

March 15, 2019

An Open Letter to our Muslim Neighbours

The Jewish community of Canada is heartbroken, horrified, and angry at the news that Muslims have been massacred in attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. As of latest reports, at least 49 people have been murdered and dozens more wounded.

This terrorist atrocity must be condemned for what it is: An act of sheer evil targeting Muslims.

This is not the first time innocents have been targeted while at prayer in a mosque. As Canadians, we remember with sorrow the heinous attack on the Islamic Cultural Centre in Quebec City. While we know that most Canadians reject such hate, we also know that a single individual can wreak terrible devastation and inject fear throughout an entire community.

Jewish tradition teaches that every person is created in the Divine image and that one who takes a single life destroys an entire world. Those who target Muslims for mass murder, whether in Christchurch or in Quebec City, are destroyers of life and enemies of humanity.

Their clear goal is to divide citizens, intimidate Muslims, and signal that Muslims are not welcome in our society. They will never succeed. You are our friends, our neighbours, and our fellow Canadians. You are home – and together we will defeat those who suggest otherwise.

We know your community is shaken. We can imagine the pain, outrage, and deep sense of insecurity you are experiencing at this time. We too have known the darkness of mass violence targeting our houses of worship, most recently at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. Just as your community offered support at that painful time, we are here for you in this moment of unspeakable suffering.

Sincerely,

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Rabbi Jonathan Infeld
Executive Member, CRC Vancouver, BC

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl
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The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is the advocacy agent of the Jewish Federations of Canada. The Canadian Rabbinic Caucus (CRC), an affiliate of CIJA, is the only national body of rabbis reflecting the broad spectrum of Jewish practice in Canada.