



Mississauga – April 2, 2019 – The Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) emphasizes Islam’s holistic message within the context of Canada’s diverse society. Today, MAC issued the following statement regarding Bill 21:

The Muslim Association of Canada is very troubled by the introduction of Bill 21, *An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State* by the government of Quebec. We urge Quebecers and Canadians to continue to voice their opposition to this discriminatory legislation.

Bill 21 will abrogate basic rights and freedoms of Quebecers, particularly our enshrined right to freedom of religion and expression. Although the stated intention was to promote the secularist nature of the state, the proposed legislation clearly targets the exclusion of visible, religious minorities, particularly Muslims, Jews and Sikhs. The legislation will restrict these minorities from actively participating in public service and community work. It will restrict their positive contributions to society, create segregation and enable unnecessary and dangerous divisions within the province.

We are especially worried about Muslim women that will be unjustly targeted by this legislation. Bill 21 will impose unprecedented limits on their freedoms, choices and personal pursuits.

“The Muslim Association of Canada is concerned that Bill 21 will give further rise to Islamophobia by legislating against openness and multiculturalism” said Sharaf Sharafeldin, Executive Director of MAC. “We believe this Bill is a step backwards for a country built on celebrating diversity and the right to self-expression. Any Canadian who understands the value, implications, and crucial need for freedom of self-expression should speak up against this Bill.”

We urge the Quebec government to withdraw this Bill. It is irresponsible and will only sow division in communities across Quebec.

We urge Canadians and governments across the country to continue to voice their opposition to this proposed legislation. We want to thank Montreal-area mayors, as well as other important stakeholders such as local school boards and unions for rejecting this Bill. We are further encouraged by political opposition in the Quebec legislature to this proposed legislation. We appreciate your continued efforts in this regard.

Backgrounder:

MAC is one of the largest Muslim organizations in Canada. It emphasizes the holistic message of Islam within the context of Canada’s diverse society.

MAC believes that the personal development of every individual is the key to real and fruitful involvement in the community. It brings a balanced, constructive and engaged understanding of Islam that aims to inspire Muslims in Canada.

For further information, please visit or www.macnet.ca