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## **Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, October 4, 2017**

**Vice-Chair**

**The Honourable Peter Van Loan**



## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Wednesday, October 4, 2017

• (1610)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC)):** I am calling the meeting to order. We have a very short period of time. I discussed some of the limitations with the witnesses. I indicated to all the parties that my inclination was that, due to the lack of time, we would cancel this meeting unless there was an alternative that folks could agree to. I understand that an alternative procedure has now been agreed to between the parties, whereby we will have seven minutes from each of the groups of witnesses who are from outside Ontario. Then we will have six-minute rounds of questions, first from the NDP, then from the Conservatives, and then from the Liberals. On that basis, I will ask you to proceed.

First, we are dealing with three different potential presentations here, correct?

Are we okay with that? All right.

I'll ask Mr. Emon to commence for seven minutes

**Dr. Anver Emon (Professor of Law & Canada Research Chair in Religion, Pluralism, and the Rule of Law, University of Toronto, As an Individual):** First, let me say thank you to the committee for inviting me to speak to you today. In the interests of time, I'll cut through some of the introductory remarks I was going to make.

I do research on Islamic law and the treatment of Muslims and Islam in Europe, North America, south and southeast Asia. It's in the context of that that I'm bringing my insights to this particular discussion.

I hope to demonstrate today that Islamophobia is already immersed in the everyday business of governing in Canada. To illustrate this systemic dynamic, I will examine three examples of government activity.

My first example is the 2011 polygamy reference in British Columbia. This case arose out of a criminal investigation of polygamous behaviour by the leaders of the FLDS community in Bountiful, B.C. The facts of the case are widely known. Since the 1990s, investigations and prosecutions stalled on the constitutional validity of the Criminal Code prohibition on polygamy.

The reference asked the court:

Is section 293 of the Criminal Code of Canada consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

In a general, neutral, factually unspecific way, this question asked about polygamy without any context-based qualifications. In doing so, the reference released the court and government lawyers from the factual shackles of the racially white, economically affluent, religiously Christian community of Bountiful, B.C., creating space to discuss an Islamic and, therefore, alien practice of polygamy.

The British Columbia attorney general hired my colleague, Mohammed Fadel, while the court-appointed amicus hired me to provide an affidavit on polygamy in Islamic law.

The court reviewed our affidavits, both of which addressed the historical, textual, and black letter law on polygamy as found in Islamic legal texts and as regulated in Muslim majority states. Importantly, the court recognized the absence of any empirical data on what Muslims actually do in Canada. In the reference, an overt determined idea of Islam was deployed to characterize polygamy as foreign and un-Canadian.

The reference raises two questions relevant to our inquiry about Islamophobia as a systemic enterprise.

Question number one is, in the absence of any meaningful data on Muslim practices in Canada, how was my affidavit relevant to a question about charter rights that pertained to individuals? Fundamentally, two unstated assumptions were operative, first, that if a religious text states something, Muslims must adhere to it and care about it or somehow follow it. This assumption illustrates why simply using anti-Muslim hate ignores the workings of Islamophobia and is systemic.

The second assumption was that Muslims, of course, slavishly adhere to their texts on polygamy, given long-standing European images of harems in Islamic lands and the oversexed Muslim male, which informs the majoritarian settler culture of Canada.

Moving on to question number two, how is my affidavit linked to systemic racism? The Bountiful, B.C. defendants were white, affluent, and adherents of a Christian denomination. They were racially marked as part of the majoritarian image of the settler Canadian state. The reference was able to re-characterize the Bountiful, B.C. community as foreign and dangerous by associating it with Islam, despite the fact that Muslim marital practices in Canada were factually irrelevant to the proceedings.

To be clear, I am not criticizing the final legal determination of the reference. Rather, I use this example to show how a whole host of ordinary, bureaucratic, discretionary—and most importantly—symbolically rich decisions made in the course of daily governmental business enable the systemic enterprise of Islamophobia. Moreover, it is plain that in this context I too inadvertently participated in the systemic enterprise of Islamophobia, but this is exactly how systemic bias works; it co-opts all of us.

My second example concerns the 2015 statute of Canada best known by its short title, the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act. The act targets certain marital practices such as forced marriage and polygamy, both of which are associated with certain communities of colour and religious practice, particularly the Muslim community.

I focus here on the title, which is the product again of discretionary governmental decisions that are pregnant with symbolic power and meaning. In the short title, the term of interest to me is the word “barbaric”.

