August 30th, 2024

Toronto Police Service Board

40 College Street

Toronto, ON Canada M5G 2J3

**Written Submission: *The Toronto Police Service Board* on Public Order Policy Consultations**

Members of the Toronto Police Service Board,

The Office of the Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism (SE Office) welcomes the opportunity to provide input on overriding principles and key elements that should be a part of the Public Order Policy. The policing of protests, demonstrations and occupations poses a complex and delicate challenge, requiring the balancing of the *Charter* protected rights while also ensuring community safety and preserving the peace. We are grateful for efforts of law enforcement to date and for the opportunity to offer suggestions to assist in making these efforts as effective as possible.

**Mandate of the Office of The Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism (SE Office)**

Canada’s Special Envoy is appointed by the Prime Minister and reports to both the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the international portion of the mandate, and to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities for the domestic portion of the mandate. Appointed on October 16, 2023, so soon after October 7th, there was an instant recognition that the Canadian Jewish community would be feeling an unprecedented amount of fear and anguish. Special Envoy Lyons therefore travelled across Canada including to Toronto to meet with representatives from Jewish communities as well as those in law enforcement, provincial and municipal governments, amongst others. The Office of the Special Envoy continues to engage in a review of anti-hate and antisemitism training in the justice system, working with relevant stakeholders and educators to develop training that provides an accurate portrayal of contemporary antisemitism.

**Living in 2024: Alarming and unprecedented rise of antisemitism in Canada**

The events of October 7th have drastically changed the scope of antisemitism in Canada; it is alarming and disheartening to see the dramatic rise across the country. Antisemitism in Canada had already steadily been on the rise in recent years with a sharp rise in reported antisemitic incidents since October 7th, 2023.

The impact of antisemitism was felt by the Jewish community almost immediately after October 7th. It is deeply concerning that in Toronto, Canada’s largest Jewish community, antisemitism made up 53 per cent of all reported hate crimes from Oct. 7 to the end of 2023, even though Jews represent less than 4% of the city’s population. Matters are only worsening in 2024. The number of incidents determined to be hate-motivated has gone up nearly 55 per cent compared to last year. Antisemitism accounted for nearly 45 per cent of 221 alleged hate crimes so far this year — more than any other category. Given these alarming figures, the time for additional action is now.

We suggest two (2) recommendations.

1. Mandatory enhanced training on hate crime and antisemitism.

2. Coordination with Crown Prosecution Services and Stakeholders.

**Recommendation 1: Mandatory enhanced training on hate crimes and antisemitism.**

The nature of antisemitism and hate crimes is constantly evolving and changing, therefore it is critical to ensure that training is updated. We recommend annual training for every Member of Toronto Police Services, whether they are affiliated with the hate crimes unit or not. The training should include the identification of hateful symbols, particularly those that may appear at protests and rallies. These symbols or phrases are often coded to appear benign while they can signify violence or incitement.

We also recommend the inclusion of antisemitism, using Canada’s adopted definition as referenced in Canada’s Anti-Racism Strategy, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition, in mandatory EDI training for all employees of Toronto Police Services, at all classifications and ranks. The Office of the Special Envoy is currently in the process of producing its own handbook on the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, which seeks to situate the definition within a Canadian context, educate Canadians on its expert-driven and international origins and acceptance, and provide clarity on practical use. Development of any antisemitism training should be done in collaboration with organizations and antisemitism experts with deep ties and credibility within the larger Jewish community.

**Recommendation 2:** **Coordination with Crown Prosecution Services and Stakeholders.**

Understanding that the Toronto Police Service works in close collaboration with Crowns (both local and those with hate crimes expertise) for the identification of potential hate crimes, we recommend that the Toronto Police Service Board develop a policy and program where Crowns with expertise in hate crimes are embedded with the Toronto Police Service hate crimes unit, in order to share knowledge and provide advice on identifying elements of particular hate crimes prior to charges being laid.

We also recommend that the Toronto Police Service Board advocate to all levels of government for the establishment of dedicated Crown positions dedicated to hate crime prosecutions.

**In summary**

Antisemitism is a threat to both national and international security and must be handled in a way which reflects the severity of this threat. Antisemitism can permeate all levels of Canadian life and government and requires strong and courageous leadership to combat it effectively, ensuring that the safety of Jewish Canadians, and all Canadians, is fully protected.

My office and I stand ready to assist in any way possible to ensure that public spaces remain safe for everyone and that they remain a place where all, including Jewish Canadians, feel welcome and free of discrimination, harassment, hatred and violence.

We look forward to continued dialogue and collaboration with the Toronto Police Service

Board.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah Lyons

Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism