



CANADA

Quick Facts

Population: 35,623,680 (July 2017 est.)

Area: 9,984,670 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Canadian 32.2%, English 19.8%, French 15.5%, Scottish 14.4%, Irish 13.8%, German 9.8%, Italian 4.5%, Chinese 4.5%, North American Indian 4.2%, other 50.9%

GDP (official exchange rate):\$1.652 trillion (2017 est.)

Source: CIA World FactBook (Last Updated August 2018)

INTRODUCTION

Canada is a free and peaceful society, with a large and generally successful immigration program. Newcomers to Canada tend to learn the local language (English or French), integrate into the economy, adopt Canadian values, and develop a positive Canadian identity. Muslims are no exception, and most Muslim communities in Canada are better integrated than their European counterparts. That said, Canada has also earned the unsavory reputation of being a terrorist haven, thanks to decades of political inaction and a weak legal framework to stop terrorist activities. A succession of terrorist groups flocked to Canada in the decades prior to 9/11. Following the September 2001 attacks on Washington and New York, Canada finally enacted stricter anti-terrorism laws. In the years since, however, Islamist, jihadist and other terrorist groups have been able to hide amid Canada's immigrant communities – including its Muslim population of just over 1 million.¹ Stubborn and subversive Islamist groups have penetrated the community and established terrorist cells, fundraising operations, communal organizations, mosques, and schools.

Following two attacks against members of the Canadian Forces in 2014, the Canadian government once again strengthened its response to these developments through legislation (including the 2015 Anti-Terrorism Act, known as Bill C51) which created new tools for the Canadian government to fight terrorism and the ideology responsible for it. Canada's approach to combatting Islamism has shifted under current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has been accused of building alliances with Islamist organizations and turning a blind eye to extremism in Canada in an attempt to court Muslim and Arab voters.² Trudeau has also pledged to welcome returned Islamic State fighters in the hopes of “de-radicalizing” and “re-integrating” them into Canadian society.³

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Exploiting the lack of anti-terrorism legislation that existed until 2001, terrorist groups traditionally used Canada's immigrant communities as safe havens and, occasionally, as bases of operations. These groups

included, among others, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA),⁴ Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE),⁵ and Sikh extremists.⁶ More recently, these organizations and groups have been joined and outpaced by Islamist cells of various political and ideological stripes.

Canada's Islamist terrorists fall into three broad camps: (1) Salafist, including the new and enthusiastic supporters of the Islamic State, (2) Shiite, and (3) Palestinian. Salafists belong primarily to the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, and Armed Islamic Group (GIA), an Algerian group striving to turn Algeria into a theocratic Islamic state.

Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda has a persistent presence in Canada, and terrorism from al-Qaeda extremists remains a serious threat. According to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)⁷, there are three primary ways in which terrorism threatens Canadian safety and security: 1) terrorists continue to plot direct attacks against Canada and its allies, at home and abroad, with the intent of causing death, disruption and fear; 2) terrorists conduct activities in Canada to support terrorist activity globally, namely fundraising to support attacks and military groups; and 3) terrorists use social media to reach and radicalize individual Canadians, who are then convinced to travel abroad to join a terrorist army and commit attacks, or to receive training on terrorist methods.

One of the most prominent examples of al-Qaeda in Canada is the Khadr family. Ahmed Said Khadr, the patriarch of the family, raised extensive funding for al-Qaeda and was the highest-ranking member of the group in Canada at one point. He died in a 2003 confrontation with the Pakistani military,⁸ but his Islamist legacy lives on through his children. Two sons, Omar and Abdul Rahman, attended al-Qaeda training camps, fought for the Taliban and spent time in Guantanamo for terrorism. Omar killed an American medic, Spt. 1st Class Christopher J. Speer, during a gun battle in Afghanistan in July 2002. He was arrested and sent to Guantanamo Bay. In 2003, the U.S. released Abdul Rahman and he returned to Canada.⁹

In October 2010, Omar Khadr pleaded guilty to murder in violation of the laws of war, attempted murder in violation of the laws of war, conspiracy, two counts of providing material support for terrorism, and spying in the United States.¹⁰ In exchange for his guilty plea, the military tribunal sentenced him to eight years in prison and promised to repatriate him to Canada after he had served the first year of his sentence at Guantanamo. The U.S. finally repatriated Omar Khadr to Canada on September 29, 2012,¹¹ and he was released on bail from an Edmonton prison and put on "house arrest" in May 2015. He has since had his bail conditions relaxed to include visiting his still-radicalized family members in Toronto, become engaged to a Palestinian activist, graced the front cover of Canada's cultural magazine, *Macleans*, and filed a \$20 million lawsuit against the Canadian government.¹²