“Barbaric” and its related terms have long been applied to Muslims and Islam, and informed the 19th century imperial ideal of “the white man’s burden”. Pope Urban II used the term “barbaric” in his 1095 speech inaugurating the first crusade against Muslims in Jerusalem, and “barbaric” lays in the backdrop of Rudyard Kipling’s 1899 poem, entitled *The White Man’s Burden*.

It hardly needs to be explained that those who invoke the term “barbarity” against others implicitly consider themselves to be its opposite—superior and civilized. For Pope Urban II, barbarity lay in the fact that, among other things, Muslims had no law, or at the very least, no good law.

Fast forward to 2015 and the zero tolerance act. The use of “barbaric” and the provisions on polygamy make it hard to miss how this act symbolically targets an imagined racialized Muslim community that is full of bad law and culture, all of which run contrary to the law of a civilized Canada.

My third and final example focuses on the newly formed Canada Centre for Community Engagement and the Prevention of Violence, which aims to address radicalization, violence, and extremism. Its senior director, Ms. Ritu Banerjee, addressed this committee on its first day of hearings.

Programs like this, generally called “countering violent extremism”, or CVE for short, were created in the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001. The myth is that these programs do not exclusively target Muslims, and it is true that they often invoke the spectre of right-wing militant groups. Indeed, in her submission Ms. Banerjee made no reference to Islamic extremism or terrorism but only to right-wing extremism.

She nonetheless spoke volumes about the systemic ways in which Islamophobia operates within the everyday operations of government. For instance, she supportively referenced Project Someone. Project Someone’s website contains various social media projects that deal with grand ideas like empathy and critical thinking. There’s one project, however, that is entirely composed of critical analyses of ISIS videos. Project Someone thereby perpetuates the all too

common idea that links Islam and terrorism, for the purpose of combatting radicalization. That’s not at all surprising.

The Brennan Center of Justice at NYU school of law has surveyed analogous programs in Europe and the United States and come to similar conclusions.

CVE programs rely on the Muslim extremist as an analytic paradigm for potentially extending that analysis to any other group, whether right-wing militant or indigenous protestor.

In these three examples I not only situate myself in the systemic enterprise of Islamophobia but also criticize projects led by different parties in government. I do this to suggest that combatting Islamophobia cannot be a partisan issue, however tempting it may be in order to achieve future electoral gains.

The opportunity this committee presents is to open ourselves up, however unpleasant it may be, to show what accountable leadership looks like, and to model it for all of Canada.

• (1615)

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Thank you very much.

We will now move to Ms. Zine for seven minutes. She is a professor of sociology and Muslim studies option at Wilfrid Laurier University.

**Dr. Jasmin Zine (Professor, Sociology and Muslim Studies Option, Wilfrid Laurier University, As an Individual):** Thank you. I will add that I specialize in Islamophobia studies and anti-racism.

I have been researching Muslim communities in Canada since the late 1990s. More recently, I completed a six-year national study on the impact of Islamophobia on the 9/11 generation of Muslim youth in Canada. I conducted in-depth interviews with 130 Muslim youth across the country to examine how Islamophobia and the ongoing war on terror have affected their sense of identity, citizenship, and belonging. I’d like to share with you some of what I have learned from the research I have been doing for the past two decades.

I will begin with terminology, since there seems to be a lot of confusion during these proceedings about what Islamophobia is and isn’t.

Some expressed discomfort with the term “Islamophobia” being used in Motion 103, arguing that employing this language in a non-binding motion will somehow contravene Canadian laws and undermine free speech. However, Canada has robust hate speech laws that govern what can and cannot be said within the boundaries of lawful dissent.

While the law permits a critique of religion, the demonization of a particular faith is different. This type of hate-mongering and vilification becomes mapped onto its adherents and can lead to Islamophobic violence. We have already seen this happen when Alexandre Bissonnette walked into a Quebec City mosque on January 29 of this year during evening prayers and shot dead six Muslim men in cold blood.

With these stakes in mind, I want to offer my working definition of Islamophobia that I have developed to capture its complex dimensions. The definition I use extends from “a fear or hatred of Islam and Muslims” to acknowledge that these attitudes develop into individual, ideological, and systemic forms of oppression that shore up specific power relations. This broader definition outlines the sociology of Islamophobia as being dynamic and multi-faceted, and not simply about negative beliefs or attitudes.

