

Collectif Pour un Québec Inclusif (CPQI)

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate distribution

I remember... For an inclusive Quebec Great mobilization in the Eastern Townships, for a fair and inclusive society

Sherbrooke, January 29, 2021 – On January 29, 2017, Quebec was rocked by a terrorist attack on the Grand Mosque of Quebec City that took the lives of six Muslims during prayer. This proves, once again, that no one is exempt from such violence and that terrorism has no religion, color or culture.

It is under the sign of an open and inclusive society that the Collectif Pour un Québec Inclusif (CPQI) organized a virtual gathering in memory of the victims of terrorism.

The event attracted a large gathering of about a hundred Estriens and took place in the presence of several elected officials and stakeholders from the region, including the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Member of Parliament for Compton-Stanstead and Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Ms. Élisabeth Brière, Member of Parliament for Sherbrooke, Ms. Christine Labrie, Member of Parliament for Sherbrooke, Mr. André Bachand, MNA for Richmond, Ms. Geneviève Hébert, MNA for Saint-François, Mr. Steve Lussier, Mayor of the City of Sherbrooke, Ms. Annie Godbout, City Councillor, Monsignor Luc Cyr Archbishop of Sherbrooke, Mr. Jean Goulet Vice-Rector, Human Resources and Vice-Rector, International Relations at the Université de Sherbrooke and Michael Goldbloom, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Bishop's University.

Lina Titouche and Anass Chraibi, two young leaders of the Dialogue+ project and masters of ceremonies, began the ceremony by inviting the audience to light a candle and observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the attack.

This was followed by a moving speech by Mr. Hassan Guillet, a retired lawyer, engineer and one of the most important leaders of the Muslim community in Quebec: "Our tears in our eyes are as similar as two drops of water, if our tears are that similar, why do we have to fight because of the color of our eyes!"

Mr. Aymen Derbali, who was present during the tragedy, testified about his experience and insisted on the importance of acting together: "What we must do is act together, not to accept hateful words, to denounce all hateful behavior. Just as we are trying to stop a virus, we should also do everything we can to stop hate."

Mr. Abdelilah Hamdache, one of the members of the organizing committee of the event, said: "This is a very special year. The pandemic has brought together more than it has separated. The year 2020 has been marked by anti-racist movements, and above all by human solidarity, and it is on this same momentum that we wanted to do our duty of memory, to build an inclusive society. Our common and most dangerous enemy is ignorance of the other. Let us work together to defeat it."

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Ms. Élisabeth Brière stressed that Canada is a host country for everyone: "Tonight, what we remember above all else is that we are and will always be stronger together. We say it, and we can never say it enough, Canada is a welcoming country. No matter what we believe, no matter where we were born, we are and always will be equal members of this country."

Cultural differences represent a collective wealth to be valued. They allow us to discover new horizons and create opportunities in a constantly changing world. Various initiatives are underway in the Eastern Townships to promote these sharing activities such as intercultural Christmas parties, world dinners, coffee shops that open intercultural and intergenerational dialogue, open houses at the Sherbrooke Mosque, Ramadan dinners without borders and other activities. Surprisingly, exploring our differences also leads us to the conclusion that "we are more alike than we think". Our daily life, our hobbies, our dreams and aspirations bring us closer and unite us.

In order to organize this activity, several Muslim organizations in Sherbrooke have come together in a Collectif Pour un Québec Inclusif (CPQI) : Centre Culturel Islamique de Sherbrooke (CCIS), Association Culturelle Islamique de l'Estrie (ACIE), Association des musulmans de l'Université de Sherbrooke (AMUS), Al Qalam Institute, Institut du Monde Arabe et Musulman de l'Estrie (IMAME), Association Éducative Transculturelle (AET), Association Afghane Québec, Cimetière Islamique du Sud-Est du Québec (CIMSEQ) and Association Bel Agir. They are supported by Actions interculturelles through the Dialogue+ project.

The members of the collective wished to congratulate and thank the Canadian government, which has just announced its decision to make January 29th the **National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia**, to honour the memory of the victims and in solidarity with the survivors of this tragedy. "The Government of Canada's decision to make January 29th the '**National Day of Remembrance of the Attack on the Quebec City Mosque and Action Against Islamophobia**' reflects Canada's desire to remember these victims, but also its willingness to pursue concrete actions to make this country more open and inclusive from coast to."



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