

Unveiling Systemic Bias: The Targeting of Muslim Charities by the Canada Revenue Agency

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In recent years, Canada has grappled with a pressing issue that strikes at the core of its democratic principles: systemic bias within the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) audits of Canadian Muslim charities. This alarming problem has raised concerns about fairness, religious freedom, and the overall integrity of the country's charitable sector.

The revelation of systemic discrimination within the CRA's auditing practices of Canadian Muslim charities has brought the issue of systemic bias to the forefront of Canadian discourse. This biased approach is not an isolated incident but is part of a larger problem deeply rooted in the bureaucratic structure of the agency.

The core issue begins with the CRA's Review and Analysis Division (RAD), which is tasked with investigating allegations of terrorism financing within the charitable sector. Over time, it has become evident that RAD disproportionately targets Muslim charities. This troubling revelation has come to light through various investigations and reports, including those by the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, the University of Toronto's Institute of Islamic Studies, and the National Security Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA).

RELIANCE ON BIASED SOURCES

A significant contributor to systemic bias within the CRA's auditing practices is its reliance on biased sources and individuals. These sources often have a clear anti-Muslim bias and have no real expertise in Islamic matters, yet their opinions play a pivotal role in shaping CRA's decisions.

According to documents filed in court, the CRA leans on so-called "terrorism experts" like Matthew Levitt, Matthew Epstein, Evan Kohlmann, and Lorenzo Vidino. These individuals have been linked to Islamophobic organizations, think tanks, or media outlets and have demonstrated a lack of objectivity. The reliance on such individuals as experts within the CRA's decision-making process raises concerns about the agency's impartiality and its commitment to fairly assessing risk.

RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST INSTITUTIONS AND MEDIA

The CRA's reliance on right-wing extremist institutions and media outlets further underscores the agency's problematic approach. Institutions like the Hudson Institute, the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, and the Middle East Forum have been funded by organizations with anti-Muslim agendas, perpetuating stereotypes and misinformation. Using such sources to shape policy and decision-making reveals a glaring bias that is detrimental to the Muslim community.

THE CRA'S APPROACH TO INTELLIGENCE

Another concerning aspect of the CRA's auditing practices is its approach to intelligence. The agency appears to have shifted away from relying on established sources of credible information, instead opting for flawed, politically motivated, or outdated intelligence. This shift has resulted in discriminatory



decisions against Muslim charities without proper accountability or external review.

BURDEN OF PROOF ON MUSLIM CHARITIES

As a consequence of this systemic bias, Muslim charities find themselves under an unfair burden of proof. They are tasked with disproving allegations based on flawed, biased, or unverified information. This creates an untenable situation where organizations are presumed guilty until proven innocent, a clear violation of the principles of justice and fairness.

CALLS FOR REFORM

Efforts to address this issue have been initiated through investigations by NSIRA and recommendations by the taxpayer ombudsperson. However, there is a growing chorus of voices demanding substantial and transparent reform within the CRA's audit practices concerning Muslim charities. The prime minister and relevant ministers hold the responsibility to ensure that the discriminatory audits cease.

IMPACT ON CANADIAN MUSLIM CHARITIES AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The impact of systemic bias in CRA audits extends beyond the administrative level; it affects the heart and soul of the Canadian Muslim community. For years, Muslim charities have been the target of discriminatory audits, creating a climate of fear and mistrust. Donors have been reluctant to support these charities due to concerns of being associated with potential wrongdoing. This climate has stifled the charitable sector's vital work in supporting marginalized communities and addressing societal issues.

LEGAL CHALLENGES AND THE SEARCH FOR JUSTICE

Some Muslim charities, such as the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC), have taken legal action against the CRA, arguing that audits are tainted by bias and anti-Muslim discrimination. These legal challenges are essential in seeking justice and holding the CRA accountable for its actions.

A LARGER IMPACT ON SOCIETY

The systemic bias within CRA audits is not an isolated issue; it has broader implications for Canadian society. By targeting Muslim charities unfairly, the government risks alienating a significant portion of the population and exacerbating divisions. It also undermines the values of inclusivity, multiculturalism, and religious freedom that Canada claims to uphold.

CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

Many voices within the charity sector have called for the suspension of RAD audits of Muslim organizations until the NSIRA inquiry is complete. However, the government's approach has been to maintain business as usual. It is incumbent upon the prime minister and key ministers to demonstrate their commitment to dismantling systemic bias within the CRA.

The systemic bias in CRA audits of Canadian Muslim charities is a pressing issue that demands immediate attention and reform. It has far-reaching implications, affecting the rights of religious freedom, justice, and fairness in Canada. As the nation grapples with this problem, it is crucial for the government to demonstrate its dedication to inclusivity, multiculturalism, and the principles of justice and fairness. Only through substantial and transparent reform can Canada hope to eliminate systemic bias and uphold its democratic values.

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