

January 24, 2018

Mayor John Tory and Toronto City Council
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and Toronto City Council,

Re: Open Letter calling for designation of January 29 as National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia

OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants is writing to ask that Toronto City Council supports the Canada-wide call for the designation of January 29 as a National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia.

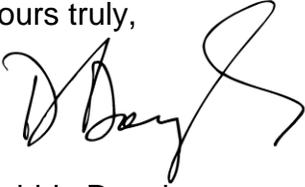
One year after the devastating attack at the Quebec City mosque that claimed the lives of six Muslim men as they worshipped and injured 19 others we remain deeply shocked by the tragedy that is often described as the biggest terrorist attack on Canadian soil. A National Day of Remembrance and Action is a fitting memorial to the lives lost and shattered, and a much needed focus for all Canadian residents to work to address the stereotypes, discrimination and hatred that give rise to such acts of violence. It is important that we work collectively to prevent such horrific acts from ever occurring again.

As the umbrella organization for immigrant and refugee-serving organizations in Ontario, OCASI has been actively engaged in working with our member agencies and other civil society organizations across Toronto as well as the province to counter Islamophobia, racism and xenophobia. We have collaborated successfully with the City of Toronto on a public education campaign across all Wards to raise awareness and encourage conversation and other actions to counter Islamophobia, racism and xenophobia. The initiative was an important expression of City of Toronto's commitment to building communities that are safe and welcoming of all residents.

Discrimination and hatred towards Muslims continues to be pervasive and persistent and is a concern for us all as Canadian residents. The work to address it must be done by all and not left only to Muslim civil society organizations and communities. A National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia can give all Canadian residents as well as political, civil society and private sectors an opportunity to individually and collectively speak out and take action on this critical concern.

As Mayor and City Council your leadership in calling for a National Day of Action and Remembrance on Islamophobia is an important expression of support for Muslim communities, and a clear statement to all Torontonians as well as other Canadians that hatred and bigotry are not welcome in our communities.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debbie Douglas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Debbie Douglas
Executive Director

CC: Councillor Neethan Shan, Ward 42 Scarborough-Rouge Rive, City of Toronto Newcomer Advocate