



July 6, 2021

Via email: David.Lametti@parl.gc.ca; mcu@justice.gc.ca; hon.bardish.chagger@canada.ca

The Honourable Bardish Chagger, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth
15 Eddy Street, 14th Floor
Gatineau, QC K1A 0M5

The Honourable David Lametti, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8

Dear Ministers Chagger and Lametti:

Re: Addressing Islamophobia and All Forms of Hate

I write on behalf of the Canadian Bar Association to thank you for convening a national action summit on Islamophobia this summer. All levels of government must work together to dismantle Islamophobia and all forms of hatred in Canada.

The CBA is a national association of 36,000 lawyers, law students, notaries and academics, from every jurisdiction of Canada, with a mandate that includes seeking improvements in the law and administration of justice, and access to justice.

The recent attack in London – where a man drove his truck into a Muslim family in what police have characterized as a hate-motivated attack, killing four members of the Afzaal and Salman families and seriously injuring a nine-year old child – is not an isolated incident. It is part of a pattern of pervasive anti-Muslim hate in Canada. Muslims and those perceived to be Muslims regularly face verbal and physical attacks, threats, and attacks on their property. These incidents have been on the rise in recent years.¹ Since the London attack, Muslims in Alberta and Saskatchewan have reported being assaulted.² It has been less than five years since six worshippers were massacred at a mosque in Quebec City.

¹ See for example: Statistics Canada, [Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2019](#) (March 2021); Legal Aid Ontario, [The Rise in Islamophobia](#) (2017).

² Saskatoon Star Phoenix, ['I hate Muslims': Attackers stab, taunt, cut beard of Saskatoon man](#) June 25, 2021; CTV News, ['She was thrown to the ground': Police investigate attack on Muslim woman in Edmonton](#), June 13, 2021.

We are pleased the government's decision to hold an urgent summit on Islamophobia, as well as the decision to convene a summit on antisemitism on an emergency basis following a disturbing rise in antisemitic incidents in Canada.³

Organizing summits is not enough. We urge governments to take swift action to address the concerns of the affected communities. Governments must reflect on how laws and policies in Canada can perpetuate systemic discrimination. Government inaction—such as the delay in enacting legislation on online hate—has made members of these communities more vulnerable.

The CBA recently commented on the need to reform the civil and criminal remedies relating to hate.⁴ We would be happy to continue to offer our expertise on the justice issues related to combatting hate.

Sincerely,

(original letter signed by Bradley D. Regehr)

Bradley D. Regehr

³ See for example: Global News, [Jewish communities on edge amid 'troubling rise' of anti-Semitism in Canada](#) May 2021; [Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2020](#), League of Human Rights, B'nai Brith Canada.

⁴ Canadian Bar Association, Constitutional and Human Rights, Criminal Justice, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Community Sections, [Legal Remedies for Victims of Hate Speech](#). (October 2020).