In July 2017, Canadian media reported that the Trudeau government had secretly settled this lawsuit, awarded Khadr \$10.5 million (CAD) and issued an official apology on behalf of the Government of Canada.¹³ Trudeau confirmed this payout, stating that the decision came as a result of a court decision that sided with Khadr. The court ruling, however, only stated that Khadr's rights had been violated in 2003 when he was sent to Guantanamo and did not order the government to pay him or apologize. Public opinion in Canada has been critical of the Trudeau government and its decision to pay an admitted al-Qaeda terrorist.¹⁴

Two Canadian men participated in the In Amenas hostage crisis in January 2013, when an al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group took over 800 hostages at a gas facility in In Amenas, Algeria. Ultimately, at least 38 civilians and 29 terrorists died during the siege.¹⁵ Two of the terrorists, Ali Medlej and Xristos Katsiroubas, were Canadian men and high school classmates from London South Collegiate Institute in London, Ontario. Both men were killed in the attack.¹⁶ Mauritanian authorities had previously arrested a third classmate, Aaron Yoon, who was convicted in July 2012 of having ties to al-Qaeda and of posing a danger to national security and sentenced to two years in prison.¹⁷ Yoon was transferred back to London,

Canada in July 2013.¹⁸

Increasingly, al-Qaeda cells in Canada have graduated from planning attacks abroad to planning attacks against Canada itself. In 2006, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) arrested eighteen men plotting to bomb the Toronto Stock Exchange, a military base located off Highway 401 between Toronto and Ottawa, and Front Street offices of CSIS, Canada's security and intelligence agency.¹⁹ They also intended to storm the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and Canadian Parliament, take hostages, and decapitate the leaders of each party, including the Prime Minister. They planned to demand that Canada withdraw her troops from Afghanistan.²⁰

Of the 18 men arrested, eleven have been convicted of terrorism offences and two have been sentenced to life in prison.²¹ The ring-leader, Zakaria Amara, pled guilty, received a life sentence and was stripped of his Canadian citizenship under a new law passed by the Harper government. Harper's successor, Justin Trudeau, has reversed this law and overhauled the government's ability to strip citizenship from foreign-born dual citizens convicted on terrorism charges.

Another al-Qaeda connected plot was thwarted on April 22, 2013, after an eight-month investigation. The RCMP arrested Tunisian-born Chiheb Esseghaier and Raed Jaser, a Palestinian from the United Arab Emirates, for plotting to derail a VIA Rail passenger train near Toronto. Police claim that the pair received guidance from members of al-Qaeda living in Iran.²²

A final example of an al-Qaeda connected terrorist cell was that headed up by Hiva Mohammad Alizadeh in Ottawa. The Iranian-born Kurdish refugee to Canada is considered the ringleader of an Ottawa al-Qaeda cell. He pled guilty to a terror plot in 2014 and was sentenced to 24 years in a federal prison.²³ Alizadeh admitted that he spent two months in an al-Qaeda terrorist training camp in Afghanistan in 2009, where he received training on using firearms and assembling improvised explosive devices, and smuggled 56 circuit boards, capable of triggering remote bombs, back to Canada.²⁴

The Islamic State

The Islamic State has garnered interest in Canada since its emergence in 2014. Recent estimates suggested that over 180 Canadians have left their homes to fight overseas, particularly in the Islamic State's jihad. Several were arrested before they could leave, and there have been at least four attacks in Canada, using lone wolf tactics, carried out by men who had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State.

The first attack was carried out by Canadian-born Martin Couture-Rouleau, who, on October 20, 2014, intentionally rammed his car into a pair of Canadian Forces soldiers in a shopping mall parking lot in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, killing one of them. Couture-Rouleau converted from Christianity to Islam in 2013, and began regularly posting pro-Islamic State and anti-Semitic messages on his Facebook page.²⁵

Just two days later, a second Islamist attack took place on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Islamist terrorist Michael Zehaf-Bibeau shot and killed Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who was standing ceremonially on guard at the Canadian War Memorial. After the shooting, Zehaf-Bibeau reportedly raises his gun in the air and shouted, "For Iraq." He then stormed the Centre Block building of the Canadian Parliament, shot a security guard and made his way towards the Library of Parliament before being fatally shot by parliamentary security guards. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Leader of Her Majesty's Royal Opposition Thomas Mulcair were in adjacent rooms when the terrorist was killed.²⁶

