

Multifaith Coalition of 70+ Organisations Asks Canadian Lawmakers For Accuracy and Fairness in New Anti-Hate Measures

Concerns Raised Over Wording on 'Swastika' in Bill C-9 and Petition e-6625

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA, October 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A group of more than 70 Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim, and interfaith organizations has written to Canadian lawmakers seeking greater accuracy in new federal measures addressing hate symbols.

“

A prohibition on displaying the Swastika, without recognizing its sacred meaning to Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains, would almost certainly be unconstitutional.”

Mark Sandler, chair of the Alliance of Canadians Combatting Antisemitism

The group's letter highlights concerns with how the word Swastika appears in Bill C-9 (Combatting Hate Act), introduced by MP Sean Fraser, and Petition e-6625, introduced by MP Melissa Lantsman, Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition. According to the signatories, the current wording conflates the sacred Swastika—used for millennia in Dharmic traditions—with the Nazi Hakenkreuz (Hooked Cross).

“While we fully support the intent to combat hate,

precision in terminology is essential,” said Rishabh Saraswat, president of CoHNA Canada. “Using the term Swastika to describe the Nazi emblem risks misrepresenting a sacred symbol and confusing Canadians about its true meaning.”

The letter requests that lawmakers substitute the phrase “Nazi Swastika” with “Nazi Hakenkreuz” in all legislative and explanatory materials. Signatories say this change would maintain the objective of the Bill while avoiding inadvertent harm to Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Canadians who use the Swastika in religious and cultural contexts.

Bill C-9 currently identifies the symbol as “the Nazi Hakenkreuz, also known as the Nazi Swastika.” The Bill also criminalizes any symbol that “so nearly resembles” the banned emblem that it might be “confused” with it. Petition e-6625 calls to “finally ban the Swastika” without further qualification.

Legal experts have cautioned that the current language could raise constitutional issues. Mark

Sandler, chair of the Alliance of Canadians Combatting Antisemitism (ALCCA), noted that, "'A prohibition on displaying the swastika, without recognizing its sacred meaning to Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains, would almost certainly be unconstitutional," citing Section 2(a) of the Charter on freedom of religion and conscience.

The coalition points to incidents in which misunderstanding of the symbol has led to complaints, employment disputes, or investigations when individuals displayed it in private or religious settings. These have included a woman named Swastika being banned from using Uber in Australia, a UK caretaker dismissed over a Swastika tattoo, and Canadian residents questioned by police for displaying the symbol.

Historical records show that the Nazis referred to their symbol as the "Hakenkreuz" rather than "Swastika." Western press reporting on the Nazi party in the 1920s also used the term "Hakenkreuz."

Over the past five years, the Swastika Awareness Coalition, CoHNA, and its Hindu, Buddhist and Jain organizational partners have worked with law enforcement agencies and government bodies to promote correct terminology. Police services in Peel Region (ON) and Montreal (QC) have already updated training materials to distinguish between the Swastika and the Hakenkreuz. Similar clarifications have been adopted in Virginia and California (USA) and in Victoria and New South Wales (Australia).

For additional information and educational materials, please visit <https://cohna.org/swastika>.

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