I locate anti-Muslim racism under the broader umbrella of Islamophobia as a manifestation. While violence, hatred, and discrimination are enacted against Muslim bodies, these acts rely upon the demonization of Islam to sustain and reproduce their racial logic. One does not exist without the other.

In this conceptual framework, individual acts of oppression include name-calling, vandalism, or assault. I remember that after the 9/11 tragedy my son Usama was called a terrorist, bullied, and threatened because of his name, identity, and faith. The 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide have borne the collective guilt and responsibility of the 9/11 attacks in ways that other communities never face when the perpetrators of crime are white. The tragic massacre in Las Vegas on the weekend is an example of this white exceptionalism, where the perpetrator is seen as a deviant individual whose actions have no bearing on the rest of his social group.

However, after the recent attacks in Edmonton, where the assailant was identified as a Somali-Muslim refugee, there have been reports of violence and harassment against visibly marked Muslim women. In an act of gendered Islamophobic violence, one woman had a glass bottle smashed on her head while on public transit, while other incidents are now coming to light. The tragic attack in Edmonton followed a series of coordinated anti-immigrant and anti-Islam rallies by white supremacist groups across the country, and now provides further impetus for Islamophobic backlash. We must be vigilant to quell these cycles of violence.

Hate crimes against Muslims are increasing at an alarming rate of 253% from 2012 to 2015. It's not only Muslims who suffer from Islamophobic harassment and violence, but anyone perceived as Muslim. For example, Sikhs who have been misidentified as Muslims have been attacked, along with their gurdwaras. A recent example is NDP leader Jagmeet Singh being misidentified as Muslim and publicly harassed.

Now, systemic forms of oppression are regulated through institutional practices like racial profiling or the denial of jobs and housing opportunities. In 2002 I conducted a study of homelessness among Muslims in Toronto and found that after 9/11 landlords were refusing to rent to people with Muslim-sounding names. The ability to access safe and affordable housing should be a human right unhindered by racism and discrimination.

Canadian policies also create systemic oppression and should be examined in light of this motion. My colleague has done a good job of outlining that, so I will move on, but also I want to mention how Bill 94, the Quebec charter of values banning the niqab from the public sphere, had a strong effect on creating and promoting gendered forms of Islamophobia. Interrogating the role of the state in reproducing systemic racism should be an important mandate.

Racial and religious profiling has targeted Canadian Muslims. The youth I interviewed internalized this surveillance and carefully monitor their actions to make sure they're not mistaken as terrorists if they go up north to play paintball or are seen playing violent video games. My younger son received a call from CSIS the day after he was elected president of the Muslim Students' Association of his university, as have other MSA presidents.

● (1620)

The 9/11 generation of Muslim youth find their identities politicized and policed at a very early age. Public Safety Canada needs to be made aware of how Islamophobia is a breeding ground for recruitment into radical Islamist groups, and they should also be advised of the destructive counterproductive effect that countering violent extremism initiatives have created in other countries.

There are, of course, ideological underpinnings that shore up all of these practices, things like Muslims as terrorists and pending threats to public safety that are popularized in media, pop culture, and public policy.

In conclusion, I want to make some concrete recommendations to make the priorities of motion 103 actionable.

First, I would like to recommend that research on and documentation of Islamophobia, systemic racism, and religious discrimination be promoted as a funding priority through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and that funding priorities for the Canada Council for the Arts and Canadian Heritage should include these areas to help generate counter-narratives to the misrepresentation of racial and religious groups.

Finally, the Council of Europe's model for youth centres that provide peer mentoring and training around human rights, anti-Islamophobia, anti-racism, and combatting all forms of discrimination should be viewed as a best practice.

Thank you. I hope the discussion moving forward continues to build on the possibilities that Motion 103 opens for creating a more just and inclusive society.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Thank you very much.

Now we will move to the National Council of Canadian Muslims' Ihsaan Gardee, executive director and, Eve Torres, public affairs coordinator for seven minutes.

**Mr. Ihsaan Gardee (Executive Director, National Council of Canadian Muslims):** Mr. Chair and honourable members, thank you for this invitation to appear before the committee to share the perspective of the NCCM on this committee's study of the issue of systemic racism and religious discrimination including Islamophobia. Due to the shortened nature, we will be submitting a written brief as well to supplement our oral testimony today.

