

September 15, 2011

The Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) is deeply disappointed with Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent indication that 'Islamism' represents the biggest threat to Canada. MAC is equally troubled by the Government's intent to bring back controversial anti-terrorism laws that were sunset in 2007.

For many people, there is no distinction between Islam and Islamism. Associating Islam with major threats to Canada is problematic and ill advised. Such language does little but promote divisiveness in our country precisely at a time when leaders need to eschew divisive language and lead through spreading messages of tolerance and understanding. In singling out Islam in his remarks, Mr. Harper was irresponsible and was sending a message of intolerance to Canadians nationwide.

We have a number of concerns about the proposed anti-terrorism legislation. The laws allowed police to arrest suspects without a warrant and detained for 3 days without charges if police believe a terrorist act may have been committed. Although these laws were introduced in 2001, they were sunset in 2007 without ever being used by police or prosecutors. We believe that the fact the law was never invoked in its 6 year existence speaks volumes about the need for these laws.

We call on Mr. Harper to reconsider the government's stance on the re-introduction of these laws, and to exercise more caution and sensitivity in speaking about Islam.

Wael Haddara, MD FRCPC
President and Chairman of the Board
Muslim Association of Canada

The Muslim Association of Canada is a grassroots Islamic movement that embodies a holistic understanding of Islam emphasizing God consciousness and good works. By balancing authenticity and creativity we advance an understanding of Islam that is relevant to Canadian society. We serve the Muslim community and society at large through our own initiatives as well as constructive engagement with others. We inspire, enable, and engage people to uphold the fundamental values of faith, justice, and being of benefit to all of humanity.