On August 10, 2016, another would-be ISIS jihadist was shot and killed by Canadian police while in a taxi near his home in small-town Ontario. Twenty-five-year-old Aaron Driver, a Muslim-convert who was known to authorities, had recorded a homemade video and strapped on a home-made bomb. He was headed to busy Union Station in downtown Toronto,²⁷ but thankfully, the Canadian police were tipped off by their counterparts in the FBI and his attack was thwarted. In Driver's video, he didn't mince words: "I give my pledge of allegiance to (ISIS leader) Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who's called for jihad in the lands of crusaders, and I respond to this call," said a masked driver.²⁸ The driver was a known Islamist radical, and

had been issued a Peace Bond by police to limit his communication with the outside world. And yet, he was able to build a bomb and record a video despite this order.

Finally, on October 1, 2017, Somali national Abdulahi Hasan Sharif engaged in an ISIS terrorist attack in Edmonton, Alberta. He drove a truck through a crowd, rammed a police officer and then stabbed him repeatedly, all while hanging an ISIS flag from his car window. Sharif illegally entered the U.S. from Mexico and was issued a deportation order before showing up in Canada and asking for asylum.²⁹ Oddly, the Canadian government did not stop Sharif from entering Canada, despite not having a passport and using different spelling for his name, and later awarded him with refugee status.³⁰

On top of these attacks at home, a sizeable number of young Canadians have taken up arms to fight alongside Islamic State militants in Iraq, Syria and beyond. According to the Minister of Public Safety, at least 180 individuals with a connection to Canada are currently overseas fighting alongside Islamist terrorist organizations, primarily the Islamic State.³¹ There are also at least 60 known returned foreign fighters in Canada, most of them living freely.³² The reason is that, according to Larry Brooks, a former Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) counter-terrorism official, it's nearly impossible to prove to a Canadian judge, in a Canadian court, that an individual has participated in terrorist activities overseas. "It's tremendously difficult to collect credible evidence that could satisfy a Canadian court for prosecution," Brooks has said.³³

In 2017, Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale stated that the number of returned jihadists remained at 60. Against the backdrop of the collapse of the ISIS "caliphate" in Iraq and Syria, many observers were skeptical and believe the number is higher. Prime Minister Trudeau's administration appears to be taking a more conciliatory approach to dealing with returning Islamic State fighters. In a 2017 year-end interview, Trudeau stated "We know that actually someone who has engaged and turned away from that hateful ideology can be an extraordinarily powerful voice for preventing radicalization."³⁴ He also pledged millions to a "de-radicalization" program for returned ISIS terrorists.

Hezbollah

Canada was an important source of financing and operational organizing for Hezbollah, prior to it being banned as a terrorist entity in 2002.³⁵ Before being outlawed, the Lebanese Shiite militia raised funds, bought equipment, and hid wanted terrorists in Canada.

In 1998, the RCMP uncovered a car theft ring run by members of the Iranian-backed terrorist organization to raise money for its global operations. Mohamed Dbouk managed one of the most lucrative Hezbollah cells. After seeking refugee status in Canada, he raised cash through credit card and banking scams, as well as cigarette smuggling, and used the proceeds to purchase high-tech military supplies and ship them to Lebanon. After Dbouk was indicted in Canada, he returned to Lebanon.

Although officially banned, Hezbollah continues its subversive reach into Canada. In 2011, the U.S. Treasury Department identified the Lebanese Canadian Bank SAL, along with its subsidiaries, as a "financial institution of primary money laundering concern under Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act for the bank's role in facilitating the money laundering activities of an international narcotics trafficking and money laundering network."³⁶ Its network traffics illegal narcotics from South America to Europe and the Middle East and laundered hundreds of millions monthly through bank accounts and other assets including U.S. used car dealerships, according the U.S. Treasury.³⁷ The U.S. government found that Hezbollah derived direct "financial support from the criminal activities of [this] network."³⁸

Hezbollah has also been known to hide terrorists wanted by other countries in Canada. Hani Abd al-Rahim al-Sayegh, a leader of Saudi Hezbollah involved in the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing that killed nineteen American Air Force personnel, made a refugee claim in Canada using a false name and settled in Ottawa, where he was arrested a year later.³⁹

