



Dear Mayor Chow,

February 5, 2024

I am writing to express our disapproval of increasing the Toronto Police Budget any more than what is already reflected in the current proposed City budget.

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 recommendations](#) 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. Due to high community demand over the last few years, community organizations have launched various methods of [third-party reporting](#) of hate motivated incidents such as acts motivated by Islamophobia and antisemitism which do not involve law enforcement. This is one way our communities are tracking hate motivated incidents without subjecting survivors and victims to law enforcement with systemic issues of racism and discrimination.

The [Council of Agencies Serving South Asians' \(CASSA\)](#) involvement and advocacy for preventing hate motivated crimes has led community members in the Greater Toronto Area to seek our support in reporting hate motivated incidents to the Toronto Police. [Through CASSA's commitment to countering hate motivated incidents](#), we have provided training to Toronto Police on how to improve their reporting processes to build community trust and increase community capacity in reporting hate crimes to police.

For a community organization heavily invested in ensuring our communities have trusted access to law enforcement, we have been very alarmed and disappointed by the ongoing police preference to criminalize lawful behavior and increasingly look at Brown and Black communities through a criminal lens instead of engaging with them through dialogue and discussions. 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. 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.

Now, the TPS and Toronto Police Association are pressuring Mayor Olivia Chow [to increase the Toronto Police budget](#). A claim [a Star columnist finds is misleading](#). Is the criminalizing of Brown men being used as a scare tactic to garner attention and increase resources? Unfortunately, this is not unprecedented. We find TPS' approach disingenuous. To be fair, there are some police officers who have the right intentions and want to work with racialized communities. However, the [problem is systemic](#) and we need TPS to do better. We empathize that their work has become extremely challenging since October seventh. It has been challenging for us all. It is not acceptable to use our communities as scapegoats. Toronto Police Service needs to get its act together and should not be asking for any more funding because they are not making our communities safer. Instead, as indicated in the current proposed City budget, investments should be made for social services, housing, and other community supports that empower and uplift Torontonians.

Thank you for your time and considerations of this letter.
In solidarity,

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