

Thousands march in support of Muslim family killed in Canada



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London, June 12 (RHC)-- Thousands of people have marched in support of a Canadian Muslim family run over and killed by a man driving a pick-up truck last Sunday in an attack the police described as a hate crime.

The four victims, spanning three generations, were killed when Nathaniel Veltman, 20, ran into them while they were out for an evening walk near their home. A fifth family member, a nine-year-old boy, survived.

People in London, Ontario marched about seven kilometres (4.4 miles) on Friday from the spot where the family was struck down to a nearby mosque, the site close to where Veltman was arrested by police. Some carried placards with messages reading “Hate has no home here”, “Love over hate”.

“The best part was not just the numbers ... but the diversity of the people coming from every single community in London, coming together for this cause,” said 19-year old college student Abdullah al-Jarad at the march.

After a moment of silence marking the time of the tragedy, representatives from several religions gave speeches denouncing hatred and saluting the outpouring of support for London’s 30,000-strong Muslim community. Other rallies or vigils in Canada took place in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec, where a shooting in a mosque left six dead in 2017.

The attack sparked outrage across Canada, with politicians from all sides condemning the crime, spurring growing calls to take action to curb hate crime and Islamophobia. Veltman made a brief court appearance on Thursday and will return to court on Monday. He faces four charges of first-degree murder and one of attempted murder.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has called the killings a “terrorist attack” and vowed to clamp down on far-right groups and online hate. Detective Superintendent Paul Waight, who is leading the investigation, has said there was evidence “that this was a planned, premeditated act, motivated by hate.”

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