The Iranian embassy in Ottawa had a history of funding and aiding a controversial cultural center with ties to Hezbollah, and was increasingly considered an outpost for espionage and subversion by the Iranian

regime. The Iran embassy regularly hosted and funded conferences for Iranian Canadians and invited guests only. These events sought to reach sympathetic members of the Muslim community—to recruit, persuade, and intimidate them to join the Islamic Republic’s network.⁴⁰ In 2012, the Canadian government posted a notice on the Iranian embassy door ordering all Iranian officials to leave the country within five days. The government also closed Canada’s embassy in Tehran, recalling all Canadian diplomats, cutting diplomatic ties with Iran, and officially listing Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism. The Trudeau government has somewhat softened Canada’s hardline stance against Iran, for instance by lifting some sanctions in February 2016.⁴¹ Trudeau has pledged rapprochement with Iran, however, has yet to follow through with re-opening official diplomatic ties.⁴²

Canada went further by amending the State Immunity Act and adopting the Justice for the Victims of Terrorism Act, both of which allowed the families and victims of terrorism to take legal action and seek damages from the perpetrators of terrorism and those who support them, including the government of Iran. This effectively eliminated the legal distinction between terrorist groups and the states that bankroll them, extinguishing the sovereign immunity protection typically granted to governments. To assist victims in identifying and locating Iran’s state assets, the government released a list of known Iranian state-owned property in Canada. In 2014, an Ontario judge ordered the seizure of more than \$7 million in bank accounts and property belonging to Iran. The historic ruling validated the Harper government’s legal changes. Currently over 90 Canadian victims of terrorism have launched claims in Ontario’s Superior Court seeking compensation from Iran for its role in training, arming, and financing Islamic terror networks.⁴³

Palestinian Islamists

Hamas, the most influential Palestinian Islamist group, has a history of using Canada as a fundraising base, even after the government designated it a terrorist organization in November 2002.⁴⁴ A May 2000 Privy Council Office memo to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien identified the Jerusalem Fund for Human Services (Jerusalem Fund) as a fundraising entity for Hamas.⁴⁵

The Canadian Coalition for Democracies alleges that the Jerusalem Fund responded to the flagging by merely changing its name to the International Relief Fund for the Afflicted and Needy (IRFAN) in 2001-2002. The Canadian Jewish News discovered that the Jerusalem Fund and IRFAN shared a mailing address in Mississauga, as well as a fax number.⁴⁶

In 2004, IFRAN came under scrutiny from the Canada Revenue Agency and its auditors over fundraising links to Hamas, but was able to keep its charitable status by signing an agreement stating it would not fund any organization linked to Hamas.⁴⁷ A later audit found that, between 2004 and 2009, IFRAN had “openly supported and provided funding to Hamas” while also engaging in “deceptive and misleading fundraising.”⁴⁸ A Charities Branch document highlight how IFRAN sent almost \$15 million to Hamas and related agencies during this period, leading to the government’s decision to strip IFRAN of its charity status in 2011, and, in 2014, to add IFRAN to Canada’s official list of terrorist groups.⁴⁹

Hamas also has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in Canada through the Texas-headquartered Holy Land Foundation (HLF).⁵⁰ The U.S., which designated Hamas a terrorist organization in 1995, shut down HLF in 2008 and, in 2009, sentenced five of its leaders to prison terms ranging from 15 to 65 years.⁵¹

Additionally, Hamas is known to have recruited Canadians to commit attacks within Canada. In 2003, for instance, Israel arrested a Canadian man in Gaza who pled guilty to conspiracy and illegal military training for planning attacks against Jews in Canada and the U.S.⁵² Hamas denied recruiting him, claiming that they limit their attacks to Middle Eastern targets.⁵³

The smaller Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) has also tried to penetrate Canada—albeit on a much more modest scale. The group is known to have long collected and laundered money in Canada, and even attempted to acquire a fraudulent visa so that its treasurer, Muhammed Tasir Hassan Al-Khatib, could visit Canada.⁵⁴ Additional details of PIJ activity inside Canada remain spotty, but the country’s intelligence service has warned that the group could expand its current, minimal activity in the years

ahead; a confidential 2003 CSIS report notes that the discovery of a PIJ fundraising network in Florida “raises the possibility of PIJ elements crossing the border to develop a similar infrastructure in Canada.”⁵⁵ To date, however, here is no evidence that the PIJ has done so. Like Hamas, PIJ was designated a foreign terrorist organization by the Canadian government in November 2002, and its activities have waned in Canada since this designation.⁵⁶

