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PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT: LAUNCH OF UNITED FOR ALL COALITION

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Above: Local organizations form United for All coalition to coordinate efforts to overcome hate and violence in Ottawa. City of Ottawa signs Strong Cities Network agreement.

On Friday, November 15, 2019, a group of 24 organisations announced the formation of a local coalition called *United for All*. Led by the City of Ottawa, United Way East Ontario, Ottawa Police Services, and joined by many other organisations, the group will coordinate local efforts to overcome hate and violence in our city.

The launch of this coalition is *United for All's* first step to publicly stand up against issues like racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, violence against women and more. Though in its early stages, over the coming year the group will develop a city-wide plan to help address the root causes of hate and violence — with the aim of making Ottawa a welcoming city for all. As part of the plan, the group will aim to secure public and private funding to support its vital work.

In recent years, Ottawa has seen a rise in hate crimes and hate speech toward religious and cultural groups, Indigenous community members and more. According to Statistics Canada, police-reported hate crimes in Ontario jumped by 67 per cent in 2017. In that year, Ottawa ranked among the top 10 cities with highest reported hate crime rates in the country.

Ottawa's strength lies in its diverse and vibrant community. I am proud to be working with various organizations and agencies on a city-wide plan to address hate and violence. By finding common ground instead of differences, we invite age, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, abilities, values and beliefs to become the fabric of our city and unite, rather than divide, us."

– Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson

As its first milestone today, **Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson** and the **City of Ottawa's** leadership signed the **Strong Cities Network (SCN)** agreement as the largest coalition of organisations to join the network. Being a member of the SCN will allow the city and *United for All* to access research data, capacity-building supports and learning resources, as well as a training hub.

"Ottawa is home to people of all backgrounds and every single person deserves to feel safe and supported," said Amira Elghawaby, community activist and a founding board member of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network. *"I'm proud to be part of a coalition dedicated to promoting inclusion and confronting all forms of hatred. I look forward to the work ahead to make our city better for everyone."*

"We know members of our communities face Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and other forms of hate," said Yasir Naqvi, Chief Executive Officer, Institute for Canadian Citizenship. "We're here today to show that we are taking a unified approach to help address these issues."



"As a municipality and a coalition we're coming together to show that all forms of hate are unacceptable," said Ottawa city councillor for Rideau-Rockcliffe ward, Rawlson King. "United for All is a call to action; together we will shine a light on violence and hate, and to find a better path forward for our community."

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Try watching this video on www.youtube.com, or enable JavaScript if it is disabled in your browser.