

# Statement regarding Canada's anti-terrorism legislation

We have more than one reason to concern ourselves with the anti-terrorism legislation now in process. There is an historic and continuing connection between our belief in that of God in everyone, and our traditional work to ensure the equal treatment of all persons. Secondly, as a people engaged in publishing Truth, Friends themselves have experienced their share of arbitrary arrest, and detention without due process. Lastly, state legislation, because it deals with our relationships with one another and with the social frameworks that support those relationships, is a spiritual concern appropriate to Friends.

We believe that the new Canadian anti-terrorism legislation was developed to appease the anxieties of the present U.S. Administration rather than to answer any evident need within Canada; and that pre-existing Canadian and international law was already more than sufficient for purposes of reasonable security.

The new legislation, both through intention and poor drafting, is likely to have damaging effects. It can be used to criminalize dissent. It disproportionately threatens those already vulnerable as members of minority groups: immigrants, naturalized Canadians, refugees, Muslims and Indigenous peoples. By the threat of unjust surveillance, harassment, deportations, wrongful conviction, denial of charitable status, and seizure of assets, it can hinder and discourage the humanitarian work and social witness to which Quakers and many others are called by the Spirit. Of particular concern is the lack of due process for the accused, and the lack of adequate accountability on the part of those given authority under the legislation.

We ask ourselves, "At what point do people lose the power to challenge their government's misuse of authority?". Learning from history, we must have the courage to act despite fear, and call our government to account while it is still possible to do so. We approve, therefore, that Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) undertake the following actions:

1. The Clerk of CYM write of our concern to the Canadian Government; and also to Monthly Meetings asking Friends to take up this concern individually and together;
2. Ask Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) to undertake work on this concern for CYM.

We record our concern regarding the particular weight upon our neighbours in the United States who are resisting both infringement on their civil liberties and an encroaching vision of their country as an all-powerful global empire. We hold them in the Light. ✨

*Approved by Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
in session, 8 August 2003 at Montebello, Québec*

FROM DRAFT CHAPTER – FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH – FOR THE NEW CYM FAITH AND PRACTICE

4. We do not want you to copy or imitate us. We want to be like a ship that has crossed the ocean, leaving a wake of foam which soon fades away. We want you to follow the Spirit, which we have sought to follow, but which must be sought anew in every generation.

*– Meeting of Elders, Balby, Yorkshire, 1656*