

POLICY BRIEF

Quebec's Bill 3 and the Defunding of Democratic Dissent

JULY 2026



KEY BRIEF POINTS:

- Defunding legal challenges (e.g. against Bill 21).
- Silencing international solidarity (e.g. for Palestine)
- Bureaucratic barriers to advocacy.
- Attack on "Social Unionism."



This policy brief analyzes the systemic problems with Quebec's Bill 3, which imposes bureaucratic restrictions on the ability of civil society organizations, in particular labour unions, to engage in legal and political activities in support of human rights.

Executive Summary

On April 2, 2026, the Government of Quebec adopted Bill 3 into law. Introduced by Minister of Labour Jean Boulet of the party Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), and titled "An Act to improve the transparency, governance and democratic process of various associations in the workplace," the legislation fundamentally alters how labour unions, as important members of civil society, collect, manage, and democratically allocate their collective resources.¹ As such, it is an alarming example of how governments are increasingly utilizing legislative and administrative frameworks to limit the ability of independent civil society organizations to advocate for fundamental human rights and challenge state power.



Source: [Quebec Cite](#)

¹ Yanez-Leyton, C. (Oct 30, 2025). [Union leaders pan new Quebec bill that makes some union dues optional](#). CBC News

Ostensibly, Bill 3 was introduced for the purpose of enhancing internal union governance, increasing financial accountability for union members, and modernizing democratic processes within the workplace. However, human rights advocates, legal experts, and civil liberties organizations immediately identified severe problems with the legislation. Critics raised profound concerns about how the law deliberately creates structural financial precarity for labour unions and imposes devastating bureaucratic burdens on the activities that they can engage in, warning that the ultimate effect of the bill would be the silencing of institutional political opposition.

Critics argue that the legislation could function as a targeted political tool against government critics by restricting funding for activities such as social justice advocacy, international solidarity work, and constitutional litigation. By creating a distinction between “core” and “non-core” union activities and imposing additional administrative and procedural requirements on spending related to the latter, the bill could substantially limit unions’ ability to allocate resources toward broader socio-political advocacy. As a result, there is a risk that the legislation could weaken unions’ capacity to advance human rights initiatives, participate in public policy debates, and challenge potentially discriminatory laws through the courts.

This brief evaluates the potential impact of Quebec’s Bill 3 on the democratic participation of labour unions, as an example of broader, systemic threats to the ability of civil society to engage in human rights advocacy. Importantly, these attempts to legally restrict unions from engaging in what the state deems “non-core activities” and to silence institutional political opposition are not limited solely to the province of Quebec; rather, they are part of a growing, coordinated conservative trend occurring elsewhere in Canada.² This includes the implementation of a similar dues-bifurcation framework by the Government of Alberta, which carves out “social causes” as one of many “non-core activities” that can only be funded through “opt-in” fees.³ Major labour organizations, such as Unifor, have condemned Alberta’s framework as an attack on freedom of association⁴ and the direct importation of draconian, US-style “right-to-work” laws designed to artificially suppress wages and undermine political opposition to right-wing economic policies.⁵

To demonstrate the negative implications of Bill 3 for human rights advocacy in Quebec and abroad, this analysis looks at two highly consequential case studies. First, the brief will examine how Bill 3 aims to undermine the ability of unions to launch major legal challenges against controversial legislation, specifically focusing on the constitutional battle against Bill 21, a law which actively fosters discrimination and institutional Islamophobia.⁶ Second, this brief will look at how Bill 3 aims to silence civil society advocacy over Israel’s genocide in Gaza and expressions of support for the Palestine solidarity movement, which has grown in popularity over the last few years.⁷

2 Foster, J. (2021). [Taking aim at unionized workers: The impacts of Bill 32 \(Part 1\)](#). Parkland Institute

3 Government of Alberta. [Rules for union dues election and financial statements](#).

4 Das, A. (2022). [Does unionization reduce CO2 emissions in Canada? Environmental Science and Pollution Research](#), 30, 61455–61465.

5 Finger, L. K., & Hartney, M. T. (2019). [Financial Solidarity: The Future of Unions in the post-Janus Era](#). Perspectives on Politics, 19, 19–35.

6 Mach, J. (Mar 23, 2026). [‘Why don’t you just say it out loud?’: SCC justices grill Bill 21 challengers in historic hearing](#). Canadian Lawyer.

7 Urgence Palestine Québec. [Coalition platform](#).

Ultimately, this policy brief concludes that Bill 3 is designed to undermine democratic dissent and systematically dismantle the ability of civil society to act in support of human rights, global solidarity, and the ongoing fight against state-sponsored oppression. This poses a risk of authoritarian encroachment on the constitutionally protected freedom of association. The brief ends with several recommendations, including the complete withdrawal of Bill 3, stronger legal protections for advocacy and freedom of association, respect for the democratic autonomy of civil society organizations, and the dismantling of discriminatory policies that infringe on human rights and constitutional freedoms.

Part 1: The Narrowing of Advocacy Rights

Bill 3 introduces a vast number of administrative burdens on labour unions that severely impact their ability to conduct their day-to-day activities. However, the most devastating element of the legislation is its attempt to fundamentally narrow the legal rights of these organizations in a way that structurally excludes broader social advocacy and the defence of human rights.

In particular, Bill 3 mandates the strict bifurcation of democratically collected union dues into two distinct categories: "principal" (mandatory) and "optional" (facultative). Minister of Labour Jean Boulet explicitly articulated the ideological premise of this division during parliamentary debates, stating publicly that the "central mission" of unions is strictly limited to workplace representation, collective bargaining, and providing training on the shop floor. According to the CAQ government's restrictive philosophy, everything peripheral to that immediate workplace relationship becomes optional.⁸



Source: [Montreal City News](#)

⁸ Yanez-Leyton, C. (Oct 30, 2025). [Union leaders pan new Quebec bill that makes some union dues optional](#). CBC News.

Under this highly restrictive paradigm, a union's regular (principal) dues can no longer be utilized to participate in broader social justice movements, support external human rights charities, engage in political advocacy, or mount systemic legal challenges unless the subject matter relates strictly, directly, and exclusively to the immediate defence of an active collective agreement. Everything that falls outside this incredibly narrow scope—from fighting climate change and demanding equitable public transit, to challenging institutional racism and defending minority rights—is legally deemed a "peripheral" hobby and subjected to a separate, optional funding mechanism.⁹

This represents a direct, legislative assault on the historically established philosophy of "social unionism." For decades, unions and related civil society actors in Quebec have understood that human rights, systemic discrimination, environmental degradation, and broad socio-economic conditions are inextricably linked to the well-being and dignity of the working class, and therefore relevant matters for labour unions.¹⁰ Social unionism dictates that a worker's interests do not end at the factory gates or the office door, but are deeply embedded in the health of the broader democracy. By legally severing the worker from the citizen, Bill 3 dictates that civil society can only defend the immediate economic interests of the former while being mandated to abandon the broader human rights of the latter.

Part 2: Bureaucratic Barriers to Advocacy

Bill 3 does not outright prohibit labour unions from engaging in the above "social" activities — doing so would amount to a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms — but instead imposes an administrative system with significant logistical barriers that make it much more difficult to do so effectively.

To access funds for these newly defined "peripheral" advocacy activities, Bill 3 forces unions to navigate a highly restrictive, multi-step democratic gauntlet designed specifically to induce voter fatigue and guarantee organizational failure.¹¹

The Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines agréés (CRHA) has analyzed the mechanics of the proposed system, warning that making a portion of union dues "optional" introduces a heavy administrative and accounting burden. The CRHA highlighted that because the social and political activities targeted by the government represent "relatively minimal amounts" of union spending, the new compliance mechanisms demand a disproportionate amount of time and money that would otherwise go toward defending workers' rights.¹² Similarly, unions such as PSAC-Québec have condemned the bill, arguing that these financial oversight requirements will be highly costly for local chapters and are designed to undermine unions' political actions and court challenges. To fund a social cause or legal challenge, a union must first present a detailed financial proposal at a general assembly, clearly disclosing the total amount associated with the optional dues.¹³

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU-CSC). (Mar 11, 2026). [Bill 3 in Quebec – A dual attack on workers' rights and union democracy](#).

¹¹ Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ). (Nov 6, 2025). [Projet de loi 3 : tout ce qu'il faut savoir!](#)

¹² Ibid

¹³ Public Service Alliance of Canada - Quebec. (Nov 27, 2025). [Bill 3: The CAQ refuses to hear us. PSAC-Québec](#).

