

Working Together: A Guide to Ending Islamophobia at Work

Prepared by MCRO from the Survey of Muslims in Canada (SMiC, 2026) and Working While Muslim (WWM, 2026), a survey of 423 Muslims in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Sources appear in grey, for example WWM 89 means Working While Muslim, page 89. Full sources are on page 4.

Key message.

Muslims in Canada face more discrimination at work than other Canadians. Few report it, and fewer still see it fixed.

SMiC 14, 246 • WWM 14, 89

In the GTHA, only about **1 in 10** cases of workplace discrimination is fully resolved WWM 89; MCRO calculation.

The evidence at a glance

FROM REPORT TO RESULT

64%

of workplace discrimination cases in the GTHA were reported, most likely to an employer or HR

WWM 89

16%

of those reported cases were fully dealt with

WWM 89

12%

of Muslims who faced discrimination at work or school reported it to the authorities SMiC 14

43%

of those who reported say nothing was done

SMiC 14

AT WORK IN THE GTHA

26%

have faced discrimination or prejudicial treatment while working WWM 14

26.7%

of those in the labour force have faced verbal or physical violence or harassment while working WWM 15

52%

say their religious practice isn't properly accommodated WWM 14

1 in 5

were asked about their religion in a job interview WWM 15

Muslims compared with other Canadians

At work, past five years, at least a moderate amount SMiC	Muslims	Others
Underemployed because of their religion SMiC 246	15.5%	8.7%
Unequal access to jobs, promotions or pay SMiC 246	15.3%	7.4%
Felt shut out of certain jobs SMiC 246	13.0%	2.8%

55% of Muslims, and 40% of others, say Ottawa has done little or nothing about Islamophobia at work SMiC 123.

What gets in the way

Customers 41% of harassment came from customers or clients, the largest source WWM 92.	Fear 27% of those who didn't report stayed silent for fear of payback WWM 89.
Pay Visible minority Muslim women working full-time, full-year earn 64 cents for every dollar earned by White non-Muslim men WWM 12.	Slow systems The federal human rights commission's backlog grew about 60% in 2025 CHRC 2025. 49% of Muslim women whose report led to action were not at all satisfied SMiC 258.

Promises not yet kept

Commitment	Promised	Status
Update the Employment Equity Act (federal)	Announced December 2023 Senate committee, Feb. 2026	Not yet acted on Canadian Labour Congress, Mar. 2026
Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia (federal)	Funding to grow the Office Canadian Heritage, 2025	Scrapped for an advisory council, Feb. 2026 Senate Debates, Feb. 5, 2026
Hearings at Ontario's human rights tribunal	The law requires a chance to be heard Ontario Human Rights Code	97% of final decisions dismissed without a hearing, Jan.–Sept. 2025 Tribunal Watch Ontario

What we can't yet measure.

Canada's monthly Labour Force Survey, the best source on jobs, doesn't ask about religion.

WWM 16

Five priorities and who must act

What employers and governments can do to end Islamophobia at work.

FROM THE REPORTS

MCRO SUGGESTION*

1 Make the human rights system work

ONTARIO

ENFORCEMENT*

FEDERAL*

- **Ontario:** fund the Human Rights Commission and Tribunal so cases are heard WWM 100, 102
- **Enforcement:** decide cases on their merits, with public time targets*
- **Federal:** fund the federal commission to clear its backlog*

2 Make complaints lead to results

EMPLOYERS*

ENFORCEMENT*

ONTARIO*

- **Employers:** look into every complaint and tell the worker, in writing, what was done*
- **Enforcement:** check sectors where many Muslims work, without waiting for complaints*
- **Ontario:** require employers to investigate, and presume payback if a worker is punished after complaining*

3 Make room for faith, and stop harassment

EMPLOYERS

ONTARIO

- **Employers:** don't ask about religion in interviews; have a clear written accommodation policy; stop harassment by co-workers, managers and customers WWM 102–103
- **Ontario:** stronger protection from harassment, including by customers WWM 100, 102–103

4 Equal pay and benefits

ONTARIO

FEDERAL*

- **Ontario:** update the Employment Standards Act for fair wages and equal benefits, including for part-time work WWM 100–101
- **Federal:** update the Employment Equity Act, as promised in 2023*

5 Count Muslim workers

FEDERAL

ENFORCEMENT*

- **Federal:** add religion to the Labour Force Survey; fund a national study and action plan on Islamophobia at work WWM 103
- **Enforcement:** publish complaint results by religion and gender*

* MCRO suggestion, not named in the reports. "Enforcement" means human rights commissions and tribunals.

What you can do

Start with the person closest to the problem. Move up only if nothing changes.

Who	Ask for	How	Who to ask
Workers and job seekers	A written accommodation policy, and no religion questions in interviews WWM 102 .	Keep a record of incidents and report them: 21% who didn't report didn't know who to ask WWM 89 . Use settlement and job services: 44% who never did didn't know they existed WWM 99 .	Your manager or HR, then your union, then the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario
Unions	Equal pay and benefits for all workers WWM 100–101 . Rules that make it easier to join a union WWM 101 .	Organize in retail, transportation and warehousing, and food services, where many Muslims work WWM 101 . Step in early: unions were involved in just 1.5% of responses to Muslims' reports SMiC 256 .	Employers, Ontario's Ministry of Labour
Muslim women's groups	Affordable child care, programs to return to work, and equal pay for part-time work WWM 100 .	Support women through complaints. Partner with cities on child care and return-to-work programs WWM 100 .	City councils, Ontario's Ministers of Labour and Education*
Legal clinics and national groups	Tribunal funding WWM 100, 102 . Religion in the Labour Force Survey and a national action plan WWM 103 . Fairer recognition of foreign credentials WWM 104 .	Run workers' rights workshops with cities WWM 99 . Brief MPs and Statistics Canada*.	The Government of Ontario, Statistics Canada, MPs

* MCRO suggestion, not named in the reports. Advocacy steps are MCRO guidance.

ABOUT MCRO

The Muslim Communities Research Observatory is an independent research observatory. We collect and synthesize rigorous research on Muslim communities, turn it into policy briefs, dashboards and toolkits, and help leaders and organizations put that evidence to work. Contact: Amira Elghawaby · amira.elghawaby@mcro.ca

Sources (numbers are page numbers): **SMiC** Shah, S., & Nabi, S. (2026). *The Survey of Muslims in Canada*. University of Toronto (903 Muslims and 1,072 others, nationally). **WWM** Khan, S., & Edwards, W. (2026). *Working While Muslim*. Islamophobia Research Hub, York University (423 Muslims in the GTHA). **CHRC** Canadian Human Rights Commission (2026), *2025 Annual Report to Parliament*. Tribunal Watch Ontario (2026), *Court Slams Tribunal's Refusal to Hear Cases*. Promises table: Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights (Feb. 9, 2026); Canadian Labour Congress (Mar. 21, 2026); Canadian Heritage, Question Period Note (2025); Senate Debates (Feb. 5, 2026). Survey figures are estimates.