



# B.C. Human Rights Coalition

#1202 – 510 West Hasting Street

Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8

Tel: 604.689.8474; Fax: 604.689.7511; Email: [info@bchrcoalition.org](mailto:info@bchrcoalition.org)

## Media Release

For Immediate Release

November 1, 2004

### COALITION SUPPORTS THE CALL FOR A FULL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

**(VANCOUVER, Canada)** – As a provincial organization that works to advance and protect the equality rights of British Columbians, we join with others in calling for a thorough investigation as to whether the recent Anti-Semitic remarks made by a Muslim cleric in Vancouver contravene Canada's anti-hate crime laws. Not only were the remarks deeply offensive and harmful, but they must also be properly assessed from a criminal perspective to ensure that we, as a society, remain vigilant in our fight against hate crimes.

Canada as a country does not tolerate the promotion of hatred towards any group of people, including hatred directed toward a particular group based purely on their religious beliefs or practices. Canada is a multicultural country; one that prides itself on its ability to accommodate and celebrate the differences that exist amongst us. These values are enshrined in our Constitution and are given legal force through both human rights protections and criminal code provisions. This signals a strong legislative intent to protect against hate propaganda and hate crimes.

The B.C. Human Rights Coalition is a membership based organization. Our membership includes both individuals and groups who represent diverse cultural, racial and religious backgrounds. We work hard to promote a climate of understanding and mutual respect through educating British Columbians on acceptance, inclusiveness and human rights. When preventative techniques fail, we believe it's important to support others in the community in condemning acts of discrimination and hate.

The B.C. Human Rights Coalition stands together with the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC). We call upon the B.C. Hate Crimes Team to conduct a thorough investigation as to whether the remarks made by Sheik Younos Kathrada contravene anti-hate crime laws. As an organization that works primarily in the human rights arena, we also commit to working with the CJC and others should they wish to assess or pursue a claim on this matter under our human rights legislation.

– 30 –

Contacts: Susan O'Donnell, Executive Director  
Terri Kennedy, Communications Coordinator  
BC Human Rights Coalition, 604.689.8474

The B.C. Human Rights Coalition is a non-profit community-based organization. We strive to promote and strengthen the human rights of British Columbians through advocacy, education and law reform.