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November 2, 2023

Mayor Olivia Chow  
City Hall, 2nd Floor  
100 Queen St. W.  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

**Re: Response to City Council Motion MM11.37 – Keeping Toronto Safe from Hate**

Dear Mayor Chow,

As you know, City Council, at its meeting held on October 11, 2023, adopted item MM11.37 with respect to keeping Toronto Safe from Hate. The Motion recommended, among other items, that:

**City Council request the Toronto Police Services Board to provide an update to the Mayor and Members of City Council on the work of the Toronto Police and the Hate Crimes Unit and post it publicly on their website, this should include information on work:**

- a. to protect and promote a sense of safety in predetermined areas of critical infrastructure and potential targets including places of worship and cultural centres including schools and daycares;**
- b. with the Neighbourhood Community Officers, Community Partnerships and Engagement Unit, and the Chiefs Community Consultative Committee in community outreach with community leaders, business owners, media, religious institutions and others in response and dissemination of information related to hate-related incidents; and**
- c. partnering with the Minister of Attorney General's Hate Crime Working Group and other intergovernmental bodies on hate-related crimes and incidents.**

**TORONTO POLICE SERVICES BOARD**

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As a result of Council's decision, the Toronto Police Services Board, at its meeting held on October 19, 2023, approved a report in response to Council's Motion (Minute No. P2023-1019-9.0. refers), including a recommendation directing the Chief of Police to work with myself on a response to the above recommendations. This letter will serve as the Board's update as requested by City Council, and will also be posted on our website for members of the public.

### **The Service's Response to Events in the Middle East**

On October 7, 2023, Hamas carried out a terrorist attack in Israel. This attack, as well as Israel's response in the Gaza Strip and the ensuing events since, have had a deep impact on many communities in Toronto, and across Canada.

On October 9, 2023, ahead of two planned rallies in the city, Deputy Chief, Lauren Pogue, provided a statement reassuring the public that the Toronto Police Service (Service) is committed to allowing all members of the public to exercise their rights for peaceful protest, but that intimidation, harassment, or hate-motivated behaviour aimed at specific communities will not be tolerated. This message was reiterated by Chief Demkiw in subsequent statements.

The Service immediately increased its visibility and presence in Jewish communities, along with cultural centres, synagogues, mosques and other places of worship across the city, in what is now known as Project Resolute. The Service has since continued to reassure the public that it continuously monitors global events to assess how they may impact the safety and security of Toronto residents, and is working closely with federal and provincial partners and other law enforcement agencies to ensure coordination and information sharing.

On October 12, 2023, Members of the Hate Crime Unit (HCU) attended City Hall for an informal discussion on the Service's response to hate crimes. City officials and councillors at the meeting included Deputy Mayor Mike Colle, Councillor James Pasternak, Chief of Staff Andy Stein and Chezlie Alexander. On October 18th, 2023, the Chief, along with Senior Officers and Members from the HCU participated in a town hall event organized by the United Jewish Appeal (UJA). This event was attended by over 600 people. The HCU is actively working with Members from the Community Partnership and Engagement Unit (CPEU) to arrange a similar engagement with the Muslim community.

Since the outbreak of the conflict, the HCU has been actively engaging with a number of community organizations. Members have attended religious facilities, followed up on reports of hate crimes, and attended all related protests and demonstrations. They have also spoken to countless community members during these interactions to provide information and reassurance and they will continue to engage in these activities.

Chief Demkiw also continues to meet with and listen to community leaders in our city who have said that the war in the Middle East is generating fear and insecurity in Toronto. Chief Demkiw has personally visited places of worship including mosques and synagogues, as well as schools and businesses in both the Jewish and Muslim communities. The Chief has made it a priority to connect with the communities that have been most impacted by the tragedy in the Middle East and has committed to ensuring that members of senior leadership from the Service are also making their presence felt in communities. As of November 2, 2023, Senior Officers have visited a total of 113 identified locations within the Jewish and Muslim communities, while the frontline members of the Service have conducted 4,193 premise checks.

### **Response to Hate Crime**

The Service's Intelligence Unit has substantially increased its HCU personnel and expanded its investigative capacity. These increased resources have been temporarily reassigned from other areas of the Service in order to reprioritize the response to the increase in hate crimes. The HCU will now take carriage of all investigations that are suspected hate crimes or that are considered related to the current conflict in the Middle-East. Increasing the resource assignment to this Unit will ensure that all investigations are led by an expert and receive support in a timely fashion.

The HCU has been conducting multiple daily reviews of all hate related occurrences, including calls for service, and offering support to investigators. This work is further enhanced with daily meetings coordinated by the HCU that include all of the Service's 16 Divisional Hate Crime Coordinators, external GTA Hate Crime Units and members of the Hate Crime Extremism Investigative Team commonly referred to as HCEIT, which is a provincial Hate Crime team that consists of members from 18 police agencies from across Ontario. These daily meetings will ensure all agencies are working collectively in the sharing of intelligence, education, analytical support and the promotion of discussion on provincial, national and international trends as it relates to hate crime and hate activity.

The daily meetings will also improve the investigative response, linking occurrences and in the identification of suspects. The HCU will be taking carriage of all multi-divisional, multi- jurisdictional and complex cases.

The HCU are members of the National Hate Crime Working Group. HCU Detective Kiran Bisla, is one of the leaders of this working group and is an internationally recognized expert. At the outset of the conflict, the HCU recognized the potential for an increase in hate crimes and the need to access their colleagues at the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) in a timely manner.

This connection is critical in order to benefit from the consultation and MAG consent required in these types of investigations. This enhanced working relationship has resulted in an expedited review of reported hate crime occurrences, which allows for timely classification of crimes.