Briefly, the NCCM is an independent, non-partisan, and non-profit grassroots organization whose mission is to protect human rights and civil liberties, challenge discrimination and Islamophobia, build mutual understanding, and advance the public concerns of Canadian Muslim communities. The task set before you, according to the wording contained in the motion, is to:

develop a whole-of-government approach to reducing or eliminating systemic racism and religious discrimination including Islamophobia, in Canada, while ensuring a community-centered focus with a holistic response through evidence-based policy-making.

This is an important task that is timely and essential to the ongoing well-being of Canadians and newcomers. Systemic discrimination and religious discrimination have a long and sad history in Canada, with many current expressions including anti-indigenous racism, anti-black racism, and anti-Semitism. All of these require attention and the concern of this committee.

As we know and have heard, Islamophobia is specifically mentioned in the motion while other specific examples are not. Some have made and continue to make an issue of this. From our perspective, as an agency working on the front lines of this issue and receiving regular and increasing numbers of complaints of anti-Muslim discrimination and harassment, the specific reference to Islamophobia is absolutely appropriate. This is in line with other actions that the government has taken including unanimously adopting a motion in 2015, M-630, which specifically condemned anti-Semitism.

This committee's study is also important because of the devastating attack on January 29 at the Islamic cultural centre in Quebec, which left six worshippers dead, many injured, and families shattered. This was the single most horrific mass killing at a place of worship in Canadian history, and it occurred in the context of well-documented growing expressions of hate and discrimination against Muslims. You have heard the statistics from my colleagues.

The singling out of Islamophobia does not diminish the importance of all forms of systemic discrimination but, rather, is a recognition of the current ground realities and an important signal that the government recognizes the urgency of the situation.

There has also been significant and unfounded fearmongering regarding the usage of the term Islamophobia in the motion and in the work of this committee. Islamophobia has been defined in a clear manner by leading human rights institutions in the western world and in Canada for decades. Islamophobia is hate, hostility, prejudice, and discrimination directed towards Muslims. The Ontario Human Rights Commission defines it as follows, which the NCCM subscribes to:

Islamophobia includes racism, stereotypes, prejudice, fear or acts of hostility directed towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling...Islamophobia can lead to

viewing and treating Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic and societal level.

Of course, all terms have limits and "Islamophobia" is no different. From various viewpoints its limitations could be identified, but it would be unacceptable to expect that the term Islamophobia should be held to a higher standard of clarity than are other equivalent terms such as anti-Semitism. It has a clear meaning and it has gained wide usage both inside the Canadian Muslim communities and in wider society for many years.

Hate expression in Canada is only limited by Criminal Code provisions, which establish a very high bar for conviction, and by human rights legislation, which prohibits discrimination and harassment in limited domains of life, such as employment, housing, and services. Outside of these fairly narrow contexts, hate expression is perfectly legal in Canada.

However, hate expression and racism are not harmless. Many studies have demonstrated that such expression undermines the mental health and well-being of the groups affected and contributes to the alienation of members of these groups. Hate expression and racism are major contributors to the experiences of discrimination and harassment. It is also important to recognize the issue of intersectionality, in which individuals who bear a number of different markers can face a number of different forms of discrimination. For example, black Muslim women face gender-based discrimination, race-based discrimination, and religious discrimination. Although hate expression outside of its identified legal limits is legal and a necessary consequence of the protection of free speech, it must be understood that it is toxic to the social cohesion of Canadian society and it places tremendous burdens on the targeted minority groups.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Eve Torres (Public Affairs Coordinator, National Council of Canadian Muslims):** I have been working with Muslim communities in Quebec for more than 15 years. I have been able to see the progress of Muslim Quebecers, but I have also seen the many barriers to social acceptance that they have to overcome.

Unfortunately, for years, we have heard about Muslims being belittled and stigmatized in political speeches or public and media commentaries. Yet Muslims in Quebec have not seen their views, challenges and concerns taken very seriously.

In the meantime, the rise of right-wing extremist groups in Quebec has become very problematic. The NCCM argues that there is a direct link between hate speech and violence against minority groups. However, a number of Quebec politicians have acknowledged that the climate created by Islamophobic rhetoric has contributed to the emergence of violence against Quebec Muslims, which led to the terrorist act against the Centre culturel islamique de Québec, but no concrete measures have really been taken.

The trauma caused by that attack still permeates Quebec's Muslim communities. I met with the families of the victims and the wider community, and I can say that communities are extremely concerned about their future, especially their children's future. This type of challenge is only starting to be heard by the provincial government and some opposition parties.

I would be happy to further elaborate during the time for questions.