The proposal must then be submitted to a secret-ballot vote of the membership. Although earlier versions of the bill imposed a mandatory 72-hour waiting period before voting and required the vote to remain open for at least 24 hours, those provisions were amended during the legislative process. Under the adopted framework, the vote must nevertheless remain open for a minimum of 12 hours and obtain the required majority approval before funds may be allocated to the proposed activity.¹⁴



Source: [CBC News](#)

The mechanics of this process are not designed to foster authentic deliberative democracy. Instead, by making the process far more complicated, time-sensitive, and bureaucratic, it risks suppressing political engagement. The process weaponizes membership apathy, internal logistical complexity, and the natural exhaustion of the workforce, which will lead to fewer funds available for unions to engage in human rights advocacy.

Furthermore, these bureaucratic barriers paralyze the ability of civil society to respond to urgent political or legal issues. The Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ), an organization composed of nearly 90,000 healthcare professionals (90% of whom are women), warned that the law fails to reflect the realities of union mobilization and removes the basic right of organizations to rapidly challenge unconstitutional laws in court. If the government passes draconian back-to-work legislation, unilaterally imposes a collective agreement, or abruptly suspends civil liberties, organizations are structurally prohibited from using their principal funds to launch an immediate constitutional injunction or a massive public relations campaign to defend their members.¹⁵

¹⁴ Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec. (Apr 2, 2026). [“Adoption of Bill 3: The FIQ obtains significant amendments to limit its impacts.”](#)

¹⁵ Ibid

The severity of this democratic subversion has alarmed top legal and human rights institutions across the province. The Barreau du Québec (the provincial bar association) issued a stark warning, noting that Bill 3 portrays a profound risk to the freedom of association and restricts the capacity of civil society to participate in public debate.¹⁶ The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ) echoed these concerns, explicitly warning against legislative trends that restrict Charter-based judicial recourse. The Commission emphasized that safeguarding democratic principles requires ensuring that unions retain the unrestricted capacity to challenge legislation that infringes upon their members' fundamental rights.¹⁷ Furthermore, Amnesty International explicitly condemned the legislation, stating it severely limits the capacity of unions to act effectively for the common good beyond strict labour law, and officially recommended that the government withdraw or fundamentally alter the bill.¹⁸

Part 3: Defunding Legal Dissent: The Constitutional Challenge to Bill 21

To understand the profound implications of Bill 3 for undermining legal dissent, one must understand the context of widespread civil society opposition to discriminatory legislation, including the intense battles surrounding Bill 21 (the Act respecting the laicity of the State). One paramount motivation for the government in introducing this restrictive financial legislation was to try to stop well-funded unions from intervening against the government's highly contested, populist legislative agenda.

Bill 21 and Institutional Islamophobia

Bill 21, which was adopted by the Quebec government in 2019, explicitly prohibits certain public sector workers in positions of civic authority — most notably public school teachers, crown prosecutors, and police officers — from wearing religious symbols while exercising their professional functions.¹⁹ While the CAQ government persistently frames this as a neutral defense of state secularism, civil liberties organizations, including the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), have demonstrated that because the legislation specifically impacts highly visible garments such as the hijab, its practical application disproportionately alienates, economically marginalizes, and stigmatizes Muslim women.²⁰

The law forces these women to make an impossible, discriminatory choice between their fundamental religious identity and their chosen profession, effectively institutionalizing Islamophobia and legally enforcing a tiered system of citizenship where minority women are excluded from the public sphere.²¹ Organizations like the Ligue des droits et libertés (LDL) have

16 Assemblée nationale du Québec. (2026). [Projet de loi n° 3: Loi visant à améliorer la transparence, la gouvernance et le processus démocratique de diverses associations en milieu de travail](#).

17 Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse. (Nov 25, 2025). [Commentaires sur le projet de loi n°3 sur les associations en milieu de travail](#).

18 Amnistie internationale. (Mar 2026). [Canada: Rapport présenté au Comité des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies](#) (Index: AMR 20/0675/2026). Amnesty International.

19 Assemblée nationale du Québec. [Bill 21](#).

20 Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA). [Bill 21](#).

