



*Atheist Freethinkers*

**PRESS RELEASE**

*For immediate release*

**LPA-AFT Denounces Statement by P. M. Justin  
Trudeau Comparing “Islamophobia” & Homophobia**

Montreal, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 – *Atheist Freethinkers* (LPA-AFT), an association which promotes secularism and supports the rights of atheists, vigorously denounces the statement made by Prime Minister Trudeau on Monday at the ceremony commemorating the Quebec City mosque killing of 2017-01-29:

*“Why does the word Islamophobia make us uncomfortable? ... Nobody complains about the word homophobia ... but the word Islamophobia bothers us.”* Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

LPA-AFT considers it unacceptable to compare homophobia and “Islamophobia”. The term homophobia designates a hostility or systematic discrimination against homosexuals, while “Islamophobia” is defined etymologically as fear of Islam. Thus Trudeau is comparing persons with an idea, as if both deserved the same dignity. Homosexuality is not an ideology, but Islam certainly is one, especially its politicized variant, Islamism. LPA-AFT considers that persons deserve to be treated with dignity, but ideas and ideologies on the other hand must be subject to open criticism.

LPA-AFT considers Trudeau’s statement to be a semantic manipulation whose purpose is to prevent any criticism of Islam, in addition to being an insult to the dignity of homosexual persons. The result is also demeaning for Muslims as well. The Quran contains numerous passages which encourage violence and even murder and terrorism. Evidently, many Muslims, following their own personal judgement, reject these passages. To silence criticism of Islam would prevent these same Muslims from expressing opinions about their own religion. In addition, this censorious attitude risks provoking the hostility of those who seek to formulate legitimate criticisms of Islam, thus increasing already existing tensions. Furthermore, let us not forget that more moderate Muslims are subject to undue pressure from more radical Muslims and would thus be reduced to silence by such censorship.

Finally, to confuse homophobia and “Islamophobia” is to abandon Muslims to the religion in which they were born, as if religious affiliation were biologically determined and immutable. This amounts to an endorsement of Islam’s prescribed ban on apostasy and thus a denial of Muslims’ freedom of conscience.

It is the opinion of LPA-AFT that freedom of expression can only be beneficial to reduce tension and encourage general social harmony.

– 30 –

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