July 19, 2024

To the Toronto Police Service Board

Regarding policing of protests and demonstrations.

Freedom of speech and to protest are important aspects of Canadian society. That said, protests that leave to intimidation, hateful rhetoric, damage to property and disruption to public thoroughfares should not be tolerated at all. There have been too many instances in the last year when roads and bridges have been closed to normal traffic due to protests. As a member of Toronto’s Jewish Community, my neighbourhood and my people have been targeted by hateful protestors who cover their faces to avoid consequences of their actions. I believe that the Toronto Police need to enforce existing laws and deal forcefully with these hateful and violent protestors.

These groups act less as protestors and more as masked mobs/gangs that roam Toronto. There should be no tolerance for covering one’s face during protests, and if there is not a law against this currently, then the city should implement one.

We are tired of the destruction to public and private property, the disruption to our roads and public spaces, and the general intimidation that is being committed by these protests. If we cannot rely on the Toronto Police to protect the public and enforce the laws, then what is the point of the Police?

Too many times I have heard the Police ask what they can do if they are only 4 or 5 people compared to a mob of dozens of protestors. If that is the case, then a riot squad should be called in to deal with it.

Protests must be peaceful, with protestors faces visible, without destruction, violence or intimidation. If they are not, there should be consequences to those individuals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Noam Samson