



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Julie Dzerowicz
Member of Parliament / Députée
Davenport



August 6, 2024

Mayor Olivia Chow
City Hall
100 Queen St W
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Via Email

Mayor Chow:

I hope this email finds you well. As you know, there has been a dramatic increase in expressions of hate in Toronto and across Canada. In particular, we have seen a dramatic rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia.

At the national and city levels, many steps have been taken to combat this rise in hate and discrimination. I am hoping that working together we can continue to step up our efforts. Specifically, I am advocating for the City of Toronto to urgently consider a bylaw that prohibits demonstrations within 100 meters of sensitive locations, including places of worship, schools, childcare centers, and hospitals to protect these areas from protests that intimidate, incite hatred, violence, or discrimination. The City of Vaughan has implemented a bylaw and I hope that the City of Toronto will follow suit.

I have spoken to local Jewish and Muslim groups and individuals who are deeply worried. Many feel unsafe sending their children to school and attending religious services due to a fear of being targeted and attacked. In light of this troubling trend, the establishment of designated community safety zones around places of worship, schools, childcare centers, and hospitals within the City of Toronto prohibiting demonstrations that intimidate or incite hatred, violence, or intolerance - would be a key step that would tangibly improve safety. This measure is critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of our children and vulnerable community members.

The federal government has taken critical steps to combat hate and discrimination, including:

- Hosting national summits on antisemitism and Islamophobia in 2021 to engage with communities, gather recommendations, and shape future policies. These summits were pivotal in the development of Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy and the National Action Plan on Combatting Hate.
- Investing \$110.4 million into launching Canada's new Anti-Racism Strategy to fight racism and discrimination using a whole of government approach. This strategy covers over 70 federal initiatives, while investing over \$70 million directly into communities across the country.
- Budget 2024 also invests over \$273 million over six years to implement Canada's Action Plan on Combatting Hate, including over \$29 million ongoing to combat hate crimes and enhance community security.
- Appointing Amira Elghawaby as the Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia in 2023. Her role involves advising the government, conducting community engagements, and addressing policy issues related to Islamophobia.

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- In 2020, appointing Canada’s first Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism to promote Holocaust education, remembrance, and research and tackle antisemitism.
- This month, MP Anthony Housefather was appointed by the Prime Minister as a Special Advisor Jewish Community Relations and Antisemitism.

Last year, Toronto City Council passed the "Keeping Toronto Safe from Hate" motion, which condemns all forms of hate, including antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racism. This motion is a significant step in reinforcing our commitment to creating an inclusive and safe environment for everyone. The motion also includes directives to enhance collaboration between the City of Toronto, Toronto Police Services Board, and other security agencies to monitor, prevent, and respond to hate crimes more effectively, including requesting the Police Services Board to create "community safe zones" around places of worship, cultural centers, schools, and daycares. Nearly nine months have gone by since this motion unanimously passed.

More recently, a motion requesting the Provincial Government to create safety “bubble” zones did not pass. Instead, Toronto City Council passed a motion to create an action plan to ensure that Torontonians can practice their faith and access their places of worship while also protecting *Charter* rights. Recent incidents have highlighted the need for further protective measures, particularly around schools and places of worship. The establishment of community safety zones is essential to providing a safe and secure environment for our community and ensuring we are standing up against hate and violence.

I urge you to follow the example set by the City of Vaughan, which established a bylaw that prohibits demonstrations within 100 meters of sensitive locations, including places of worship, schools, childcare centers, and hospitals to protect these areas from protests that intimidate, incite hatred, violence, or discrimination. Under the bylaw, violations could result in significant fines up to \$100,000. I believe this bylaw balances the right to protest with the need to prevent hate and violence.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

My very best regards,

Julie Dzerowicz
Member of Parliament – Davenport

CC:
John McKay, Chair Toronto Caucus
Alejandra Bravo, City Councillor for Ward 9 - Davenport

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