Islamist community organizations

Though it is not the norm for the Canadian Muslim community, a number of Islamic community organizations that have been infiltrated with radical extremists. The most prominent example was the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC), which called itself “Canada’s largest national non-profit and wholly independent Islamic organization.”⁵⁷ After a number of controversies, the CIC finally closed its doors in 2014, and is now defunct. The CIC had a history of demonizing Israel, fabricating lies about opponents, and apologizing for hardline Islamist groups.⁵⁸ This incitement foments anti-Semitism and justifies the violence committed by Islamist groups against Israel. The CIC’s leadership has further validated terrorism by denouncing the Canadian government’s decision to designate Hamas and Hezbollah as terrorist groups, calling it an “unconscionable act of hypocrisy and a mockery of justice.”⁵⁹

The Islamist Muslim Students’ Association (MSA) has chapters at many Canadian universities. Muslim Brotherhood activists founded the MSA in 1963 at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign⁶⁰ to help Muslims “practice Islam as a complete way of life.”⁶¹ Chapters of the MSA have raised funds for the Hamas-linked Holy Land Foundation,⁶² as well as the Benevolence International Foundation and the Global Relief Foundation (both of which were later outlawed by the U.S. government for their links to al-Qaeda).⁶³

In September 2017, the Islamic Society of British Columbia was penalized by the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) and alleged to have a relationship with a Qatari organization that supports jihadist terrorism. CRA audit documents obtained by Global News⁶⁴ found that the Eid Foundation of Qatar “maintained some level of control or influence over the affairs” of the Islamic Society, while also having alleged ties to terrorist organization.

Radicalism can be found in Canadian places of worship as well, with certain mosques and Islamic schools indoctrinating their parishioners and students. The Salaheddin Islamic Center and Al-Rahman Islamic Centre, both in Toronto, are examples of this trend. The Khadr family frequented the former, and six of the terrorists in the cell that planned to storm parliament and decapitate the Prime Minister prayed at the latter.⁶⁵

ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

Canada’s 2011 National Household Survey, the most recent data available from the Government of Canada, recorded 1.05 million Muslims in the country, equaling 3.2 percent of the total population.⁶⁶ Sixty-eight percent of Canada’s Muslims are immigrants, and more than 387,000 Muslims have entered Canada since 2001. A majority of Muslim-Canadians live in the province of Ontario (581,950) and most of those are located in the city of Toronto (424,930). The province of Quebec hosts the second largest Muslim community (243,430), 221,040 of whom live in Montreal, and it is home to many immigrants from the former French colonies of Algeria and Lebanon. Sizeable Muslim populations also reside in the provinces of Alberta (113,445) and British Columbia (79,310).

According to a 2007 Environics poll, 81 percent of Canadian Muslims “felt satisfied with the way things were going in their country.”⁶⁷ Unfortunately, the same Environics poll highlighted a troubling propensity for radicalism among respondents, with about 12 percent of Canadian Muslims polled saying that the terrorist plot to storm Parliament and behead the Prime Minister was justified.⁶⁸

Perhaps that often-vocal minority explains why a 2010 Leger Marketing poll found that 55 percent

of Canadians disagreed when asked whether “Muslims share our values.”⁶⁹ A subsequent 2009 Angus Reid Strategies poll uncovered similar opinions, with only 28 percent of Canadians polled viewing Islam favorably, compared with 72 percent approval for Christianity and 53 percent approval for Judaism.⁷⁰

The updated 2016 Environics report on Muslims in Canada found similarly mixed results. On the one hand, it found that 83 percent of Muslims polled were “very proud to be Canadian,” compared to 73 percent of non-Muslims in Canada. However, when it comes to social views, on issues such as acceptance of homosexuals in society, and the dominance of men in the household, for instance, Muslims and non-Muslims have very diverging opinions. While 80 percent of Canadians believe that homosexuality should be accepted by society, only 36 percent of Muslims agree with that statement.⁷¹

In March 2017, the House of Commons passed Motion 103, a non-binding resolution to condemn Islamophobia and religious discrimination in general. Critics have argued that the law could potentially limit free speech and grant Muslim citizens special privileges. Furthermore, the motion did not define Islamophobia in a concrete way, which could lead to confusion in the future.⁷² Some analysis indicates that hate crimes against Muslims have declined in Canada.⁷³

