



Canadian Friends
Service Committee
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Renu Mandhane,
Chief Commissioner,
Ontario Human Rights Commission
180 Dundas Street West, 9th Floor,
Toronto, ON M7A 2R9

Re: Endorsement of the Ontario Human Rights Commission Submission to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services regarding the Strategy for a Safer Ontario

October 24, 2016

Dear Renu Mandhane,

The Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) is pleased to be added to the list of organizations that have reviewed and endorsed the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) submission to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services regarding the Strategy for a Safer Ontario.

The OHRC submission raises a number of long-standing human rights issues related to policing in Ontario such as racial profiling, discriminatory use of force on people with mental health disabilities and/or addictions, inequality in funding for First Nations police services, and racism and sexism in investigations of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. For a number of years, concerns about systemic discrimination by police have been raised by Indigenous Peoples, African Canadians, other racialized populations, and persons living with a mental health disability or addiction - often the most vulnerable Ontarians. Through the lens of the Ontario Human Rights Code, the OHRC's submission sets out 21 recommendations to end discriminatory policing and rebuild community trust.

Reflecting on our own testimonies of faith, we find the violation of human rights in relation to policing to be incompatible with our belief in the sacredness and dignity of every person. Indigenous Peoples represent 25% of all admissions to provincial and territorial facilities, despite only accounting for 3% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2014/2015). Similarly, the representation of incarcerated black male youth in Ontario is four times higher than that of any other incarcerated youth demographic



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(University of Toronto, 2013). These statistics reflect how certain vulnerable populations are treated when they come into contact with the law and the overuse of policing as a measure of discriminatory surveillance. Recent incidents involving African Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and the use of Tasers on persons suffering from mental health issues further highlight the need to address racial profiling and systemic discrimination. These practices foster a climate of distrust for police and work to fragment society, rather than supporting inclusivity and cohesion

OHRC's submission offers some recommendations for best practices in policing that if implemented, could locate Ontario as a leader. The OHRC has provided the province of Ontario and policing bodies with an opportunity to evaluate and ameliorate services in a manner that upholds the principles of reconciliation and human rights for all.

In Friendship,

Lana Robinson,
Clerk,
Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)



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