

The recommendations that follow are drawn from the stories we heard about Islamophobia and racism in Newfoundland and Labrador throughout the Addressing Islamophobia in Newfoundland and Labrador project and from the proceedings of the September 2018 conference.<sup>1</sup> The conference was held at the St. John's campus at Memorial University of Newfoundland and concluded with a session that aimed to mobilize insights and work from the project into various recommendations. Since March 2017, the project has collaborated with over 40 community and university partners, and directly engaged over 300 individuals across the province. This section is a condensed summary of those recommendations made specifically for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We offer recommendations specific to racism, Islamophobia and to other forms of racialized, cultural and religious discrimination. The recommendations are offered to support and further the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commendable accomplishments to date, in relation to immigration, multiculturalism and human rights. While there has been success in attracting new Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, the stories that we heard throughout the project and the conference make clear that Islamophobia and racism exist in the province, and that Muslim and racialized people are negatively and profoundly affected by Islamophobia and racism.<sup>2</sup> Without acknowledging and addressing racism and Islamophobia, our province's goal of a diverse and economically-strong province will be much harder to achieve.

We call on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, including all departments, services, boards, commissions and agencies under provincial jurisdiction (the Province), to take leadership on addressing racism and Islamophobia. We know that addressing racism and Islamophobia cannot happen without a concerted effort among all levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal), organizations in public, private and non-profit sectors, trade unions, professional associations, and citizens alike. The partners and collaborators of Addressing Islamophobia in NL are committed to continue working on building a strong anti-racist and anti-Islamophobic agenda among all sectors within Newfoundland and Labrador. However, we also know that the Province is uniquely positioned to provide leadership, support and accountability for this important work.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, please see our full community report at [https://www.mun.ca/relstudies/more/AddressingIslamophobia/AI\\_Report\\_Recommendations\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.mun.ca/relstudies/more/AddressingIslamophobia/AI_Report_Recommendations_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See Sulaimon Giwa's 2018 article:

<https://theconversation.com/newfoundland-needs-immigrants-and-anti-racism-action-now-94712>

# Provincial Recommendations

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We recommend that:

**1. The Province develop an Anti-Racist/Anti-Islamophobia (AR/AI) Action Plan 2020-2025 which outlines the Province's specific commitments to addressing Islamophobia and racism in NL. This plan should include:**

- 1A. A clear statement of commitment to anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia.<sup>3</sup>
- 1B. The establishment of Provincial AR/AI Action Plan Steering Committee, which includes the Province's departmental and agency heads, as well as community members from organizations who have taken leadership in anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia in NL.<sup>4</sup>
- 1C. Intensive anti-racist and anti-Islamophobia training for all members of the AR/AI Action Plan Steering Committee.
- 1D. A report of the progress of the AR/AI Steering Committee's Action Plan.
- 1E. Bi-annual reporting of the Province's actions taken to address anti-Muslim racism and other forms of racism and discrimination.
- 1F. A full AR/AI Action Plan (with a timeline), should be launched no later than January 31, 2021.
- 1G. A plan to promote community and academic work that seeks to monitor and challenge discrimination and racism in Newfoundland and Labrador via the Addressing Islamophobia website and/or other such social media.
- 1H. Increased support for the Province's Human Rights Commission to better respond to allegations of systemic and individual acts of racism and discrimination within the Province's departments and agencies.

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<sup>3</sup> We recommend that the Province adopt the following definition of Islamophobia: Islamophobia is a fear and/or hatred of Islam and Muslims (and those perceived as Muslim) that translates into everyday individual, ideological, systemic and intersectional forms of xenophobia and racism. Islamophobia must be understood as anti-Muslim racism and discrimination, and as integral to processes of racism and racialization. Islamophobia cannot be understood as operating separately from ongoing settler colonialism, anti-Semitism, religious and cultural discrimination, or other forms of oppression.

<sup>4</sup> The Addressing Islamophobia in NL Project website lists many of our community partners, including, the Anti-Racism Coalition of NL (ARC-NL), the Muslim Association of NL (MANAL), MUN's Muslim Students' Association (MUN MSA), the NL Human Rights Commission (NL-HRC), the Canadian Federation of Students-NL (CFS-NL), and MUN's Aboriginal Resource Office.

