



August 23, 2024

The [Council of Agencies Serving South Asians \(CASSA\)](http://www.cassa.ca) is a charitable organization established in 1991 which serves over 120 member agencies serving South Asian communities across Ontario. CASSA has been working for many years to create systemic change in the criminal justice system including advising Toronto Police on many issues that impact South Asian and other racialized and faith minority communities.

The Toronto Police Service (TPS) continues [to over-police racialized communities](#) with significant issues of anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination. The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) released [100 recommendation](#) in December addressing anti-Black racism in the TPS. [Various research and reports](#) tell us that police reported hate crimes do not depict an accurate picture of actual hate motivated incidents and crimes.

While recognizing that the last 10 months have been particularly difficult for the TPS in managing the rising number of protests, these kinds of lasting protests have historically been proven to be successful tactics to bring large scale societal and racial justice reform. As Black and Brown bodies recognize the ongoing colonial projects that are created and upheld to keep our communities oppressed, they will find ways to resist. These protests, demonstrations, and occupations have overwhelmingly been peaceful and are constitutionally protected rights of all Canadians. Through protests, the people can find legal and effective ways of resistance to oppression. If we curtail and restrict their constitutional right to peacefully protest, we are setting a very dangerous precedence for a democratic state. Over the last 6 to 8 months, the TPS decided to get more aggressive in controlling protests, demonizing those who take part in it, and criminalizing trivial behavior due to the political pressure they were getting. This was something admitted to CASSA in confidence by high-ranking seniors at the TPS. The work of the TPS was no longer to protect communities but to protect political interest and secure more funding. This led to further alienation of Black and Brown bodies who regularly took part in protests and that trust eroded completely in these communities.

CASSA reached out to TPS on numerous occasions to present opportunities for community dialogue and discussion. We were either ignored or our attempts to meet were indefinitely postponed.



It is extremely disappointing to see Toronto Police criminalizing Brown bodies, especially when given opportunities for community discussion and dialogue. How can Brown and Black communities trust police when they practice bad faith in dealing with our communities, unjustly criminalize our men and boys, and abuse their power to trample on civil liberties? We have [worked with the TPS since 2020](#) to improve hate-crime reporting, apparently in vain. A waste of our communities' time and theirs. During our training with the Toronto Police, the issue of "trust" was repeatedly brought up. TPS wanted organizations like CASSA to help build trust with our communities. Unfortunately, TPS has lost much, if not all, of its trust with racialized communities with the way they have been dealing with protests, especially over the last eight months.

The protests, demonstrations, and occupations against tyranny, occupation, oppression, and genocide will not go away. The people with a conscience will continue to protest these forms of oppression. Is it a matter of time before the International Courts finds that the protesters were right all along to protest the breaking of International Law. The TPS must decide if they want to be on the right side of history or if they want to continue to criminalize our communities for political and monetary gains. Instead of taking a criminal and heavy-handed approach; it will be more peaceful and effective for the TPS to engage our communities in dialogue and work together to uphold the constitutional rights of all Canadians, not just for the ones with white skin.

In solidarity,

Samya Hasan
Executive Director
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)
samya@cassa.ca