

As Chief of the Commission and Tribunals at the Alberta Human Rights Commission, it is my responsibility to ensure that all Albertans have equal access to a timely complaints process. It is also my responsibility to ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly and equitably as they proceed through the review and hearing stages.

Members of Alberta's Muslim community have recently approached me with concerns regarding an academic book review I wrote in 2009. The book I reviewed was written by a prominent historian and dealt with the political history of Islam. It included statements regarding the alleged militant history of the Muslim religion. In my review, I agreed with elements of the author's position and rejected others.

Firstly, I want to thank those members of the Muslim community who have reached out to me on this matter and expressed their concerns. It is vital for me to hear from and be responsive to all Albertans, especially those from equity-seeking and racialized communities. Secondly, I wish to state clearly that I do not believe or accept the characterization of Islam as a militant religion or movement, especially in light of important recent and diverse scholarship that is working to overcome misconceptions regarding Muslim history and philosophy. I specifically want to affirm that Muslim Albertans are entitled to the full and equal respect accorded all our communities.

I commit to continuing my personal education about Islam, and all faiths, in my role as Chief. Working with representatives from the National Council of Canadian Muslims, I will be meeting with leaders in Alberta's Muslim community to learn more about their lived experiences in Alberta and to work towards overcoming discrimination against the Islamic community.

The Commission is committed to ensuring that our processes are open to all Albertans. As a member of 2SLGBTQ+ community, I understand the importance of ensuring that all individuals, including those from marginalized groups, have access to a human rights system that does not further discriminate against those already experiencing discrimination. I look forward to working with all Albertans, including members of Alberta's Muslim community, in efforts to improve our processes and make our human rights system more accessible.