• (1630)

[English]

**Mr. Ihsaan Gardee:** By way of concrete recommendations to the committee, the NCCM submits that the following actions and policy steps should be undertaken.

First, Parliament should declare January 29 a national day of remembrance and action on Islamophobia in Canada.

Second, just as the federal budget was rightly subjected to a gender-based analysis, this lens should be expanded to include a diversity, equity, and inclusion analysis. When spending decisions are tied to policy and the rationales that underpin it, they can have far more broad-reaching impacts than attempting to address social phenomena after they occur.

Third, the federal government should create an anti-racism directorate within the Department of Canadian Heritage to work with provincial counterparts, such as the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate. Such a directorate should take the lead in developing a national action plan against racism, with adequate funding to support communication, education, and accountability mechanisms around hate expression, discrimination, and racism.

Fourth, while Criminal Code restrictions exist on hate expression, little is understood about these in the wider society and even among police organizations. It is essential that these restrictions be better communicated to the general public and advocacy efforts in support of their application be enhanced. Additionally, better training about these provisions, their application, and their enforcement needs to be provided to police services across Canada.

Fifth, law enforcement should be required to retain and undertake regular and ongoing training in bias-free policing as well as victim-based approaches to dealing with hate crimes. This should be conducted by adequately trained anti-hate personnel and units, or by recognized outside experts.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** We have to move to the question rounds. We are going to have to make them five minutes each.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Chair, we can't have five minutes.... Our vote is at 4:53. It's 4:31 now.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.):** We have 22 minutes.

**Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.):** We are not going to get past one round.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Ms. Kwan, please proceed.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, do we have three minutes for each party?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** I don't think we can go 15 minutes. Getting from here to the House in nine minutes is not realistic.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** If we keep talking, we are not going to have any questions.

We had an agreement, and I am going to proceed.

Ms. Kwan, go ahead, please, for five minutes.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** I think that once the bells are ringing you need unanimous consent to continue.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** We had an agreement on the procedure that would be followed. I'd like us to go ahead.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** I think we had an agreement when we thought the bells were going to ring 10 minutes later than they did.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** No, they were originally supposed to start ringing at 4:23. They started ringing at 4:27—

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Why don't we let Ms. Kwan ask her question? I say we start with that.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am concerned that we would miss our vote in the House. In light of that, if we can accommodate moving to three-minute rounds, Mr. Chair, I'm okay with that from my side.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Go ahead.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you.

Thank you very much to all of our witnesses for their very thoughtful presentations.

In terms of action going forward, which I think is central to what we are trying to do here, you have all outlined some recommendations in that regard.

With respect to recommendations, one of the key issues I've heard from communities is that there needs to be a nationwide strategy to educate the public, both on the diversity issue by way of race, as well as on religious beliefs, an interfaith sort of approach to it.

I wonder if each of you can give me a very quick recommendation in less than a minute.

**Dr. Anver Emon:** I have two that I can give you. I think multicultural education at the grade school level has been framed in terms of the good new story that is multiculturalism. When I receive law students in my critical race studies course, they don't know how to talk about race, racial politics, or the sociology of race.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Sorry, I'm just going to interrupt you for one second there. Would that mean that the federal government needs to fund the school board so that the teachers themselves would have PD days, funded to be able to learn about these differences and then be able to pass that information on to their students?

**Dr. Anver Emon:** It would certainly involve federal and provincial coordination on that matter, yes.

I will also suggest that public universities offer an important site for thinking about diversity at a more systemic level. They're often the best place for thinking about the complexity of our democratic culture through difference, but oftentimes they don't move on these things without external pushes like, for instance, a recommendation from a standing committee report.

• (1635)

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you.

Mr. Gardee.

**Mr. Ihsaan Gardee:** I would just refer you again to the third recommendation we made, which was that the federal government create an anti-racism directorate within Canadian Heritage to work with provincial counterparts such as the Ontario anti-racism directorate, which is undertaking a study of this.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Yes, thank you. Sorry, I'm just going to cut you off because you can have a directorate, but part of the issue, for example for a school board, is that they cannot have these training sessions in place because they're not funded. And to fund it, you can't tell the province to just fund it. So if we're going to do this nationally across the country, should the federal government then fund this strategy for all of the provinces, for all of the school boards across the nation?

**Mr. Ihsaan Gardee:** They should be part of the national action plan against racism that I mentioned and suggested should be undertaken, and there should be, as Professor Emon said, coordination between the provinces and the federal government.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you.

