



JAGMEET SINGH

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

April 4, 2019

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

As you are aware, the Public Safety report entitled ‘*2018 Public Report on the Terrorism Threat to Canada*’ published December 11, 2018, has left Canadians with many questions.

On December 14, 2018, the Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale himself acknowledged the harmful consequences of using terms such as “Sikh”, “Shia”, and “Sunni” to label and equate entire communities to extremism. However, the report remains unchanged.

We write this letter to you with great urgency to remind you that in the absence of rectification, the report continues to label and further marginalize entire communities. In this regard, there are two concerns:

- 1) the inappropriate labelling of entire communities as extremists; and
- 2) the addition of the “Sikh/Khalistani Extremism” to the list of Current Terrorist Threats to Canada, without sufficient evidence.

Both have the potential for devastating and long-lasting impacts on the respective communities. This report unfairly stigmatizes Muslim and Sikh communities, while failing to consider dangerous and unintended consequences. These consequences include the potential to place vulnerable communities and all Canadians at a greater risk, by emboldening the harmful stereotypes that fuelled terrorist attacks in Christchurch, Quebec City and Oak Creek.

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Political leaders must act with great care and responsibility, so their words are not used to exploit fear and fuel hatred – instead, they must promote solidarity and challenge hatred, whenever atrocities occur.

In particular, the addition of ‘Sikh/Khalistani Extremism’ to the list of Current Terrorist Threats to Canada must be addressed. There is no mention of Sikhs in previous terrorist threat reports from the public safety department since the 2002 threat report and there is no known evidence of any increases in threats to Canadians’ public safety that would precipitate this inclusion.

In fact, by the report’s own admission, Sikh extremist violence has been on the decline over the past 25 years. If that situation has changed, the Canadian public has a right to know and, if the situation has not changed, you must explain why such an inclusion is appropriate now. New Democrats wholeheartedly support evidence-based policy, but this would require the presence of evidence.

You have in us and in our caucus a strong ally prepared to tackle extremism. It is of tantamount importance to us, however, that any approach avoid further divisions between groups, which in turn fuels hatred and in some circumstances violent acts. There is nothing more important to us, than the safety and security of all Canadians.

While the tabling of these threat reports is a welcome form of transparency, we must re-evaluate how they are drafted and presented. The labelling of entire communities, the absence of sufficient evidence and the rise of far-right extremism and terror attacks specifically targeting groups identified by these generalizations is cause enough to rethink this approach in a substantive way. Instruments used to advance public safety should not be providing fuel for extremism that endangers our fellow Canadians.

In absence of a response from your Public Safety Minister to a letter sent to him in December 2018, we urge you to remove the report from your website until you have removed, as promised, the reference to the Sikh, the Shia and Sunni communities or provide a clear explanation including any evidence, where it is appropriate to release, clarifying the various motivations for



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including new threat factors.

We strongly believe we would all benefit from a fulsome understanding of the reasons that lead to the decisions outlined in this report. We cannot make mistakes when it comes to the safety of all Canadians.

We look forward to the continuation of this discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jagmeet Singh".

Jagmeet Singh, Leader of Canada's NDP

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Dubé".

Matthew Dubé, Public Safety NDP Critic