



By email: [karen.hogan@oag-bvg.gc.ca](mailto:karen.hogan@oag-bvg.gc.ca)

September 23, 2021

Ms. Karen Hogan  
Auditor General of Canada  
240 Sparks Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G6

Dear Ms. Hogan,

**Re: Concerns with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and Request for Your Office's Involvement**

I am writing on behalf of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE) and the Association of Justice Counsel (AJC). Collectively, PSAC, CAPE and AJC represent many Black and racialized employees at the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC).

We wish to relay our deepest concerns regarding CHRC's ineffectiveness to meet its mandate of promoting and protecting human rights in areas that fall under the Commission's federal jurisdiction pursuant to the *Canadian Human Rights Act and its obligations as a national human rights institution as per the Paris principles*. Specifically, the Commission has failed:

- to reasonably attend to internal complaints by CHRC's racialized staff;
- to set an example that models equity policy and behaviour for others to follow as Canada's premier "A-status" national human rights institution;
- to adequately assess complaints of race-based discrimination received from the public, and
- to meet its responsibilities under the Paris principles by consistently failing to do substantive work, litigation and education to address systemic racial discrimination and systemic Anti-Black Racism (ABR).

As your office might be aware, on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a number of racialized CHRC employees wrote to the Chief Commissioner's office to raise concerns about ABR and other forms of race-based discrimination targeting racialized employees within the ranks of CHRC management. Since these actions were stifling racialized employees' access to workplace opportunities, in addition to hampering the Commission's work to meaningfully address complaints of racial injustice brought before it, CHRC's racialized staff also presented the Chief Commissioner with a

list of observations and recommendations to improve the processing of complaints of racial discrimination within the Commission. A redacted copy of this letter is attached as Annex 1.

Furthermore, racialized staff had also relayed concerns about being tokenized at work whereby their images were used, without advance notice or consent, in official CHRC reports to falsely project an image of inclusivity and diversity at the Commission (in addition to many other forms of tokenization). However, rather than attending to complaints and heeding recommendations in a diligent and reasonable manner, the Commission decided to unilaterally conduct a non-inclusive investigative process involving outside parties, without consulting its employees, their unions or other relevant stakeholders.

We understand that CHRC has introduced various self-improvement initiatives such as a *Race Pilot Project* to ensure greater scrutiny of incoming complaints that allege discrimination based on race. The Commission has also issued a statement acknowledging white privilege, deeply embedded systemic racism and unchecked racial biases (Annex 2). Additionally, in spite of these internal challenges, the Commission has recently embarked on an Employment Equity audit which, from our perspective, is fraught with many issues and contradictions.

While we applaud these developments, based on the feedback received from our racialized members, we believe that there is a significant disconnect between CHRC's public pronouncements and their actions. We are also concerned that this disconnect is consequential as it has jeopardized the psychological health and wellbeing of Black and racialized complainants, our members, who had already assumed a great deal of risk in coming forward to share their observations and recommendations. Since July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at least four Black or racialized members have left the Commission for reasons related to their workplace culture and others are on extended leave.

On August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020, PSAC, CAPE and AJC wrote to the CHRC to express support for the Commission's racialized and Black employees. We also strongly recommended that the Chief Commissioner seriously considers the recommendations that were put forward by CHRC racialized and Black employees. Since those efforts failed to bear fruit, we filed policy grievances with the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada. In addition, in December 2020, a class action lawsuit involving Black public servants was filed against the Attorney General of Canada where allegations of systemic racism against the CHRC were also outlined, and where the CHRC is one of the named respondents.

Ultimately, and in the absence of constructive engagement, CHRC has failed to take effective action by meaningfully engaging with staff, their Bargaining Agents and other stakeholders to resolve the complaints of its racialized employees in a manner that would have sought a constructive resolution. As a result, reported disadvantages that emanate from systemic ABR discrimination within the Commission remain unaddressed. In fact, the latest Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) results reveal that employees at the CHRC have reported one of the highest rates of race-based discrimination (Question 64a) and discrimination based on national

or ethnic origin (Question 64b). A relevant section of the report from this survey is attached as Annex 3.

