



BC ASSOCIATION *of*
SOCIAL WORKERS

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March 29, 2017

The Honorable Christy Clark,
Premier of British Columbia
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4
E: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Clark;

Re: Racism in British Columbia

As citizens of BC and as members of the Multicultural and Antiracism Committee of the BC Association of Social Workers, we have watched with alarm at the growing atmosphere of intolerance and racism in BC. We are writing to ask for government action.

There have been several incidents of racist flyers being distributed in neighbourhoods in Vancouver, New Westminister, and Abbotsford, along with the desecration of Muslim and Jewish sites. Along with other racist groups, the Soldiers of Odin have more recently established a presence in BC. The recent shooting in a mosque in Quebec and other attacks taking place against Jewish and Muslim places of worship are troubling signs of a worsening racial climate developing across Canada and North America.

Given these troubling developments, we believe that it is time for your government to take an active stance on these issues of hate and racism.

Firstly, we feel that it is critical that you and other members of the government consistently make public statements condemning actions like those described above when they occur, and support the contributions of BC's diverse communities.

Secondly, we believe that it is time that your government properly fund and refocus the efforts of Welcome BC to develop a government wide strategy to address hate group activity, as well as to address the inequitable conditions facing many racialized communities. The government of Ontario has recently established an antiracism secretariat, and it may be time for BC to consider such a step.

Thirdly, given the rise of hate group activity in BC and other Canadian jurisdictions, the resources of the BC Hate Crime task force need to be increased.

Fourthly, we also believe that it is time that the government re-establish a human rights commission to ensure that racialized communities feel truly protected from various forms of discrimination.

There have been many periods in BC's history during which hatred and racism have been directed towards First Nations peoples, South Asians, Chinese, Japanese, and other groups. As social workers working with the most marginalized people in our society, we are ethically bound to address issues of hate and racism. We believe that you and your government can and must develop a vigorous approach to address these recent troubling events and the broader issue of racism in our province.

Sincerely,

M Tuzi

Marisa Tuzi, MSW, RSW
Co-chair, BCASW Multicultural and Antiracism Committee



Dave Sangha, MSW
Co-chair, BCASW Multicultural and Antiracism Committee



Michael Crawford, RSW
President, BCASW

cc. The Honorable John Horgan
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