

# Black Lives Matter

## STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY & COMMITMENT



Elizabeth Fry Toronto stands firmly in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and all Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) in our communities. We stand united with all those who battle racism and resist systemic oppression in all its forms across Turtle Island and around the Globe.

We stand in solidarity against police brutality, systemic oppression, systemic racism, systemic violence, white supremacy, racial profiling, illicit and illegal use of any power and authority that threatens the rights, freedom, lives, liberty and security of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

Systemic racism, including policing and police brutality, is a clear violation of fundamental human rights and infringement of human dignity. These violations are common occurrences on Canadian streets, courts, and prisons where they are hidden behind heavily sealed doors with limited oversight or accountability.

We work with an understanding that despite constitutional protections, Canada is not immune from the abhorrent culture of racist policing and police violence and impunity. In fact, Canada's colonial correctional and criminal justice systems are the oldest tools of racial oppression across Turtle Island and are entrenched in a history of enslavement and ongoing perpetuated colonization.

In Canada, victims of police killing, violence and harassment are primarily Black, Indigenous and other racialized people. This violence is intentional, systematic, systemic, and a direct manifestation of colonial violence, oppression, and discrimination.

We believe in meaningful pursuit of justice. However, reform of the justice system is not the answer and will only continue entrenching reliance on systems complicit in colonizing, oppressing, and killing BIPOC communities. Attempts to reconcile oppression and racism against BIPOC in prisons, courts, and communities repeatedly fail to effectively meet resulting recommendations and reducing the over-representation of imprisoned and criminalized BIPOC cannot occur within existing justice practices.

Elizabeth Fry Toronto supports the movement to defund law enforcement and increase investment of resources in community-based and community-driven services that support the dignity and well-being of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable community members.

As an organization that is committed to equity, inclusion and social justice, we pledge to speak out against and challenge systemic oppression in all its forms. We also renew our commitment to being self-reflective, self-accountable, and intentional in upholding the principles of anti-racism, anti-oppression, and decolonization in all levels of our organizational practice. We commit to continue:

- Working for, alongside, and in solidarity with racialized, criminalized, and imprisoned women and honoring their knowledge, experiences, and understandings;
- Advocating for meaningful change to end all forms of racism and violence against BIPOC communities;
- Working toward dismantling oppressive systems and aiming for a future with stronger communities without prisons;

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- Bridging the gap between the prison and criminal justice systems and the lived experiences of the women and communities we serve;
- Putting stories of racialized, criminalized, and imprisoned women at the forefront;
- Supporting and advocating for the decarceration of women from federal and provincial institutions and particularly reducing the over-representation of Indigenous and Black women in prisons;
- Supporting and advocating for racialized women experiencing gender based violence;
- Engaging our communities to build relationships, trust, and support; and
- Regularly updating and enhancing our programs, services, and employee and volunteer training to be anti-oppressive, decolonized and informed by culture, trauma, and intersectional feminism.

Elizabeth Fry Toronto calls on all settler governments to defund policing to respect and promote the life, liberty and security of BIPOC. We urge settler governments to commit to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and declarations under *the* United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the International Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

We support anti-racism initiatives, education of black histories and cultures, education of Indigenous histories, cultures, legal traditions and languages, equitable treatment before the law, and we support BIPOC that are disadvantaged due to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family status, mental or physical disability, and/or involvement with the criminal justice system.

Communities across Turtle Island grieve for their racialized members murdered by police. In the last 5 years alone, communities mourn:

D'Andre Campbell	Babak Saidi	Phuong Na (Tony) Du
Randy Cochrane	Adrian Lacquette	Jermaine Carby
Sean Thompson	Cavin Poucette	Nicholas Thorne-Belance
Machuar Madut	Brydon Whitstone	Alain Magloire
Greg Ritchie	Pierre Coriolan	Ian Pryce
Chad Williams	Abirahman Abdi	Sammy Yatim,
Jaskamal Singh Lail	Bony Jean-Pierre	Naverone Woods
Nicholas Gibbs	Kwasi Skene-Peters	Jeremy Nuvviaq
Olando Brown	Andrew Loku	Sanjai Prasad
Josephine Pelletier	Abdurahman Ibrahim Hassan	Debra Chrisjohn
Marvel Woodhouse	René Gallant	
Ozama Shaw	Marc Ekamba-Boekwa	... and more.

In solidarity,

Elizabeth Fry Toronto

**Some Facts:**

In Toronto, between 2000 and 2017, 36.5% of people murdered by police were Black, while Black people made up just 8.3% of the population

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/police-deaths-blacks-data-1.4599215>

In Winnipeg, Indigenous people make up approximately 60% of people murdered by police but only 10.6% of the population.

- <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-custom/deadly-force>

70% of people killed by police since 2000 – 2018 are known to have mental health issues

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/investigates/most-canadians-killed-in-police-encounters-since-2000-had-mental-health-or-substance-abuse-issues-1.4602916> )

**Name of people sourced from:**

- <https://www.pyrisence.ca/home/2020/5/29/cdnpolice>
- <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-custom/deadly-force>