This is anathema to an organization that is created to ensure federally-regulated institutions are free from harassment and discrimination. I am sure you will agree with us that none of the above bodes well for the CHRC, as the pre-eminent federal institution that is statutorily charged to uproot the very issues and controversies that the institution itself is ironically mired in. Indeed, we strongly believe that CHRC's failure to meet its obligation to fairly and effectively address internal complaints from staff who belong to racialized groups impacts not only the ability of the Commission to conduct compliance audits in Canada under the *Employment Equity Act* but also erodes public trust in CHRC as Canada's face and voice for respecting human rights at the international stage. This is of concern considering the fact that Canada is a founding member of the United Nations, a party to seven principal United Nations human rights conventions and covenants and affects Canada's perceptions globally given CHRC's reporting obligations regarding the state of human rights in Canada to the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Given the panoply of systemic issues identified in this letter, and if the Commission's handling of its staff complaints is a reasonable indicator, we cast serious doubts and question the ability of the Commission to make a fair, reasonable and impartial assessment of its own internal practices and processes. If the Commission is expected to oversee other federally-regulated employers and report on Canada's human rights record internationally, it would be incumbent upon the Commission to be able to speak with credibility.

We maintain that Canadian taxpayers deserve better in demanding fairness from our institutions that are legislated to uphold equity and justice. In light of the cloud of doubt and controversy, we strongly believe that what has transpired at the CHRC is of concern to the Canadian public. We, therefore, cordially request your office to consider an audit of the Commission's employment practices as well as the Commission's effectiveness in proactively addressing racial discrimination, and more specifically, ABR, as Canada's federally-mandated, premier and pre-eminent human rights watchdog. We believe this audit should look both at how the Commission addresses, or fails to address, anti-Black and other forms of racism within its own institution, as well as how it addresses race-based complaints received from the public in the context of its mandate to receive and investigate such complaints under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. (For example, racialized staff have informed us that internal data collected by the Commission over the past approximately 10 years show a pattern whereby race-based complaints have been dismissed by the Commission at higher rates than complaints brought on other grounds. However, the Commission has failed to provide us with this historical and present day data on its dismissal rates of race-based complaints as compared with other complaints, despite our requests and despite the requests of other stakeholders).

We submit that it is very likely that your office's engagement in the matter could eventually improve CHRC's overall efficiency and economy with respect to discharging its duties of protecting and promoting human rights in Canada and help the Commission stay accountable

to its statutory commitments and obligations. PSAC, CAPE and AJC would, therefore, appreciate your office attention to CHRC's failures to fulfill its statutory obligations. The concerns raised in this letter have also been raised by over thirty other organizations such as but not limited to the Canadian Association Black of Lawyers, the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers and many other legal community organizations representing complainants.

We have copied the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Minister of Justice as well as the Chief Commissioner to elicit their support for this audit.


We shall remain at your disposal should further information be required.

Sincerely,



David McNairn  
President  
The Association of Justice Counsel

Also signed by the following Bargaining Agent Presidents:



Chris Aylward  
President  
Public Service Alliance of Canada



Greg Phillips  
President  
Canadian Association of Professional  
Employees

c.c.: The Rt Hon. Anthony Rota, Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada  
The Rt Hon. David Lametti, Minister of Justice  
Ms. Marie-Claude Landry, Chief Commissioner, The Canadian Human Rights Commission

July 10, 2020

Dear Ms. Landry,

In light of recent events, we are writing to express our concerns as current and former Black and racialized employees at the Commission, as well as to propose the concrete actions we would like to see taken in order to address systemic racism within the Commission.

Recently you made a public statement in which you acknowledged a commitment to tackle racism and systemic discrimination within the Commission. You committed to implementing action plans based on the recommendations from racialized stakeholders, hiring an external consultant to investigate institutional racial barriers at the Commission, and establishing necessary structural changes to address racism within the Commission. We are pleased to see that you are dedicating attention to these critical issues and hopeful that these public commitments will lead to meaningful and lasting change within the Commission.

