

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2014
Statement by the Delegation of Canada
Working Session 12: Tolerance and non-discrimination II, including prevention and
responses to hate crimes
30 September, 2014

Mr. Moderator,

The founding principles of the OSCE enshrine the values of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, emphasizing the importance of the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. Protecting human dignity in all corners of the OSCE regardless of race, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation, must be central to our commitments. All participating States must oppose hatred and ensure that the rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals are recognized and promoted.

In order for real progress to be achieved, States must go beyond words and take concrete actions to eliminate violence and hate crime, and hold perpetrators accountable. ODIHR has rightfully identified hate crime data collection as an important tool that helps States identify challenges and develop effective responses for governments, communities and police forces.

Canada is committed to addressing incidents of hate-motivated crimes, and has taken concrete measures to promote standardized reporting and monitoring of hate crimes by Canada's police services. Since 2006, Canada has collected, on a yearly, basis, information on crimes motivated by hate that are reported to police. In addition, information on self-reported victimization is collected every five years. This data includes incidents that may not have been reported to police.

Further efforts include a number of policing initiatives, such as youth-orientated presentations and fact sheets on hate crime, a community outreach program, and a guide on hate and bias crimes for police investigators. Some cities have created police units to fight hate-motivated crimes. The RCMP's "Bias Free Policing" policy reflects well-established RMCP practices of respectful treatment of all people, regardless of who they are, and also establishes sustainable partnerships with the community and other agencies to prevent or resolve problems as they arise. This "Bias Free Policing" policy is integrated into every aspect of the RCMP's operations.

Through the Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program, not-for-profit organizations can apply for funding towards the costs of security infrastructure improvements for places of worship, educational institutions, and community centres in communities at risk of hate-motivated crime.

In addition, through measures such as the Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security, Canada works

to ensure the elimination of barriers and the full participation of all Canadians, including its diverse Muslim and Jewish communities, in the social, economic, political and cultural life of Canada.

At the international level, Canada had the honour in March 2014 to hand over the Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance to the United Kingdom. We welcome the excellent cooperation between OSCE-ODIHR and the IHRA in their work on Holocaust commemoration and education. It is important for our societies, and especially our younger generations, to remember the lessons of the Holocaust. Recent events demonstrate that, in some participating States, anti-semitic movements feel emboldened enough to convey their message of hate through public statements and actions. This reprehensible attitude must be met with unequivocal condemnation. Hate and discrimination, in any form, is a violation of our basic values and principles.

Mr. Moderator,

A broad vocabulary is used to speak about hate and intolerance: racism, xenophobia, chauvinism, aggressive nationalism, fascism, and neo-Nazism. Regardless of the terminology used, Canada is of the strong view that genuinely democratic societies where the rule of law prevails, and where fundamental rights and freedoms are respected, are better equipped to develop and adapt responses to the challenges posed by these ills. Societies that cherish these values are therefore, more stable, secure and prosperous.

It is ironic that participating States whose own democratic institutions and human rights records are backsliding are the loudest when it comes to accusing others of aggressive nationalism and fascism. Russia's use of propaganda to increase nationalist sentiments and justify its illegal annexation of Crimea, while at the same time presenting itself as the defender of supposedly oppressed minorities on the peninsula, is an egregious example of this cynical approach. As we speak, disturbing reports are emerging in Crimea of discrimination against Crimean Tatars and other religious and cultural groups.

Canada's recommendations for this session are:

-For participating States to recall these founding principles and develop or improve their monitoring and data collection of hate crime and implement whole of government approaches to combating hate, violence and discrimination.

-For participating States to develop and implement legislation to combat hate-motivated violence.

-For participating States to ensure that hate crime on the basis of religious belief or sexual orientation are included as offences in their national criminal codes.