

Friday, July 17, 2020

Nando Iannicca
Regional Chair, Region of Peel
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton, Ontario
L6T 4B9

Dear Chair Iannicca,

As the proud President of the Peel Elementary Teachers' Local, representing more than 7,300 public elementary teachers in Peel, I bring greetings on behalf of my members.

I am writing today to request that you take meaningful action against systemic anti-Black racism and anti-Indigeneity within policing in Peel. The Region of Peel spends just over 40 percent of tax revenues on funding the police, which equals an annual cost of \$458 million. This means that, currently, we spend \$1.3 million *per day* on police services in Peel.

The Peel Elementary Teachers' Local is no longer comfortable continuing to fund and support policing at the expense of essential services like affordable housing, paramedic services, firefighting, public transit, public libraries, education programs, community health centres, and many more. We believe that Peel Regional Council must act boldly to address systemic racism within policing, which directly leads to violence towards marginalized communities.

In the cases of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, Jason Collins, D'Andre Campbell, Orlando Brown, Andrew Loku, Jermaine Carby, Kwasi Skene-Peters, Marc Ekamba-Boekwa, Sammy Yatim, Ian Pryce, Alain Magloire, Nicholas Thorne-Belance, Phuong Na 'Tony' Du, René Gallant, Abdurahman Ibrahim Hassan, Bony Jean-Pierre, Abdirahman Abdi, Pierre Coriolan, Brydon Whitstone, Josephine Pelletier, Nicholas Gibbs, Jaskamal Singh Lail, Chad Williams, Greg Ritchie, Machuar Madut, Sean Thompson, Randy Cochrane, Eishia Husdon, Jorge Giraldo, and Ejaz Chaudhry, interaction with the police led to their deaths. We must say their names.

In the face of patterned police violence throughout Canada, there is no better time than now to commit ourselves to change. We have seen that investing in body cameras, civilian reviews, or de-escalation and implicit bias training for police officers *do not work*. For example, a 2017 randomized control trial in Washington, DC, that included over 2,000 police officers, found that the effect of body cameras was too small to be

statistically significant. Officers who wore the cameras used force and were the subject of complaints at about the same rate as their colleagues who did not. The Region of Peel has the opportunity – right now – to lead the way in defining what true public safety looks like and how we can achieve it collectively. The Region of Peel can be a place where Black, Indigenous and racialized peoples are free from police oppression. We are asking you to create a better future for all residents in our city by divesting from harmful policing and investing in life-affirming public and social services.

Due to decades of budget cuts, the police have become the first point of access for mental health support, gender-based violence, unhoused peoples and student behavior intervention. When police are dispatched to intervene in these issues, lives are put at risk. We *already have* professional experts who specialize in de-escalation, mental health, gender-based violence, homelessness, and working with youth. By defunding the police, significant resources could be reallocated to a myriad of community emergency and social services.

To this end, we are asking you, as elected representatives in the Region of Peel, to:

1. Cease voting to increase the police services budget;
2. Propose and implement a cut to the police services budget in support of funding reallocation to community first-response programs; and
3. Prioritize the expansion of community-led health and safety initiatives over future financial investments in policing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GBC', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gail Bannister-Clarke
President

GBC:VB:FP

cc: Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton
Allan Thompson, Mayor, Town of Caledon
Bonnie Crombie, Mayor, City of Mississauga
Martin Medeiros, Regional Councillor
Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General
Nishan Duraiappah, Chief of Police, Peel Regional Police
Thomas Carrique, Commissioner, Ontario Provincial Police
Peel Education Workers United Affiliates