# Provincial Recommendations

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1I. The creation of brochures (in hard copy and online). These would provide information on how individuals can strategically intervene (as allies) to systemic and individual racism, discrimination, including Islamophobia. Examples from workplaces, schools, and other public spaces are recommended.

1J. To strengthen anti-racism, anti-discrimination and intervention training and education for all public employees and for members of all organizations funded by the Province through an education and outreach unit within the Human Rights Commission.<sup>5</sup>

1K. Engagement of community groups and organizations across NL in facilitated conversations about racism, Islamophobia and the history of colonialism in Newfoundland and Labrador.

1L. A strategy to increase the representation of Indigenous and racialized communities on provincial boards, commissions, agencies and committees.

1M. A strategy to increase racial and cultural diversity among employees of the Province.

1N. The development of community-engaged public-education campaigns about the experiences of racism and Islamophobia for people who are experiencing multiple forms of discrimination and oppression (for example, disability, ageism, and people who are experiencing economic and social precarity).

## **2. The Province fund the NL Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Racism Coalition of NL to monitor and report on the prevalence and effects of incidents of racist, Islamophobic and other forms of cultural and religious discrimination in Newfoundland and Labrador, through:**

2A. An anonymous and online reporting forum, in collaboration with the Anti-Racism Coalition of NL, the NL Human Rights Commission, and community groups affected by racism, Islamophobia and other forms of cultural and religious discrimination.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This recommendation is supported by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action #57 to educate public servants in "intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism".

<sup>6</sup> For example, see the National Council of Canadian Muslim's reporting form:  
<https://www.nccm.ca/programs/incident-report-form/>

# Provincial Recommendations

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2B. A public education campaign that encourages the use of and promotes the online reporting forum (see 2A above).

2C. Research which compiles existing data about racism and Islamophobia in NL through existing sources, such as from the National Coalition of Canadian Muslims (NCCM); and the NL Human Rights Commission.

2D. Ask researchers in the province with demonstrated expertise in, and/or lived experience of racism, anti-racism and Islamophobia, to conduct a study and prepare a report on the lived experience and prevalence of racism, Islamophobia and other forms of cultural and religious discrimination in NL.

**3. The Province take leadership in promoting anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia in all sectors through public education, collaborative community discussions, and government policy. Although not exhaustive, the following are highlights of recommendations from the Addressing Islamophobia in NL proceedings. We call on the Province to specifically provide leadership in the following sectors:**

## **3A. PUBLIC EDUCATION**

The Province should:

- Promote anti-racism, inclusion, reconciliation and positive representations of marginalized communities throughout the education system from kindergarten to postsecondary.<sup>7</sup>
- Provide educators with anti-racism, anti-Islamophobia, anti-oppression and bystander-intervention training. Such training would equip and provide the tools for creating more inclusive educational environments.
- Encourage students to report Islamophobic and racist bullying at all levels of schooling from kindergarten to postsecondary.
- Direct funding to primary, secondary and postsecondary institutions for school and on-campus support groups, resource centres and Indigenous and other racialized community spaces.
- Foster partnerships between educators and front-line community organizations to reach out to children and youth whose access to education is adversely affected by bullying and violence or discriminatory discipline policies or practices.

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<sup>7</sup> This recommendation is supported by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, specifically #63, #63, and #64.

# Provincial Recommendations

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## 3B. HOUSING AND PLANNING

The Province should:

- Engage with Indigenous, Muslim and other racialized communities to uncover and address systemic barriers that have a discriminatory effect on these communities.
- Engage with Indigenous, Muslim and other racialized communities to uncover and address marginalization of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Develop an anti-racism working group of members of racialized and Indigenous communities, community organizations, landlords and social housing providers. Such a group would recommend equitable policies and practices in areas such as tenant-selection processes and criteria for selection, consistent with human-rights principles.