As you are aware, our colleague [REDACTED] recently tendered her resignation of a job she loves because the racism she faced was so blatant that she felt that her only option was to resign from her position in the middle of a pandemic and economic uncertainty. Following that, other racialized employees directly approached upper management to express that they too faced similar experiences as those detailed in [REDACTED]'s letter of resignation. These discussions come after various attempts to raise with managers and directors issues of racism, inequity and intersectionality pertaining to Commission practices that foster institutional, interpersonal and systemic discrimination.

Over the years, we and other racialized employees at the Commission have faced many instances of both overt and subtle forms of racism, Islamophobia, and adverse differential treatment in promotion opportunities and assignment of projects and files. Many of us carry the multiple weight of navigating gendered and intersectional forms of racism, on the basis of other forms of oppression such as class, gender, family status, disability and sexual identity. We have also been deeply concerned about the treatment of race-based complaints and the overly high dismissal rates of these complaints. Many of us have raised these concerns with management, only to be dismayed that no meaningful actions have been taken.

We echo the concerns raised in [REDACTED]'s resignation letter as they reflect each of our own experiences as well. We are particularly concerned about the following issues:

- *Lack of safe space and under-resourcing of supports for Black and racialized employees involved in the assessment of race-based complaints, as exemplified by the Race Pilot Project:* Many staff and managers, (who are predominately White) appear to lack an understanding of basic human rights principles and the nature of race-based discrimination

in Canada, including that it is often intersectional and manifests in subtle forms of discrimination. Further, when Black and other racialized employees attempt to contribute to discussions at triage, investigations, or as legal advisors, our views are often undermined and disregarded. Our professional advice is not given the same weight or consideration. We are often perceived of and dismissed as inherently biased, less credible and in need of the corroboration of a White colleague. This is particularly notable when we don't agree that the complaint should be dismissed, that certain grounds should be added, or if we try to contextualize a complaint with lived experience and other insights. We have often received an immense amount of resistance and even hostility when sharing our views on race-based complaints; and other times when the reaction is not overt hostility, our views have been politely disregarded rather than heard with any kind of openness to different perspectives. This unwillingness to be open to the views of people around the table who actually have lived experience of the subject matter of the complaint has led to the poor handling of many race-based complaints.

- *Lack of representation at all levels:* There is a serious lack of representation of racialized employees in the Commission at all levels, including the Commissioner level. Despite grossly misleading public messaging to the contrary, there is currently only a handful of racialized human rights officers and no Black individuals in executive positions. Until the recent move away from grounds-based teams, there was one team of human rights officers responsible for assessing race-based complaints and not a single one of them were racialized. To this day, almost all race-based complaints continue to be assessed by officers and managers who have no lived experience of racism and who lack basic knowledge of human rights issues.
- *Employment practices and decision-making processes that discriminate and entrench disadvantage against Black and other racialized employees:* It is an open secret that racialized employees are chronically underrepresented in management and many of the White employees who currently hold management positions, have been offered acting assignments in their current positions without any competition and later simply appointed to the position. The practice whereby those who are friends with or well-liked by management are given assignments, files, acting opportunities, promotions, and other career development and advancing opportunities without competition serves to disadvantage Black and racialized employees and perpetuates our under-representation. There is also a tendency to undervalue the strengths and contributions of Black and other visibly racialized employees. This is despite the fact that we are often asked to do visible and high-risk work beyond our level without fair compensation or institutional supports and in disproportionately precarious work arrangements, such as contract and term positions.

- *High dismissal of race-based complaints:* Year after year race-based complaints have been dismissed at disproportionately higher rates than other complaints. This is a significant cause for concern. Racial discrimination is no less common in Canadian society than other forms of discrimination. As the Commission's recent public statement noted, racism is "pervasive" in Canada. In addition, there is no evidence to suggest that racialized complainants are more likely to bring unfounded or unmeritorious complaints. Therefore, there is no reason why these complaints should be dismissed at higher rates than other complaints.

Over the years many racialized employees (being only the latest one) have left the Commission because of the above issues, racial discrimination and the constant micro-aggressions they faced. We empathize with these colleagues because we too have experienced the detrimental mental health impacts of enduring these realities in our day-to-day work environment. We too have questioned whether the Commission is truly a space for us. We carry the emotional toll and trauma daily with us.