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

Canada passed its first anti-terrorism legislation, the Canadian Anti-Terrorism Act (Bill C-36), in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States. Before the Anti-Terrorism Act received the Royal Assent on December 18, 2001, the Canadian criminal code did not even formally define “terrorist activity.” The Anti-Terrorism Act rectified this deficiency, providing a definition of both “terrorist activity” and “terrorist group,”⁷⁴ and authorizing the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Solicitor General, to designate an entity as a terrorist group.⁷⁵

The Anti-Terrorism Act’s prohibition of providing financial services to terrorist groups represented Canada’s first measure aimed at curbing terrorist financing. Before the Act, people could legally raise money for terrorist groups in Canada and the Crown could only prosecute people for directly funding a terrorist attack. However, as a practical matter, because of the opaque manner in which terrorist groups use banks and financial markets, it had proven to be almost impossible to connect donors to attacks.⁷⁶

The Anti-Terrorism Act equipped authorities with several new tools to fight terrorism, including investigative hearings, preventive arrests, and new rules concerning information disclosure and rescinding a group’s charity status. The Act amended the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) Act to provide authorities with a scheme for monitoring suspicious financial transactions that could be tied to terrorism. The Act also established a mechanism for rescinding organizations’ charitable status if there are reasonable grounds to believe that it has or will fund a terrorist group.⁷⁷

However, in the wake of the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing, Liberals and Conservatives united to pass, by a vote of 183 to 93, the Combating Terrorism Act. The bill revives the investigative hearing and preventive detention practices discontinued in 2007. Authorities may compel someone to submit to interrogation if he is suspected of having knowledge of a terrorist act and may imprison any who refuse to cooperate for up to twelve months. Authorities may also detain someone for up to three days and impose probationary conditions for up to a year on anyone suspected of engaging in terrorist activity.⁷⁸

In the wake of the two Islamist terrorist attacks that resulted in the death of two members of the Canadian Forces in October 2014, the Harper government introduced updates to the Anti-Terrorism Act in January 2015, through Bill C-51. The bill sought to broaden the mandate of CSIS and to allow various Canadian government agencies to share information more easily, with the goal of proactively thwarting attacks before they happen.⁷⁹ While Bill C-51 sparked some controversy, it was passed and received royal assent in June 2015. During the 2015 Canadian election campaign, current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pledged to amend the bill in order to strike a greater balance between promoting security and respecting civil liberties. Despite this pledge, the Trudeau government has not taken steps to amend the Act since

forming government in late 2015.⁸⁰

Prime Minister Trudeau, much like former U.S. President Barack Obama, is reluctant to discuss the threat posed by Islamists in Canada, and avoids using the term Islamist terrorism. In September 2016, Trudeau visited a gender-segregated mosque, the Ottawa Muslim Association, whose imam is a member of a group considered by some to be a terrorist organization. Trudeau met with Samy Metwally, who is a member of the International Union for Muslim Scholars (IUMS), which was founded by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Muslim Brotherhood's leading ideological figure. In 2014, the United Arab Emirates listed IUMS on its list of designated terrorist organizations.⁸¹

Trudeau's candidate selection and subsequent members of the Liberal caucus have also raised some concerns. Two members of his Liberal caucus, MPs Ali Ehasi and Majid Jowhari, have been lobbying to re-open diplomatic ties with Iran. The two men hosted an invitation-only roundtable event in Toronto in November 2016 to discuss Canadian-Iranian relations. The event was criticized for being stacked with pro-regime voices and not discussing Iran's human rights violations.⁸² When anti-regime protests broke out in early 2018, Jowhari stated on Twitter that the Islamic Republic's dictatorship was an "elected government."⁸³ Another example is Mississauga Liberal MP Omar Alghabra, who Trudeau appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Saudi-born Syrian Alghabra is the former president of the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF), an organization that was defunded by the Canadian government in 2009 over its participation in a conference with Hamas and Hezbollah delegates and for comparing Israelis to Nazis. In 2014, a Federal Court ruling upheld the decision, citing evidence that included a sign threatening to murder a Jewish child and a CAF-sponsored essay contest on the topic of "ethnic cleansing" in Israel. Alghabra once wrote an open letter calling Israel "a country that is conducting a brutal and the longest contemporary occupation in the world."⁸⁴

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