

Community Groups Take Aim at Mayor Tory's and Chief Blair's Racial Profiling Policy at Press Conference

TORONTO, April 14, 2015 – Human rights groups and community organizations have reacted with alarm to the Toronto Police Service Board's proposed "community contacts" policy and warn that it will have devastating consequences for race relations throughout the city. Galvanised by mounting opposition, this morning a number of community organizations are holding a press conference to discuss the current practice of carding and its impact on Black communities throughout the city. Their message is clear. Carding is a form of racial profiling and is unconstitutional. They won't hesitate to turn to the Courts if the Board is not prepared to respect the rule of law.

The press conference will feature Valerie Steele, community leader and Past President of the Jamaican Canadian Association; Cutty Duncan, a local community organizer; Knia Singh, an Osgoode Hall law student and member of OSAll; and, Vilko Zbogar, a Toronto lawyer and Law Union of Ontario member.

Reflecting on his experience as a Black resident of Toronto, Knia Singh comments "I've been stopped by the Toronto police too many times to remember, I'm a victim of racial profiling. I'm supposed to be a free person with rights, but I can't drive a car or walk down the street without the fear that I'm going to be stopped by the police for no reason. The policy that Mayor Tory and Chief Blair want enacted is little more than a continuation of racial profiling".

Lawyer Vilko Zbogar remarks "The Toronto Police have been racially profiling young, Black males for far too long. This practice needs to stop immediately as it violates Ontario's *Human Rights Code* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. If Mayor John Tory and the other members of the Toronto Police Services Board aren't prepared to end carding then they can expect to be answering for these abuses in the Courts."

The press conference starts at 11:00 a.m. and is happening at the Sheraton Centre Hotel Toronto (123 Queen Street West, across from City Hall) in the Cedar Room.

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