





**Tom  
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**Tom Mulcair**  
**NDP  NDP**

September 23, 2015

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your letter and questions on behalf of Canada's Muslim and Arab communities.

The communities you represent have grown and thrived, making Canada a better society. But they have also faced significant challenges that are often ignored or made worse by Stephen Harper's government.

I'm proud that New Democrats have always taken a principled approach to your concerns.

Like you, New Democrats have been deeply worried about Canada's reduced influence on the world stage as a leader in promotion of peace, justice and democracy. Mr. Harper has hurt our international reputation. We even lost a chance at a seat on the UN Security Council – the first time that has happened in the UN's 60-year history.

As your Prime Minister, I will champion foreign policy based on results, not rhetoric. Canada will lead on the world stage and work with others to promote the values we hold dear.

You asked about a number of bills adopted by Mr. Harper's government. As you know, we voted against Stephen Harper's Bills C-51 and C-24. A NDP government will protect our security and our rights by repealing Bill C-51. Bill C-24's creation of two-tier citizenship rights is contrary to Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms and should not be law in Canada. New Democrats will repeal Stephen Harper's harmful and unconstitutional changes to citizenship rules.

You also asked about Bill C-23, better known as the "Unfair Elections Act". As you know, we fought against C-23. Not only we will roll back the problematic provisions of that bill, we are committed to reforming our electoral system so every vote counts. Under an NDP government, this election will be the last one fought under a first-past-the-post electoral system.

Your letter asked about the NDP's commitment to fighting Islamophobia. Like you, I have been worried about the growth of Islamophobia in Canada. But I have also been encouraged by the solidarity that Canadians have shown with our Muslim and Arab neighbours in response to instances of Islamophobia. When vandals defaced the walls of a mosque in Cold Lake, Alberta, the city came together in a show of support and solidarity, and helped Cold Lake's Muslim community in the cleanup. That's Canada at its best.

Sadly, policies and statements from Mr. Harper and members of his government have singled out Canada's Muslim community. While introducing Bill C-51, Mr. Harper made negative comments about Canadian mosques. I spoke out and demanded that Mr. Harper apologize to Canada's Muslim community. Unfortunately, we saw a continuation of the same behaviour from Conservative members during committee meetings on C-51 where Muslim-Canadian witnesses were accused of sympathizing with terrorists and extremists.

You have always been able to count on New Democrats to speak out against Islamophobia and I assure you that as your Prime Minister, I will always stand against racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia equally. To that end, New Democrats will reverse the Conservatives' weakening of the Canadian Human Rights Act with regards to hate speech. Those who make baseless and hateful accusations against other Canadians must be held to account.

You also asked about the principles that will govern the NDP's direction on trade policy. We believe responsible trade provides Canada with both economic benefits as well as opportunities to project and promote our values. A New Democrat government will continue to look for trade opportunities that make tangible improvements to the lives of workers in partner countries, and help, through awarding trade privileges and advantages to emerging democracies that respect human rights.

As your letter requests, I re-affirm the NDP's commitment to democratic development, the application of rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and the respect of human rights as foundation of Canadian diplomacy. This also extends to Canada's commitment to international law and our active and productive participation in institutions of multilateral diplomacy.

We will always stand up for Canadian citizens who are in distress abroad. As you know, we have spoken up for Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy. Not only have we raised the case on numerous occasions in Parliament, I have directly called on Mr. Harper to personally intervene to seek Mr. Fahmy's release. Earlier in the course of this campaign, I spoke to the Egyptian ambassador to Canada to reiterate the NDP's support for Mr. Fahmy's immediate return home to Canada.

Finally, your letter asked about pursuing justice against human rights violators abroad through Canada's judicial system. As you know, NDP MPs have looked at amendments to Canada's State Immunity Act to do just that. An NDP government would consider amendments that would provide a meaningful channel for seeking justice against those accused of committing crimes against humanity and major human rights violations.

Further to your letter, I should point out that we have presented a concrete plan to address the Syrian refugee crisis. An NDP government would resettle 46,000 Syrian refugees by 2019 and we will remove the current policy that discriminates against refugees based on religious or ethnic background. What's more, we will work with you to speed up the process for private sponsorship so that community members can reunite with their loved ones.

Friends, this election is about change and your NDP team is ready. I hope you will join us in building a better country—one where your concerns will be a priority. In 2011, we proudly elected a number of Muslim and Arab-Canadian MPs. In this election, we have the opportunity to elect more. Our team is ready to form Canada's first NDP government and fight for your community's priorities.

I urge you to join us. Together, we will replace the politics of fear and division with the politics of hope and optimism.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Mulcair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Mulcair" clearly distinguishable.

Tom Mulcair  
Leader, Canada's New Democrats