

CoHNA Celebrates Historic Victory on Bill C-9 Amendment

Justice Committee adopts amendment distinguishing sacred Swastika from Nazi Hakenkreuz

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA, December 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Coalition of Hindus of North America (CoHNA) today celebrates an important legislative victory on Bill C-9: the Justice



Committee's adoption of MP Anthony Housefather's amendment, which removes the word "Swastika" when referring to the Nazi emblem and replaces it with the historically accurate term "Nazi Hakenkreuz."

Its inclusion in legislation aimed at banning Nazi symbols would have risked further deepening the undue misalignment of the symbol"

*Richard Robertson of B'nai
Brith Canada*

The outcome is the result of months of coordinated [outreach](#) that CoHNA was proud to help organize and lead, alongside other Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Jewish partners across Canada. Our email campaign saw close to 9000 emails sent to Canadian MPs and Senators, representing every province and major city. It marks a significant victory

for grassroots advocacy by Dhārmic Canadians as well as Indigenous communities whose sacred symbol has long been misrepresented in Western discourse.

Honoring the ask from our community, on December 9, 2025, the Committee voted to replace the inaccurate terminology with the historically precise term "Nazi Hakenkreuz".

"This proud win confirms that when we speak with clarity and unity, Parliament listens. We celebrate this win and extend our profound gratitude to every grassroots volunteer and partner organization who made their voices heard by testimonies, briefs and outreach campaigns. We are also deeply thankful to all the MPs who listened to our voices and represented our concerns in Parliament," said CoHNA Canada president Rishabh Sarswat.

Legislative Support

CoHNA thanks MP Housefather for listening to community concerns and for taking this crucial step toward protecting the religious freedoms of Dhārmic Canadians.

Along with him, from the current Parliament, MPs Larry Brock, Jamil Jivani, and Shuvolay Majumdar amplified our voices. Former MPs Chandra Arya and Peter Julian as well as

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe have also in the past acknowledged and advocated for nuance on the Swastika.

Interfaith Community Unity

When Bill C-9 was introduced with language that incorrectly labeled the Nazi hate symbol as “Swastika,” CoHNA immediately sounded the alarm and began coordinating a community-wide response. This outcome is a powerful testament to the strength of interfaith solidarity and unity of diverse communities in Canada.

“I am pleased that the House of Commons Justice Committee unanimously supported our shared position that the proposed Combatting Hate Act clearly distinguish between the unlawful display of the Nazi Hakenkreuz and the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain swastika,” said Mark Sandler of the Alliance of Canadians Combatting Antisemitism (ALCCA), which had taken an early position on the bill. “We hope that the federal political parties will work collaboratively to ensure that the legislation moves forward with all the amendments we have proposed. Our communities deserve no less,” he added.

“The removal of the word Swastika from Bill C-9 is an example of what we can achieve when multicultural voices from across Canada speak as one. Its inclusion in legislation aimed at banning Nazi symbols would have risked further deepening the undue misalignment of the symbol,” said Richard Robertson of B’nai Brith Canada. Part of the oldest Jewish human rights organization, B’nai Brith Canada had already [made history](#) in March this year by supporting a nuanced approach on understanding the Swastika versus the Hakenkreuz.

Broad winning strategy:

--Dhārmic Community coordination meant the Justice Committee heard a unified, consistent message, with submissions from Hindu Federation, Hindu Canadian Foundation (HCF), Canadian Organizations of Hindu Heritage Education (CoHHE), Hindu Canadian Alliance (HCA), and World Jain Organization, represented by Vijay Jain. In addition, a Buddhist temple coalition, organized through the Vesak Celebration Committee, included West End Buddhist Temple, Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple, Cham Shan Buddhist Temple, and Karma Sonam Dargye Ling Tibetan Buddhist Temple

--Unprecedented Interfaith coalition building – We worked closely with Jewish organizations including ALCCA, Allied Voices for Israel (AVI), B’nai Brith Canada, Canadian Antisemitism Education Foundation (CAEF), Canadian Women Against Antisemitism (CWAA), Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), as well as independent Jewish legal experts and several Jewish MPs including MP Housefather. This alliance demonstrated that protecting the sacred symbols of one community strengthens protections for all communities.

--Strategic messaging and [Policy Brief](#) – We developed and shared educational materials, talking points, and advocacy tools that empowered organizations and individuals across the country.

CoHNA submitted a comprehensive policy brief to the Justice Committee documenting the sacred history of the Swastika and the need for accurate terminology.

--Grassroots mobilization – Through our advocacy platform and partner efforts, close to 9000 emails from 500 individuals reached MPs and Committee members and multiple meetings ensued.

CoHNA is deeply grateful to every organization, temple, and individual who contributed to this effort. This victory belongs to all of us.

What This Victory Achieves:

Following the amendment, Bill C-9 will:

- Use “Nazi Hakenkreuz” as the term for the prohibited hate symbol
- Remove the ambiguous phrase “also known as the Nazi swastika” from the English text
- Retain intent requirements—a symbol is only an offense if displayed with the willful intent to promote hatred
- Maintain protections for education, history, journalism, art, and religious uses

Canada Joins Global Movement Toward Accurate Terminology

With this amendment, Canada now joins a growing list of democracies that have successfully distinguished between the sacred Swastika and the Nazi Hakenkreuz in their hate crime legislation:

- Australia (Victoria & New South Wales) – Banned Nazi symbols with explicit religious exemptions (2022-2023)
 - United States (California, Washington, Virginia) – Criminalized Nazi symbols while protecting Dharmic religious use (2022-2025)
 - Germany – Maintains the world's strictest anti-Nazi laws while avoiding conflation in legal text
 - Canadian municipalities – Peel Regional Police (Ontario) and Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal (Quebec) updated hate crime reporting tools to distinguish the symbols (2024)
- These jurisdictions prove that effective hate crime enforcement and religious freedom protection are entirely compatible through precise language.

What's Next

While this amendment is a major victory, Bill C-9 remains in Committee, as MPs debate the religious exemption clause (Section 319(3) of the Criminal Code) which is unrelated to the Swastika issue. CoHNA will continue monitoring the legislative process and will provide updates as the Bill advances.

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