

councilmeeting

From: Info TADC <info@tadc.ca>
Sent: May 15, 2025 9:15 PM
To: councilmeeting
Subject: [External Sender] Comments for 2025.IA30.1 on May 21, 2025 City Council

Categories: Communication (Supp)

To the City Clerk:

Please add comments from TADC to the agenda for the May 21, 2025 City Council meeting on item 2025.IA30.1, The Development of the Proposed Demonstrations By-law. **We would like to request presenting this to the council in person if possible.**

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

On behalf of the Toronto Association for Democracy in China (TADC), we are writing to register our opposition and grave concerns over the proposed bylaw restricting demonstrations in Toronto.

The fundamental right of citizens to publicly demonstrate and voice our collective concerns has been a cornerstone of our democratic system, enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The proposed bylaw to limit and infringe on this fundamental freedom of expression will be a draconian step backward from the core democratic values of which we are proud of as Torontonians.

We are particularly concerned with the notion of restricting protest around 'vulnerable institutions' in the proposed bylaw. What would be the process and criteria in determining such institutions? Equally important, who would be responsible for making the decision to designate or not, and would anyone be able to challenge the decision? Would designated 'vulnerable institutions' be publicly listed? Who would shoulder the burden to inform the public the area around a 'vulnerable institution' prohibited from demonstration so as to prevent participants in a protest inadvertently breaking the law?

TADC was founded on the eve of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre in Beijing, China and has been advocating for human rights and democracy in China, in Canada and at the United Nations for the past 35 years. TADC along with like-minded pro-democracy groups organize protest rallies in front of the Toronto Chinese Consulate every June 4 and October 1. Our protests have been carried out in cooperation with the Toronto Police, following their directions for a peaceful demonstration every time. Toronto Police bear the duty to exercise their judgement and authority in a timely manner to contain a demonstration before turning unruly. Rather than holding unruly protesters accountable, a bylaw to restrict the public's freedom to demonstrate is a punishment to all.

It would be unfathomable to imagine that in the future we would not be able to protest in front of the Toronto Chinese Consulate over its suppression of dissent and political prosecution of human rights

defenders and pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong and China, should the Consulate itself or its adjacent address have found its way to be designated as 'vulnerable' under the new bylaw. In fact, it would be truly ironic.

We believe that the intent and framework of this proposed bylaw, if adopted, would run contrary to the civil engagement and democratic participation that our City so proudly promotes under the banner of *Diversity is Our Strength*. The notion of diversity implies that there are bound to be differences among us and it will take all stakeholders including our elected representatives, civil society and law enforcement to work together to ensure tolerance and respect are accorded to all. We sincerely urge you to withdraw this proposed bylaw. We cannot afford to go backward in safeguarding our Canadian democracy and freedom.

Thank you for your attention,

Cheuk Kwan & Winnie Ng
Co-Chairs
Toronto Association for Democracy in China
<https://www.TADC.ca>