

Members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security -

On behalf of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, we are writing to support Bill C-71 and measures to strengthen the bill to prevent access to firearms by members of hate groups which espouse racism and violence.

The Canadian Anti-Hate Network (CAN) is a nonpartisan nonprofit which monitors hate groups and provides up to date information to media, researchers, law enforcement and community organizations. The organization is modeled after, and supported by, the esteemed Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in the United States.

The Canadian Anti-Hate Network is concerned about the growing threat of hate groups in Canada, which have a bodycount.

January 2017, Alexandre Bissonnette walked into a mosque in Quebec City and killed six - Canada's first terror attack on a place of worship. April 2018, Alek Minassian allegedly drove a rental van into people on the sidewalk, killing ten.

Bissonnette was consuming anti-Muslim propaganda and both were consuming alt-right propaganda, which often glorifies mass killings and mass killers.

We know of other individuals, like Thomas White of Thunder Bay, who has a RPAL license and restricted firearms. He is the host of Canada's largest neo-Nazi podcast and has posted, "basically my kids are the one thing that keep me from seigeposting [advocating violence] 24/7. Otherwise, it'd be massacres on the streets until I met an untimely end."

It is our understanding that White continues to possess his firearms despite concerns being expressed to the Chief Firearms Officer of Ontario.

In Alberta and elsewhere, as reported by Vice and the CBC, the anti-Muslim III%er militia group are stockpiling weapons, conducting paramilitary training, and staking out mosques. The leader of the group has posted on Facebook, "the only good Muslim is a dead Muslim." In April, a Kansas court found three members of the III%ers guilty of plotting to bomb a building full of Somali refugees.

Canadians made up over 70 per cent of the traffic on a now-defunct openly fascist and neo-Nazi forum called Iron March. The same forum produce Atomwaffen, the neo-Nazi terror group that killed 5 in the span of 8 months in the United States. On Iron March, users told a frustrated 17 year old from Oak Bay, British Columbia to get his firearms license and take a permanent solution to his school.

In Île Perrot, Quebec, 2006, 18-year-old Renaud Emard, known as “necro99” on Stormfront, was arrested on weapons charges after being investigated for making racist threats on the Internet and posting pictures of himself posing with guns. After police raided his home, 20 firearms and other weapons were uncovered. Hate literature, an ethnic cleansing manual, and a hit list featuring the names of schoolmates were also discovered. Emard pleaded guilty to possession of a prohibited weapon and five counts of careless storage of firearms.

According to the Edmonton Sun, Kyle McKee, leader of the violent neo-Nazi group Blood and Honour was sentenced in 2013 for possession of a shotgun “while prohibited from possessing weapons, as a result of having already been given four previous weapons prohibitions.”

Headline: Suspect in Edmonton cop killing was wanted for hate crimes. June 9, 2015, The Star.

Headline: Former co-president of Sask. Soldiers of Odin facing explosives, weapons, drug charges. February 16, 2017, Regina Leader-Post.

We trust these examples, of which there are many more, illustrate how dangerous it is to allow individuals in hate groups access to firearms.

We recommend the Bill C-71 be amended to add criteria to prevent individuals from receiving firearms licences if they associate with hate groups and therefore pose a serious risk to themselves and others. Further, we support measures which make it possible, in the interest of public safety, for the Chief Firearms Officer to take weapons out of the hands of individuals espousing racism and support for violence.

If you have any questions, please contact us at info@antihate.ca.

Sincerely,

Bernie Farber
Chair, Canadian Anti-Hate Network

Richard Warman
Board Member, Canadian Anti-Hate Network

Amira Elghawaby
Board Member, Canadian Anti-Hate Network

Evan Balgord
Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Hate Network