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## **COMMUNITY CALLS FOR PARLIAMENT TO LEGISLATE A CHINESE CANADIAN HERITAGE MONTH**

United Against Hate Canada and the Montreal Chan Associations today announced the launch of a national campaign calling on Parliament to adopt a motion creating an annual Canadian Chinese Heritage Month that would be similar to the other heritage months that already celebrate the contributions to Canada's wellbeing of other ethnic, religious and racial minorities.

The two groups say that there are 1.8 million Canadians of Chinese origin or heritage, comprising one of Canada's largest minority groups yet are not recognized by a heritage month of their own. The Province of Ontario officially passed the Chinese Heritage Month Act in 2024, proclaiming the month of February as Chinese Heritage Month. But there is no national recognition for a community which has played a key role throughout Canada's history.

"That is a glaring omission among Canada's 68 commemorative days and months", says Marvin Rotrand, Director General of United Against Hate Canada.

"Between 1885, when Canada first imposed a head tax on Chinese migrants, until 1947, when Parliament revoked the discriminatory Chinese Exclusion Act legislated in 1921, the Chinese have faced barriers in Canada unlike that of any other ethnic or racial group. Despite official discrimination, the Chinese put down deep roots in Canada, persevered and contributed to Canada's growth. It's time to recognize their contributions to our country."

The organizations recognize that Canada has decreed that May is Asian Heritage Month but say that the appellation "Asian" does not mean that the diverse groups who trace their origins to Asia have much in common with each other. The month is also less celebrated than other heritage months.

"That may be due to specific heritage months also being recognized for specific Asian groups. For example, April is Sikh Heritage Month and June is Filipino Heritage Month. Both these months receive significant attention in these two communities and are more celebrated than Asian Heritage Month," says Jimmy Chan, President of the Montreal Chan Organizations.

The two groups point out that in 2024 the Senate voted a motion to designate October as Korean Heritage Month which Ontario had already done in 2017 and that while not specific to Asians, Parliament has also recognized October as Canadian Islamic Heritage Month and November as Hindu Heritage Month. These months are meaningful to many people of Asian heritage.

Mr. Rotrand notes there are no heritage months per se recognizing the many contributions of Japanese and Chinese Canadians although in 2024 Alberta, via a Ministerial Order, proclaimed September as Japanese Heritage Month in the province with the first celebration taking place in 2025.

Last week the organizations wrote to elected officials at all three levels of government who are of Chinese origin and heritage and invited them to consult Chinese organizations in their regions and begin to interface with Members of Parliament.

The letters summarized discussions with stakeholders across Canada and showed significant support for a motion to create a Canadian Chinese Heritage Month. The groups have also reached out to other elected officials who have championed heritage causes and community groups within and outside the Chinese community to strengthen the request for a Canadian Chinese Heritage Month.

Mr. Chan states that while both the Montreal Chan Associations and United Against Hate Canada will continue to support the celebration of Asian Heritage Month, they have already recruited a dozen organizations which will support their demand to Parliament to add to the list of recognized heritage months by creating a Canadian Chinese Heritage Month.

The campaign is winning support from organizations from across the country who hail from outside the Chinese community.

"The Chinese have contributed so much to Canada," indicated Max Stanley Bazin, President of the Black Coalition of Quebec. "Today we stand in solidarity with the Chinese community as they launch this campaign to win much merited overdue recognition. We invite Canada's diverse ethnic, racial and religious minorities to add their voices in support of the call for a Canadian Chinese Heritage Month to be voted by Parliament."