Now that the Commission publicly committed to addressing racism and racial discrimination within its own institution, we believe the question the Commission should ask itself should not be whether some of its employees hold racist beliefs but whether all of its employees and management are actively anti-racist and operate from an anti-oppression mindset in their dealing with race-based complaints and in their daily dealings with Black and racialized colleagues. The urgency of an anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens is all the more pressing when we consider the broad public interest mandate the Commission has under human rights legislation, and more recently under the new proactive compliance legislation which disproportionately affects the rights and lived realities of Black and other racialized individuals and communities.

It is important to note that Black and racialized employees are often hesitant to stand up against racism as often racialized employees who call out racism face harsh backlash and other subtle forms of ostracism and exclusion. We believe it is imperative that an institution such as the Commission, which has the explicit mandate to address and prevent discrimination and to work within a public interest mandate, should look into its own behaviour, and the impact of its policies and practices and actively work against racism within its organization, as it has recently committed to doing.

We hope that you will investigate, document and address all the concerns reported by racialized employees at the Commission. To that end we ask that you commit to taking the following actions:

- 1. Reform the complaints intake and assessment process to ensure full, effective and equal access to justice for racialized people in Canada and a safe space for racialized employees:**

- a) Implement the recommendations enumerated in both of Mark Hart's reports relating to the assessment of race-based complaints;
  - i. The Commission should establish a detailed action plan for fully implementing the recommendations within one year, and should report publicly on this plan;
  - ii. Establish an advisory committee comprised of stakeholders from the March 4<sup>th</sup> dialogue session and the undersigned racialized employees and provide them with regular updates on progress with respect to each of these recommendations;
  - iii. The new criteria, operational tools and guidance should be made publicly available on the Commission's website.
- b) Discontinue the Race Pilot Project until all of the racial discrimination, workplace health and safety concerns raised by its advisors are addressed and systemic remedies are put into place, including:
  - i. Corrective measures in the form of retroactive pay for any work done above level, recognition, a commitment to consistent consultation and involvement in decision-making around the project and related initiatives, and fair compensation moving forward;
  - ii. Commitment that all future projects related to anti-racism that involve the contributions of Black and racialized employees are co-developed by these employees, fairly compensated and recognized for their work, adequately resourced, and supported by an executive champion with clear messaging from senior management to all staff and a zero-tolerance policy for racial discrimination and harassment.
- c) The Commission should ensure that preliminary decisions on race complaints are not rendered at triage, as this is a violation of procedural fairness and any preliminary decisions made about the merits of a complaint should rest with the Commissioners;
- d) The Commission should ensure that racist rhetoric at meetings, such as triage or team meetings, will not be tolerated under any circumstances;
- e) The Commission should ensure that managers do not coerce racialized human rights officers to draft reports that they do not agree with. Where managers refuse to accept



the analytical judgment of an officer, they must have a safe path of recourse to raise this issue with the director of complaints, without a fear of reprisal;

- f) The Commission should make it clear to all managers and directors that they are responsible for ensuring a safe space for racialized employees to express their views and exercise their professional duties.

**2. Appoint an independent consultant with lived experience of racism, demonstrated expertise in racial discrimination, institutional racism and anti-Black racism in employment to investigate and document the experience of racialized employees at the Commission, and to provide binding recommendations to the Commission.**

- a) The consultant should conduct a robust and transparent inquiry into systemic racism within the Commission, which includes:
  - i. An assessment of the organizational culture and patterns of organizational behaviour;
  - ii. An intersectional and disaggregated employment equity analysis of the representation, distribution and trajectory of Black and racialized employees;
  - iii. A review of all formal and informal employment policies, practices and decision-making processes to identify barriers to the recruitment, retention, treatment and advancement of Black and racialized employees as well as the impacts of these systems to ensure that they are in compliance with our legislation and the Commission's mandate.
- b) The consultant should be afforded the latitude to access all necessary documents and make all necessary recommendations, and the Commission should publicly commit to implementing the proposed recommendations;
- c) The review must provide for the confidential input of staff and clear messaging should be circulated to all staff to ensure informed consent, transparency, neutrality and confidentiality of this endeavour and to communicate a zero-tolerance policy for reprisals of any sort for those who participate in this process;

