hate, xenophobia, and bigotry, has no place in Canadian society.
- Discrimination and acts of hate against anyone, marginalize individuals and communities and exclude them from participating fully in society and fulfilling their potential.
- The dignity of every person in Canada is essential to a healthy and vibrant society.
- Everyone in Canada has a role to play in creating safe environments for us all.
- All levels of government, civil society, communities, and public officials have a duty to work together in developing policies, programs and initiatives to reduce and eliminate Islamophobia in all of its forms.
- By working together, we can nurture inclusive communities and strengthen our shared commitment to Canada's values of equality, respect, justice, and the dignity of all persons.

## **Summary**

Toronto's motto, "Diversity our Strength," is something we take great pride in as citizens. This past week, Canadians across the country borrowed our motto to express solidarity with those who have been made to feel like they are not welcome in North America. However, our words are only as good as our actions. It is time to take further steps to support the principles of diversity and to denounce islamophobia and xenophobia.

Acts of hate and intimidation toward Muslim Canadians are on the rise. Just days ago, news broke that gunmen carried out an act of terrorism in a Quebec City mosque while men, women, and children gathered to pray. This despicable and cowardly deed does not represent the values that we as Canadians and as Torontonians hold dear. Let us come together to stop the spread of hate. Let us instead spread a message of love and peace.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims has crafted the Charter for Inclusive Communities. The Charter is a commitment to "standing up for the rights and dignity of everyone in order to promote inclusive, just, and respectful communities in Canada." This is a message that we, as a city, can support.

In signing onto the Charter for Inclusive Communities, the City of Toronto will join the ranks of City Councils across the Province, including London, Waterloo, Hamilton and Ajax. Other organizations that formally support the Charter include the police departments of Ottawa, Windsor and London, as well as the Toronto and York Region Labour Council and many other social service organizations. Toronto can show leadership by endorsing this charter and encouraging other governments and organizations to do so as well.

The Charter for Inclusive Communities not only acknowledges that Islamophobia presents real dangers to certain members of our community, it asserts that, as a community, we have a duty to work towards eliminating the hate. Let us shoulder our responsibilities as we agree to take up this task.

## **Background Information (City Council)**

MM24.24