

**Submission of the Canadian Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee to the Legislature
Justice Committee.**

We are writing on behalf of our community as leaders of the Canadian Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee formed recently to combat the rising tide of racist attacks on our community's homes, houses of worship, and members. We take racism seriously in any and all of its forms. Racists do not discriminate and that is why we feel we are on the same side, in this fight against racism and discrimination, with all of our brothers and sisters in Canada. Racist attacks against any fellow Canadian is an attack on all of us. Anti-Semitism is a threat to all of us as it emanates from the same webs of hatred that promote Islamophobia, homophobia, anti-immigrants (xenophobia), anti-black racism, sexism and anti-First Nations' peoples and Aboriginals. Our community is a community at risk, it has suffered and continues to suffer daily racist attacks, violent incidents, and hate crimes, the majority of which go unreported.

There is an unhealthy feeling simmering within the community that we are marginalized and our aspirations and concerns are unanswered or suppressed and that our basic human rights are violated. Official data reported by Statistics Canada show that our community is experiencing higher unemployment rates, higher poverty rates and higher COVID 19 infections than any other Canadian community and this is despite the fact that our community members have typically higher educational achievements and credentials and greater language skills than many other immigrant communities or native born Canadians.

Any action or any measure that divides the racialized communities and pits one group against another is unproductive, hurtful and inadmissible. We strongly support our brothers and sisters in the Jewish community in their struggle to contain and restrain anti-Semitism. We support any plan to combat anti-Semitism but unfortunately we feel that the IHRA legislation tabled for adoption by this Committee that includes "illustrative examples" is unproductive, divisive and confuses and conflates antisemitism with criticism of Israel. The suggested legislation inclusive of the "illustrative examples, fractures the needed solidarity where we all need to stand together in this struggle and where anti-racism should be clearly defined. It should separate anti-Semitism from protecting Israeli infractions of international law and the human rights of Palestinians under occupation. We support the legislation that outlaws anti-Semitism but not the attempt to shield Israel from legitimate criticism. We feel that IHRA legislation inclusive of "illustrative examples" threatens our Charter protected rights to free speech, freedom of belief and freedom to criticize the actions of any country or political group that tramples on International Law and the International Humanitarian Law. We strongly believe that it is our natural right to voice our opposition to any action that infringes our human rights here or abroad and should feel safe and protected by our country and fellow citizens. We should feel safe and assured that our rights will not be impinged upon for political expediency and zealotry to shield any nation state from the legitimate scrutiny of its behaviour.

It is quite relevant here to remind the honourable Committee members that Mr. Kenneth Stern, the Director of the New York Bard Centre for the Study of hate, who drafted the IHRA

definition, is on record opposing its official adoption by public institutions and has called for the separation of the definition from the “illustrative examples”.

We are hereby adding our voice to that of many renowned public intellectuals and scholars like Noam Chomsky, Richard Falk, and Viet Nguyen who called for the dismissal of this legislation for being divisive and unnecessary.

At this time we are calling for unity of the constituency of justice and the defense of human rights, imploring our representative to stress what unites us in this crucial fight for justice, equality and safety. This is not the time to allow divisive politics and narrow political interests to trump our unity and collective safety as we confront the forces of evil of discrimination and hate.

Yours truly,

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*CAADC was founded in response to the growing stereotyping, defamation, and discrimination directed against Canadians of Arab origin.
CAADC will defend the civil liberties and constitutional rights of all ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds in Canada.*

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