21 Narain, V. (2024). How Does it Feel to be a Problem? Inclusion and Exclusion and Quebec's Bill 21. Constitutional Forum / Forum constitutionnel. 32. 21-30. 10.21991/cf29470.

extensively documented how this legislation, and the divisive political rhetoric surrounding it, fuels a dangerous climate of exclusion, racism, microaggressions, and institutional Islamophobia within Quebec.²² Research confirms that mothers of Maghrebi origin and their children face routine racial microaggressions in public schools, directly emboldened by the context of the secularism law.²³



Source: [The Star](#)

Labour unions such as the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE), which represents tens of thousands of teachers across highly diverse socioeconomic zones and major urban centers in Quebec—including Montreal, Laval, and Outaouais—are dedicating vast institutional resources to fighting this legislation.²⁴ The FAE has become a primary appellant in the historic constitutional challenge against Bill 21 currently being heard before the Supreme Court of Canada. The union views this litigation not merely as a theoretical debate about secularism, but believes that defending the fundamental right to work without discrimination is a core civil rights issue and absolutely within the mandate of a labour union.²⁵

22 Ligue des droits et libertés. (Jun 8, 2025). [Mémoire: Laïcité de l'État et droits humains au Québec.](#)

23 Rubertucci, A. (Jan 5, 2022). ['Muslims do not feel safe': Bill 21 is fuelling Islamophobia in Quebec, say advocates.](#) CityNews Montreal.

24 Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE). [Mémoire de la FAE - Projet de loi n° 3 : Loi visant à améliorer la transparence, la gouvernance et le processus démocratique de diverses associations en milieu de travail.](#)

25 Mach, J. (Mar 23, 2026). ['Why don't you just say it out loud?': SCC justices grill Bill 21 challengers in historic hearing.](#) Canadian Lawyer.

At the Supreme Court, the FAE's legal counsel, Frédéric Bérard, took direct issue with the CAQ government's preemptive and aggressive use of Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the notwithstanding clause).²⁶ The government invoked this clause specifically as a way to immunize blatantly discriminatory legislation from any form of judicial review.²⁷ Bérard warned the Supreme Court justices that allowing the unchecked, routine use of the notwithstanding clause could pave the way for a "mini-Trump in Canada," arguing that an authoritarian leader could utilize this exact mechanism to override fundamental rights and dismantle democratic equality in a perfectly constitutional manner. Chief Justice Richard Wagner explicitly engaged with this argument, questioning the province's lawyers on what would happen if a tyrant who had no respect for the separation of powers or equality between men and women suddenly passed legislation undermining the foundations of Canadian values. The total legal cost for the FAE to mount this massive defense of civil liberties is projected to reach \$2.4 million by the conclusion of the 2026 financial year.²⁸

Bill 3 as a Financial Shield

If Bill 3 is fully enacted and enforced, organizations like the FAE could be prevented, as a practical matter, from drawing the \$2.4 million required for this historic human rights litigation from their general principal revenue, due to restrictions on how such funds may be allocated and accessed.²⁹

Because challenging unconstitutional laws at the Supreme Court is not deemed a "core" function of collective bargaining under Bill 3, the union would be forced to subject the funding of the Bill 21 challenge to the gruelling, annual "optional dues" bureaucratic gauntlet.³⁰ By forcing the approval for any such expenditure to go through a highly publicized and structurally complex annual voting process, Bill 3 threatens to exhaust the membership and defund dissent.³¹ It ensures that when the government passes unconstitutional, discriminatory, or Islamophobic laws, working-class organizations will be systematically stripped of the financial and organizational capacity required to hold the state accountable in the courts.³²

Part 4: Suppressing Solidarity and Global Human Rights

The second main impact of Bill 3 is that it fundamentally undermines the ability of labour unions to engage in international solidarity, geopolitical education, and the defence of global human rights.

Quebec civil society has been historically highly active in expressing solidarity with marginalized populations globally, a practice deeply rooted in an internationalist commitment to human rights, anti-colonialism, and global justice. The response to the ongoing genocide and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza since 2023 has brought this dynamic to the forefront of public discourse. Quebec labour unions in particular have traditionally shown immense leadership within civil

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ 98.5 FM. (Oct 24, 2025). 2,4 M\$ pour contester la loi 21 | FAE: «[La job d'un syndicat, c'est de défendre le droit au travail](#)» [Audio podcast].

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ). (Nov 6, 2025). [Projet de loi 3 : tout ce qu'il faut savoir!](#)

³¹ Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU-CSC). (Mar 11, 2026). [Bill 3 in Quebec – A dual attack on workers' rights and union democracy.](#)

³² Qub. (Apr 5, 2026). [“We won’t muzzle the unions!”](#): Jean Boulet defends his Bill 3. Youtube Video.

society in pushing for systemic change on a global scale, and major labour federations such as the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) have taken strong, principled institutional stances against Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people.³³



Source: [Montreal City News](#)

This broad social mandate is a vital and positive democratic force, ensuring that organized citizens have a powerful, collective voice in matters of global justice, international law, and the protection of civilian life against state-sponsored violence.³⁴

However, the international solidarity activities of unions have been met with severe, coordinated backlash from conservative media and political actors in Quebec who actively seek to delegitimize any broad human rights mandate held by civil society and working-class organizations. Commentators have aggressively questioned why union resources would be directed toward supporting grassroots human rights groups, relying heavily on populist tropes to argue that such actions deviate from a narrow, acceptable administrative mandate, claiming that union leaders are out of touch with the "real" economic concerns of their members.

