



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-01008**

BY: **MR. BAYLIS (PIERREFONDS-DOLLARD)**

DATE: **DECEMBER 5, 2016**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **MÉLANIE JOLY**

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Response by the Minister of Canadian Heritage

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

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SUBJECT

**Islam**

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**ORIGINAL TEXT**

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**REPLY**

The Government would like to thank the petitioners for their request that the House of Commons join them in recognizing that extremist individuals do not represent the religion of Islam, and in condemning all forms of Islamophobia.

Canada is a diverse country and respecting our differences while fostering inclusion is a key component of our collective and individual success. Peaceful co-existence between all religious and belief communities is an important part of this approach.

In 2007, the House of Commons unanimously adopted a motion designating October as Canadian Islamic History Month "due to the important contributions of Canadian Muslims to Canadian Society, the cultural diversity of the Canadian Muslim community, the importance of Canadians learning about each other to foster greater social cohesion, and the important effort now underway in many Canadian communities in organizing public activities to achieve better understanding of Islamic history".

The Government of Canada recognizes and respects the diversity of Canadians in regards to race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as fundamental characteristics of Canadian society in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. The Government is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance Canada's multicultural heritage while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians.

Furthermore, subsection 3(1)(g) of the Act states that it is the policy of the Government of Canada to "promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins".

Canada has chosen to embrace diversity and inclusion, and to actively promote this as a core element of our national identity both in Canada and abroad. Promoting diversity and inclusion is also a key priority for the Government of Canada, and is one of the themes of the Canada 150 Celebrations, which will mark the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017.

Domestically, one of the Multiculturalism Program's objectives is to build bridges to promote intercultural understanding. Through the Multiculturalism Program, the Government provides support to the public to carry out activities that promote inter-faith and intercultural understanding in Canada. To further these efforts internationally, on May 17, 2016, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced the creation of the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion, which leverages Canada's experience as an inclusive, multi-faith, multilingual and multicultural democracy to promote diversity, inclusion, pluralism, and all human rights, including freedom of religion or belief.

The Government of Canada condemns all forms of racism and discrimination, including Islamophobia.