

QCGN Statement on Murder of Muslim Family in London, Ontario

Human Rights and Freedoms Are Not to be Taken for Granted

MONTREAL, June 8, 2021 – The Quebec Community Groups Network is sickened by the heinous murder of five Muslims Sunday in London, Ontario. The fear and hatred that fueled this senseless act of Islamophobia has no place in Canadian society. Every Canadian has a sacred and inherent freedom of conscience and religion. No person, no group, and no government can take this freedom away. Some will try; none will succeed. As a nation, Canada has sacrificed dearly in the fight to preserve this freedom. And the fight continues.

There is a straight line between the mass murder of Muslims – yesterday’s crime and the 2017 attack on the mosque in Quebec City – and laws that single out and prevents or restricts people of faith from exercising their freedom of religion. There is a straight line between violence and governments that callously set aside and ignore these fundamental freedoms in the name of the collective good. When people are murdered because of who they are, we are all wounded. We are diminished, and we are all threatened.

This is not someone else’s fight. This is a societal struggle.

Governments do not decide what rights and freedoms individual Canadians possess. Governments are accountable to us, not the other way around.

We were painfully reminded last week that Canada must face up to being on the infamous list of countries that have perpetrated genocide. There is much work to be done by all Canadians to heal our relationship with the land’s Indigenous peoples. The path to reconciliation lies in discovering and internalizing a human rights approach to our nation’s governance.

It is 2021, and we are not the True North Strong and Free. Canadians are being murdered because of their religion. Reconciliation with the land’s Indigenous peoples is incomplete. Quebec is passing legislation that pre-emptively suspends the fundamental freedoms, legal and equality rights of its citizens.

Human rights and freedoms may be inherent, but they are not to be taken for granted. They must be fought for and vigorously defended by everyone of us.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes to the family and community of yesterday's victims. Today their grief touches us all. Let us share the pain together.