This hostility was perfectly encapsulated in a highly adversarial interview on QUB Radio, where host Benoit Dutrizac confronted CSN President Caroline Senneville over the union's intense focus on Gaza. Dutrizac attacked the union's solidarity with groups like "Montreal for Palestine," dismissing the activists as "crinqués" (fanatics) and implying that union leadership illegitimately ignores local workers in favour of international issues.³⁵ Senneville responded by defending the union's democratic mandate, explaining that the union's duty is to defend all the interests

33 Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ). (n.d.). [34e Congrès de la FTQ](#).

34 Urgence Palestine Québec. [Coalition platform](#).

35 Qub_radio, [Benoit Dutrizac confronted the president of the CSN and things got heated!](#) #CSN [Video]. YouTube.

of workers, which fundamentally includes taking moral stances on human rights, international solidarity, and anti-war initiatives, declaring that "the union dues belong to the members, it's up to them to decide!" ("La cotisation syndicale appartient aux membres, c'est à eux de décider!").³⁶

Anti-Palestinian Racism (APR) as a Systemic Framework

By classifying geopolitical advocacy as a "non-core" or "optional" activity, Bill 3 provides legislative validation to this right-wing media critique. If the state dictates that international solidarity resolutions and the funding of human rights awareness campaigns cannot be drawn from principal dues, it effectively silences the institutional voice of the labour movement on matters of global injustice.³⁷

This dynamic must be analyzed through the emerging academic and legal lens of Anti-Palestinian Racism (APR). The Arab-Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA) has developed a robust framework describing APR as a specific, pernicious form of anti-Arab racism that "silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives," which has been adapted and applied by organizations including Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) and the CJPME Foundation.

Key manifestations of APR identified in the Canadian context include:

- Denying the Nakba and failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people with collective rights.
- Excluding or violently pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians themselves, and their allies from the public square.
- Defaming Palestinians and their allies with slanderous claims, such as equating basic human rights solidarity with inherent antisemitism, terrorism, or opposition to democratic values.³⁸



Source: [Jewish Currents](#)

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Yanez-Leyton, C. (Oct 30, 2025). [Union leaders pan new Quebec bill that makes some union dues optional](#). CBC News,

³⁸ Arab Canadian Lawyers Association, (2022). Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations.

Understanding the "exclusion" aspect of APR is vital to comprehending the insidious nature of this systemic racism. Exclusion in this context is not merely about interpersonal prejudice; it is a structural phenomenon designed to actively bar Palestinian narratives and human rights defenders from accessing institutional platforms, resources, and public visibility. When institutions fold under external pressure to cancel pro-Palestinian events, or when the state introduces complex administrative hurdles to prevent organizations from funding solidarity campaigns, they are operationalizing exclusion. This creates a chilling effect where advocating for Palestinian rights is deemed "too controversial" or "too administratively difficult" to pursue, effectively erasing the Palestinian struggle from the legitimate bounds of civil society discourse.

This exclusion is often justified through the intensive use of defamation. In a comprehensive study of 2023 online content, the CJPME Foundation identified 988 concrete examples of Anti-Palestinian Racism (APR) in Canada, noting that defaming Palestinians and their advocates as terrorist sympathizers or antisemites is a rampant, systemic issue (CJPME Foundation, 2024). The report highlighted that 77% (760 instances) of the identified examples included defamatory slurs. Unlike the previous year, accusations of being terrorist sympathizers were the most common subtype (59%, or 585 examples), followed by accusations of antisemitism (46%, or 457 examples).³⁹

When the political establishment and media commentators attack organizations for expressing solidarity with Palestine and demand they stick to a narrow administrative mandate, they are engaging directly in the exclusionary practices identified by the APR framework.⁴⁰ Bill 3 provides the state with an apolitical administrative tool to achieve the goals of APR and silence support for Palestinians without having to engage in overt censorship. By rendering Palestinian solidarity an "optional" and heavily bureaucratized endeavour subject to massive logistical hurdles, the state structurally enforces the exclusion and silencing of Palestinian narratives. Bill 3 makes it harder for civil society to spend organizational resources in opposing atrocities and oppression at home and around the world.