Professor Zine.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** You're past time.

I'm going to have to—

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** Mr. Chair, I think we had an agreement on procedure. I would rule it out of order because—

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** There was no [Inaudible—Editor] on any agreement. A motion to adjourn is not debatable.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** —it's contrary to a unanimous consent motion.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** I'm not going to entertain it, because it's fundamentally unjust.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** It's not debatable.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Mr. Reid, you can proceed.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** It's Mr. Sweet.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Oh, Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Thank you very much, Chair.

To be clear, any hatred, discrimination, persecution, or violence against Muslims is absolutely wrong. It should be dealt with to the full extent of the law. To be clear, we are also the ones who have a problem with the term "Islamophobia", however not [Inaudible—Editor].

Mr. Gardee, you mentioned that you felt that the meaning was quite clear in the Muslim community, but we've had testimony before from people within the Muslim community who had very deep concerns about the term "Islamophobia". And today, Ms. Zine introduced a seventh definition of Islamophobia to us.

My concern is that, when it comes to hatred, persecution, and discrimination, clarity really needs to happen. Ms. Zine also mentioned that demonization of Islam would be something that should be criminalized. I'm wondering where the criticism of Islam moves into demonization. Secondly, are you in agreement with the definition of the Toronto District School Board's definition of Islamophobia?

**Dr. Jasmin Zine:** I'd like to respond because you have misquoted me. I never said "demonization of Islam should be criminalized".

**Mr. David Sweet:** Okay.

**Dr. Jasmin Zine:** I said that there are hate crime laws that determine the boundaries of lawful dissent in terms of speech. I said that demonization gets mapped onto the bodies of Muslims who then become victims of Islamophobic violence as a result of those types of ideas. I'm not suggesting it be criminalized.

You talk about the different definitions. I could ask everyone in this room to give me a definition of racism, and they will all come up with different definitions than I have as a race scholar because not everyone has textbook definitions, but people understand it and know it when they see it.

So again, I think my colleagues have asked why we are holding Islamophobia's definition up to a higher standard than we hold other definitions. Even the definition of culture has changed throughout the centuries, and there are about 40 or 50 different definitions for that. Why are we holding this to a different level?

I've tried to outline a working definition that can be used to help dismantle Islamophobia, and I've worked on educational projects with UNESCO and the Council of Europe on how we combat Islamophobia using a definition like this. The operational definition has been there, and it's been used in other national contexts.

**Mr. David Sweet:** I think one of the reasons why we're holding it to some standard—

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, we need unanimous consent to continue, and you didn't get it, and I'm sorry I'm going to—

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** We do not need unanimous consent. We're continuing.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Well, you have a non-debatable motion on the floor here to adjourn, so—



**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** We're not entertaining that, because we had unanimous consent as to the—

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** But there's a motion to adjourn and it's not debatable, so I'm going to challenge your decision with all due respect, Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Madam, it's my job as chair—

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** That's not debatable, sir. We have to vote on that.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** The chair is to protect fair, democratic process and due process rights in accordance with the rules—

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Okay, but I've challenged your decision, and that's not debatable, and we have to vote on it.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Could we at least allow Madame Zine to finish her response?

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** We set the rules at the start of this meeting by unanimous consent, and you are now seeking to do it—

**Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.):** Ask the clerk.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Madam Zine had 20 seconds left in her answer and I would like her to finish it.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Would you ask the clerk, please?

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Madam Zine, you can finish your answer in 20 seconds and then it's over to the Liberals.

**Dr. Jasmin Zine:** Well, I think this is an illustration of why there are differences about various kinds of objectives or definitions or

things that are going on. The fact that there are people in the community who may have a different understanding of it doesn't mean the standard definitions being used internationally and in various forms are not good, worthy ones. The definitions stand on their own.

• (1640)

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Now, Ms. Dabrusin, for three minutes.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Thank you.

I'm not going to take my full three minutes, and I apologize: a vote has been called, which is why there is a rush.

Could any of you provide in writing any comments about the strengths and weaknesses of the Ontario anti-racism strategic plan?

As well, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination put out a report with recommendations for Canada on September 13, 2017. If you have any comments for us to consider, I would appreciate that in writing. Thank you.

**Mr. Ihsaan Gardee:** Of course.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Is there anything else from the Liberal side?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** I'm done with my question.

**The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan):** Do I have a motion to adjourn?

When you have unanimous consent to set a process, it stays in place.

The meeting is adjourned.





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