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Joint statement on National Summit on Islamophobia

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Rachna Singh, Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, and Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education, have released the following statement for the National Summit on Islamophobia, hosted by the Government of Canada on Thursday, July 22, 2021:

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Joint Statement

Victoria
Thursday, July 22, 2021
1:30 PM

“Over the past year, we’ve seen a significant increase in hateful attacks against Muslims across Canada. In June, the cowardly attack in London, Ontario shocked the country, taking the lives of four members of the community and leaving a son without a family.

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“In B.C., we’ve also seen a rise in anti-Muslim comments on social media, women attacked by white supremacists for wearing a hijab, and just last week, Islamophobic slogans were graffitied across a block in Surrey-Newton. This is unacceptable and cannot continue.

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“Government has a moral and ethical obligation to dismantle racism. We are committed to tackling hatred and discrimination of all kinds in B.C., but we know we must back it up with real action.

“We have committed to introduce a new anti-racism act to make B.C. a safer, more welcoming and equitable province for everyone, regardless of their race, skin colour or faith. As well, we’ll introduce anti-racism data legislation, to provide better and more equitable services to communities.

“And while government works on these priorities, we know communities that are experiencing racism and hate right now can’t wait.

“That’s why we launched a provincewide anti-racism awareness campaign and provided millions of dollars in grants to communities across B.C. for grassroots anti-racism projects and our Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network. This includes funding for Islam Unravelling to work with communities on ways to stop faith-based hate.

“We are working to create a new multilingual racist incident hotline to help British Columbians report racist incidents and receive support and referrals. We are also reviewing the Police Act and looking at options to deter hate groups from registering as societies in B.C. In addition, the BC Prosecution Service has a policy on hate crimes that provides guidance to prosecutors dealing with offences motivated by the offender’s bias, prejudice or

hate towards others.

“Education also has a significant role to play in stamping out discrimination in our communities. By teaching our children the colonial history of B.C. and highlighting local Muslim stories, we are giving them the tools to tackle Islamophobia and build a more inclusive province for everyone.

“The curriculum includes topics relevant to Islamophobia, such as diversity, inclusion and the prevention of discrimination. The Ministry of Education is currently creating a K-12 anti-racism action plan to give students and staff guidance on how to respond to incidents of racism.

“As well, the provincial Erase strategy (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) has been recently expanded to include Erase racism resources and information for students, staff and parents, which promotes inclusion and diversity.

“Racism and hate are hurting people in our communities, and it takes all of our collective voices to stand in solidarity against hate in any of its forms.

“We look forward to reviewing the recommendations by the National Council of Canadian Muslims in the upcoming days and working with the federal government and members of the Muslim community to build a country where everyone is treated with mutual respect, dignity and kindness.”

Learn More:

For more information on what to do if you see or are the victim of hate crime, visit:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governme/anti-racism/anti-racism/resiliencebc>

Students, parents, guardians and teachers can access resources through the Erase website to help them build safer school communities:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase>

For translations, visit: <http://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021AG0001422#translations>

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