Part 5: Policy Implications and Recommendations

Quebec's Bill 3 represents a watershed moment in the escalation of state-sponsored suppression of civil society in Canada. By cloaking aggressive financial restrictions and deep state interference in the apolitical language of "transparency" and "governance," the CAQ government has engineered a highly effective administrative mechanism to definitively defund institutional dissent.⁴¹

The primary overarching threat of this legislation lies in its calculated attempt by the state to shut down the ability of unions, as an important agent within civil society, to engage in human rights advocacy and to structurally challenge discriminatory legislation.⁴² By restricting core organizational funds to a dangerously narrow definition of acceptable, immediate workplace

39 CJPME Foundation. (2024). [https://montreal.citynews.ca/2025/11/29/montreal-thousands-rally-against-anti-union-measures/Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East. https://www.cjpmefoundation.org/apr-report-2023](https://montreal.citynews.ca/2025/11/29/montreal-thousands-rally-against-anti-union-measures/Canadians%20for%20Justice%20and%20Peace%20in%20the%20Middle%20East.%20https://www.cjpmefoundation.org/apr-report-2023)

40 Ibid

41 Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU-CSC). (Mar 11, 2026). [Bill 3 in Quebec – A dual attack on workers' rights and union democracy](#).

42 Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec. (Nov 25, 2025). [Bill 3](#).

activities, Bill 3 threatens to instantly bankrupt multi-million dollar constitutional defences of fundamental civil liberties, such as the FAE's ongoing, \$2.4 million Supreme Court fight against the institutional Islamophobia embedded within Bill 21.⁴³ Simultaneously, by classifying international human rights advocacy and global solidarity as a peripheral hobby subject to bureaucratic restrictions, the legislation provides deep, legislative structural cover for anti-Palestinian racism and successfully severs the vital link between local democratic power and global human rights.⁴⁴

The implications for Canadian democracy are profound and deeply alarming. Labour unions and their affiliated social organizations represent one of the very few socio-economic institutions with the scale, financial infrastructure, and democratic mandate capable of serving as an effective counterweight to corporate hegemony and state overreach, 3 and therefore play an important leadership role in civil society. When the state assumes the unilateral power to forcibly separate independent organizations from their social conscience, dictate their internal bylaws, and restrict their ability to advocate for minority rights, it fundamentally shifts the balance of power permanently toward the political elite and away from democratic accountability.⁴⁵



Source: [The Confederation of Canadian Unions](#)

43 98.5 FM. (Oct 24, 2025). 2,4 M\$ pour contester la loi 21 | FAE: «[La job d'un syndicat, c'est de défendre le droit au travail](#)» [Audio podcast].

44 Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME). (2022). [Anti-Palestinian racism](#).

45 Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE). [Mémoire de la FAE - Projet de loi n° 3 : Loi visant à améliorer la transparence, la gouvernance et le processus démocratique de diverses associations en milieu de travail](#).

To protect the integrity of human rights advocacy, preserve the freedom of association, and ensure the survival of a robust civil society capable of defending the marginalized, the following recommendations are directed at the Government of Quebec:

1. **Repeal Bill 3 Completely:** The government must immediately and unconditionally repeal Bill 3. As recommended by Amnesty International and the Ligue des droits et libertés, the state must recognize this legislation as an unjustified infringement on the freedom of association and a direct, calculated threat to the democratic functioning of civil society.
2. **Acknowledge and Protect Advocacy Rights:** The state must formally acknowledge and legally protect the fundamental right of unions and all members of civil society to engage unhindered in broad social, political, and human rights advocacy. The defence of human rights must never be legally classified as a "peripheral" or optional endeavour.
3. **Support Free Speech and Democratic Deliberation:** The government must immediately cease any and all attempts to interfere in the internal statutes, bylaws, and democratic deliberative processes of independent organizations. The state must ensure that civil society can freely debate, vote, and allocate resources toward legal challenges and global solidarity without state-imposed restrictions.
4. **Dismantle Discriminatory Policies:** The government must proactively dismantle discriminatory policies, such as Bill 21, that marginalize minority communities, institutionalize Islamophobia, and violate constitutional rights and freedoms.



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