## 3C. POLICE SERVICES

The Province should work with police services to:

- Consult with local communities to hear concerns and receive input on response measures regarding racism and Islamophobia.
- Support Police and Crime Commissioners in ensuring appropriate resources are allocated for tackling hate crime effectively at the local level.
- Establish or enhance a comprehensive anti-racism and anti-discrimination vision statement and implement effective policies and procedures (including a complaints mechanism).
- Establish staff training to help prevent and respond to issues of racism and discrimination in policing services and in the community.
- Ensure appropriate representation of Indigenous and racialized groups in recruitment and at all levels of the organization.
- Establish a community working group with representation from Indigenous and racialized community organizations to develop and implement a framework for a policy on race-based data collection and analysis.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> As part of efforts to reduce bias and discrimination, race-based data collection policy initiatives are being developed among police service providers. In Ontario, this is in the works after calls for the collection of race-based data by the Canadian Mental Health Association in the report *Racialized Populations and Mental Health Court Diversion* (CMHA, 2019).

# Provincial Recommendations

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## 3D. HEALTH SERVICES

The Province should:

- Ensure that the legislation that govern the professions include anti-Islamophobia, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and cultural safety/competency training and regular policy/practice reviews.<sup>9</sup>
- Consult regularly with local Muslim, Indigenous and racialized communities, as well as the Anti-Racism Coalition-NL, the NL Human Rights Commission and other groups to discuss any concerns and/or complaints as they arise.
- Increase the inclusion of diverse ways of healing to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of Indigenous, Muslim, and other racialized patients/clients.<sup>10</sup>
- Establish or enhance a comprehensive anti-racism and anti-discrimination vision statement.
- Implement effective policies and procedures (including a complaints mechanism), as well as a commitment to pursue mandatory staff training to help prevent and respond to issues of racism and discrimination in health services and in the community.
- Increase employment opportunities for Indigenous, Muslim, and other racialized peoples among healthcare providers, and to provide support to those individuals so they may thrive while employed in healthcare.

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<sup>9</sup> See Gunn, Brenda L. "Ignored to Death: Systemic Racism in the Canadian Healthcare System." United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Health/UniversityManitoba.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Reading, Charlotte. "Policies, programs and strategies to address aboriginal racism: A Canadian perspective." Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2014.

# Provincial Recommendations

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## 3E. MEDIA

The Province should seek to work with media outlets and regulators to:

- Intervene more proactively in cases of alleged discriminatory reporting.
- Encourage anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-Islamophobia, and other forms of training to examine biases and stereotyping in reporting and the media's role in perpetuating racism and Islamophobia.
- Ensure that the perspectives of Indigenous, Muslim, and other racialized people are represented in reporting, broadcasting and publishing.
- Centre Indigenous and racialized voices in matters pertaining to Indigenous and racial justice.
- Increase employment opportunities and supports for Indigenous, Muslim, and other racialized peoples within media.

## 3F. LABOUR FORCE AND WORKPLACE

The Province should:

- Create more awareness and action to address barriers to equal labour-market participation, particularly as related to racism, Islamophobia and xenophobia.
- Encourage all employers to make potential workplace accommodations, and to develop and implement non-discriminatory policies and practices as a requirement for licensing applications and/or renewal.
- Make licensing renewals conditional upon evidence of non-discriminatory policies and practices.
- Work with all employers, including labour unions and professional bodies, to develop and adequately implement intersectional anti-racism, anti-Islamophobia, anti-xenophobia and anti-discrimination action plans.

# Provincial Recommendations

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## 3G. LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Province should:

- Liaise with the NL Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Racism Coalition of NL, other community organizations, and the legal community to develop a plan to facilitate prevention, interventions, and remedies for those who experience racism, Islamophobia and discrimination.
- Increase the mandate of, and funding to, the NL Human Rights Commission to engage with community organizations and diverse communities in developing appropriate anti-Islamophobia and anti-racism initiatives across all sectors of the province.
- Train, hire and retain lawyers who have expertise in human rights and immigration, particularly in Legal Aid.
- Designate January 29<sup>th</sup> as the “National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia”, as part of a nation-wide initiative. This date reflects the devastating terrorist attack on the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec (CCIQ) on January 29, 2017, which claimed the lives of six Muslims who left behind spouses and seventeen orphans, and seriously physically and emotional injured many others.