

## ActionDignity's Response Regarding Black Lives Matter

Dear community,

This has been a challenging time in the world, and this statement has been extremely difficult to write. First and foremost, we would like to acknowledge the Black ActionDignity staff members and community members, volunteers, and everyone else in the world that is being directly impacted by police brutality, impunity and anti-Black racism.

Recently in Canada, 29-year old Regis Korchinski-Paquet, an Afro-Indigenous woman was killed in her Toronto home during an interaction with the police. This is just one of the cases in Canada of violence against Black women, and is representative of the many cases where members of Canada's Black communities have been brutalized by the police. We know that in Toronto, Black people are 20 times more likely to be shot dead by the police than white people.<sup>1</sup> Police brutality and racial profiling against people of colour is prevalent in Canada, and at times like this, it is important to ensure that this violence does not continue. To be clear: Black Lives Matter.

We acknowledge Pierre Coriolan, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony Mcdade, and those who have been targeted by police violence. Violence against Black people is global, and it is during these times that solidarity is needed to ensure that Black Lives Matter. This global solidarity is especially needed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where existing health data has highlighted the alarming death rates for Black people in multiple countries (including the United States and the UK), which has been significantly higher than that of white Americans and white Brits. Although there is no race-based data being collected on the impact of COVID-19 in Canada, our support work at the JBS Plant in Brooks Alberta has highlighted how racialized workers, including Black immigrants, migrants and refugees are overly impacted by the outbreak.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/public-interest-inquiry-racial-profiling-and-discrimination-toronto-police-service/collective-impact-interim-report-inquiry-racial-profiling-and-racial-discrimination-black>



It is also timely to make this post during Pride Month. Both Black Lives Matter and the Stonewall protests were created as a response to police violence and brutality. For this Pride Month we encourage you to show up for Black people. To protect Black lives. We urge you to act against social, political and economic systems that continue to perpetuate anti-Black racism and violence without consequence.

Sadly, our communities have shared and experienced racism and specifically, anti-Black racism, time and time again. This situation of police brutality in the United States and Canada is not new. Racism is not new. Overrepresentation of incarcerated Black and Indigenous people is not new. However, we must continue to honor the lives of the people we have lost and ensure that our collective experiences of injustice do not continue.

Finally, we would like to take a moment to acknowledge our youth members who have truly showcased their leadership and desire for social justice within the Black Lives Matter movement. They work tirelessly and genuinely in the hopes of building a better society. We sincerely thank these youth and the incredible young leaders for having the courage to speak up and show us what it means to engage in allyship.

To help generate support for the Black Lives Matter movement, we would like to encourage our community members to do the following:

1. Practice self-care and community-care
2. Know that in situations of injustice, community-care also requires the act of dismantling the injustice
3. Find out which local actions are occurring that you can partake in:
  - a. There are several online events that enable for people to protest safely without risk of catching COVID-19
  - b. If you are engaging in public, in-person events, please practice social distancing (If possible) and wear personal protective equipment
4. Know your rights
5. Call out the racism within your family, friends, and workplace



6. Do not share photos of protesters (unless you have their permission)
7. Demand an inquiry into the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet
8. Support and donate to organizations and causes that do anti-racism & BLM work.

Here are some organizations or groups in Alberta doing anti-racism work:

- ActionDignity (<https://actiondignity.org/>)
- Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (<https://aaisa.ca/>)
- Alberta Rural Development Network (<https://www.ardn.ca/>)
- Canadian Cultural Mosaic Foundation (<http://www.canadianculturalmosaicfoundation.com/>)
- CommunityWise (<http://communitywise.net/>)
- YYC Voices (<https://yycvoices.ca/>)
- Alberta Assembly of Social Workers (<https://www.facebook.com/AssemblyofSW/>)

We encourage you to find out more about the organizations you choose to support and donate to. Here are some organizations taking active leadership roles in anti-Black racism:

In Canada:

- Black Lives Matter Toronto ( <https://blacklivesmatter.ca/donate/> )
- Frontlines Toronto (<http://frontlines.to>).

In America:

- Black Visions (<https://www.blackvisionsmn.org>)
- Reclaim the Block (<https://www.reclaimtheblock.org>)
- North Star Health Initiative (<https://www.northstarhealthcollective.org>)
- The Innocence Project (<https://www.innocenceproject.org>)
- African American Policy Forum (<https://aapf.org/>)



- Minnesota Freedom Fund (<https://minnesotafreedomfund.org/>).