This relationship is further supported through the Ontario Provincial Police Hendon group. This group is comprised of municipal, provincial and federal agencies that meet regularly to discuss intelligence and other issues, such as hate crime trends and enforcement strategies.

Members of the HCU have been deployed to demonstrations and event locations to observe, monitor and collect evidence of hate-related speech and other hate crimes.

In addition to being on the ground, the HCU is also increasing the level of its public communication in collaboration with the Service's Corporate Communications Unit, to educate, reassure and inform the public of actions we have taken, and to, hopefully, act as a deterrent to others who may engage in or who are considering engaging in such behavior.

Due to the high level of their direct interaction with the public, the HCU has extended its educational outreach to include hate crime training for Parking Enforcement Officers and Communication Operators, to allow them to recognize and identify hate crimes and encourage reporting.

Intelligence Analysts, in collaboration with the HCU, have developed a deployment document that has been disseminated city-wide. This document is designed to inform operational decision makers in the field in the deployment of their resources to support communities affected by the ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza, and includes three types of information:

- Standard Deployments – for proactive patrols – to pay special attention to locations of religious, cultural, and political significance in their divisions/areas. The report contains a hyperlink to a list of such locations, broken down by division and a map
- Data-Driven Deployments – information received through radio calls and reporting in vicinity of the above locations mentioned above – including hate crimes - hotspots are identified for deployment.
- Intelligence-Driven Deployments (Qualitative Analysis) – These are based on an analysis of information received through social media, news, and other sources of information; internal and external to Toronto.

The Service has also officially launched the Global Shield Initiative in Toronto, which plugs the Service into an international network on intelligence sharing with law enforcement and private sector partners, with a focus on counter-terrorism. The Service is still in the early stages of developing connections in this network, however, the infrastructure and personnel are in place.

The Service is currently looking to use these connections to improve its operational response and proactive measures to mitigate types of threats seen in other jurisdictions.

## **Community Outreach**

The Service sees outreach as an opportunity to engage in prevention, build resiliency, develop trust and focus resources where they will have the greatest impact.

The HCU has attended Jewish schools, businesses, and various places of worship (Jewish and Muslim) to connect with community members, provide community reassurance, and provide education in an effort to increase reporting. A pamphlet related to hate crime was distributed at these locations, providing information on how to report hate crimes and the importance of reporting.

Members of the HCU attended the Community Hebrew Academy (200 Wilmington – 32 Division) with the Service's Jewish Liaison Officer, Michelle Gillespie, and met with the head of school, Jonathan Levy. The meeting was a follow up to a recent incident that occurred at the school and resulted in charges of three individuals.

Members have also connected with Palestinian community leaders regarding community concerns, and opportunities to meet for discussions. Members of the HCU have also liaised with Peel Regional Police to establish additional contacts with the Palestinian Community.

HCU is collaborating with CPEU to arrange speaking engagements and hate crime presentations with community groups throughout Toronto, as requested.

Chief Demkiw has met with leaders from the Palestinian community and continues to have dialogue with them. The Palestinian diaspora is primarily concentrated in the City of Mississauga, nevertheless, the Chief has been committed to connecting with the larger Muslim community within the City of Toronto.

Chief Demkiw and the Command team have also met with members of the Muslim Consultative Community, which includes leaders from the Muslim community, in order to understand their concerns. These discussions have provided valuable insight and have resulted in the Service creating an internal, online learning module that will inform its Members and provide them with a knowledge base that will allow for compassionate and empathetic approaches to our interactions with members of the Muslim community during these increasingly challenging times.

The Service has also committed to ensuring that internal and external communication has an equity lens applied to it so that the language is not triggering for any community, as well as having the Equity Inclusion and Human Rights Unit review the Service's Operational Plan concerning Project Resolute to ensure that policing functions are inclusive, fair, and bias-free.

## **Next Steps**

Intelligence Services will continue to monitor the situation here in Toronto as well as abroad, and the Hate Crime Unit will pursue any alleged or suspected incidents of hate crime or hate motivated behaviour to ensure those responsible are held accountable.

The Service as a whole will continue to provide heightened visibility and presence in Jewish communities, along with cultural centres, synagogues, mosques and other places of worship across the city, to ensure community safety, and to provide members of communities across Toronto with a sense of security. To achieve this goal, the Service will redeploy resources from other areas of business as necessary, and rely on callbacks (overtime) where needed.

## **Conclusion**

The Board continues to receive briefings from Chief Demkiw with respect to the dynamic situation in Toronto, and supports his plan to deploy officers as circumstances change and evolve to ensure that all residents feel safe and secure.

Residents are encouraged to report any allegations of hate-motivated incidents to police for investigation. The Toronto Police Service and the Hate Crime Unit will aggressively pursue any alleged or suspected incidents of hate crime or hate-motivated behavior in our city. We remind the public that residents should always call 9-1-1 in the case of emergencies. For incidents that do not have an immediate safety concern, we ask residents to call the Service's non-emergency line (416-808-2222) so that the police may investigate. Members of the public who have information that they wish to report anonymously, are asked to call or contact Crime Stoppers (416-222-TIPS).

The Toronto Police Services Board remains committed to listening to communities from across the city, and ensuring all communities across Toronto are safe and secure. We are grateful to you and to City Council for its continued support and partnership to keep Toronto the best and safest city for everyone.

Sincerely,



Dubi Kanengisser  
Executive Director

CC: City Councillors  
Michal Hay, Chief of Staff to Mayor Chow  
Board Members, Toronto Police Services Board  
Chief Myron Demkiw, Toronto Police Service