



End Anti-Black Racism

A solidarity statement by OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants modified in solidarity by AMSSA- Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia to reflect BC specific conditions.

Vancouver June 3, 2020 – We are in solidarity with Black Communities in Canada and across North America amidst the pain and rage we feel at the taking of another Black life - again. We mourn Regis Korchiniski-Paquet who died last week in Toronto.

We mourn George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor – brutally killed in the United States, victims of anti-Black racism and White supremacy.

Canada is not immune. We remember Andrew Loku, Abdirahman Abdi, D’Andre Campbell and many others who were failed by mental health services and killed by Police in what often looks like state-sanctioned murder, given how rarely police officers are punished for the taking of Black lives. A coroner’s jury made 30 recommendations in 2017 after the fatal shooting of Andrew Loku by police. Many are yet to be implemented. How long must we wait and how many more lives will be unjustly taken? What are Black lives worth in Canada?

We have been here before, have asked these same questions of our governments. Black folks and their communities in Canada are over-surveilled, over-policed, criminalized and under-protected. Differences can divide us; racism, discrimination, and intolerance have no place in our society. Raising awareness is not enough, we need to confront systemic racism and dismantle it. The work that we do individually and collectively now is more important than ever.

Anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism is the foundation of policing in North America and the systems and institutions and policies that govern our lives continue to promote white supremacy five hundred years into settler-colonialism and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. This past week has been a sharp reminder that the systems that resulted in the displacement and genocide of North America’s First Peoples and the enslavement of African peoples have not been dismantled. They have evolved into what we know today. And the end result is the same. The death of Black folks at the hand of the State.

People across the land are coming together, as safely as they can in the midst of a pandemic, to call for accountability, justice and reparations from our governments and from Police for the violent taking of Black lives and harm done to Black communities. We are in solidarity with Canadian chapters of Black Lives Matter and peaceful protests across the country, including with Vancouver organizers and with #NotAnotherBlackLife that organized a peaceful protest in Toronto over the weekend that brought together thousands of people to mourn collectively and demand an end to Police killings and violence.

But we must do more. Expressions of solidarity are meaningless if we do not confront and work to end the Anti-Black racism that is insidious and pervasive, and deeply rooted in our own communities.

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While we call for systemic change and an end to racial oppression, let us call out and work together to end anti-Black racism and racism in the media and public discourse, as well as in our communities, workplaces, neighbourhoods and homes.

We call on our governments, Police and other institutions to:

- Collect provincial and municipal data on discriminations based on race and make the data transparent and easily accessible to the public.
- Consider the relevancy of the [2017 Andrew Loku inquest](#) in BC's context and implement the recommendations. Provide more transparency of data on instances of police violence in BC.
- The government of Ontario has an Anti-Racism Directorate which works to eliminate systemic racism in government policies, decisions and programs, and advance racial equity in Ontario for Black, Indigenous and racialized populations. It may be time for BC to consider creating its own Anti-Racism Directorate.
- Strengthen the [Canada Anti-Racism Secretariat](#) with a clear mandate to end anti-Black racism.

“Revolution is not a one-time event. It is becoming always vigilant for the smallest opportunity to make a genuine change...” - Audre Lorde

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