- d) The consultant should be given the opportunity to interview both current and former racialized employees of the Commission;
- e) The consultant's report should not be subject to any privilege preventing its publication;
- f) The consultant's report should be made public and the Commission should provide a public response to each of the recommendations therein along with an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations;
- g) The Commission should commit to an early, transparent and consistent communication system with the Black and racialized employees who are signatory to this letter, including consulting on the selection of the consultant, the terms of the contract, the implementation of the recommendations and any other programs or measures related to addressing systemic racism.

**3. The Commission should commit to providing career and developmental opportunities to Black and racialized employees:**

- a) The Commission should provide greater access to the necessary experience, programs and services to Black and racialized employees who are interested in development and promotions to higher-level positions;
  - i. To that end, the Commission should create a skill inventory by soliciting voluntary information from self-identified employees who are racialized employees about career interests and skills. The skills inventory should be kept up to date to allow the Commission to identify current employees who have the necessary skills for promotions.
- b) The Commission should individually invite self-identified racialized employees to identify their learning needs and develop a personal learning program, including formal learning and development programs, language training, assessment services, mentoring programs, acting and assignments;
- c) The Commission should require managers, through the performance discussion process, to consult with racialized employees to identify their learning needs and career goals, and

ensure that these employees are allowed access to training courses and learning opportunities with an aim to equip them with the necessary skills and experiences to advance in their careers. Managers should be actively supporting their racialized staff to be equipped with the skills and experiences necessary to progress to higher levels within the Commission;

d) Mentorship opportunities should be created whereby senior management are committed to the success of the racialized employee.

**4. The Commission should commit to establishing a fair process for acting appointments and commit to addressing the chronic lack of representation of Black and other racialized employees at the Commission, especially at the managerial level and above:**

- a) The Commission should end all informal hiring and promotion processes and should ensure all appointments are made through fair competition and that acting appointments above 3 months in length or those that are extended be staffed through the competitive process available to all employees, including Black and racialized employees;
- b) The Commission should ensure that job descriptions accurately reflect the position, are consistent at level and are exempt of subjective criteria. Job descriptions should not be subjectively tailored to exclude racialized employees and to facilitate the hiring of the employee the manager already has in mind, but should be adequately specific about the types of knowledge, experience and abilities required to do human rights and anti-racism work;
- c) The Commission should commit to combating the effects of past systemic discrimination by making available employment opportunities for racialized employees. This should include setting specific hiring goals, which are a rational attempt to impose a systemic remedy on a systemic problem;
- d) The Commission should commit to combatting and closing the racialized wage and opportunity gaps between and among its employees, through transparent pay equity practices;

- e) The Commission should pursue corrective measures to ensure fair and equal opportunity where a Black or other racialized employee has identified practices that have resulted in differential access or disadvantage.

**5. The Commission should commit to having racially diverse selection boards among others by:**

- a) Having a racially diverse human resources department and managers who sit on selection boards.

**6. Significant human rights experience and expertise should be a requirement for all positions within the Commission, especially those positions that relate in any way to the assessment of complaints, as well as legal advisory and litigation roles.**

- a) The Commission should only consider for employment, candidates who have human rights knowledge and demonstrated experience, including lived experience, in anti-racism and anti-oppression analysis. In particular, the following experiences and expertise should be prioritized in order to fill the gap in under-representation:
  - i. Lived experience of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and/or any other form of racism;
  - ii. Demonstrated ability to apply an anti-racist, anti-oppression, and critical race theory lens to social problems;
  - iii. Experience working in environments that work to affirm the rights of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including Black, Indigenous and other racialized individuals;
  - iv. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the culture, history and current oppressions experienced by Black, Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized groups.

**7. The Commission should put in place independent mechanisms to accept and review internal complaints of racism and racial bias and should commit to investigating**

**thoroughly and adequately such complaints and take all the necessary corrective measures and disciplinary measures against any employees.**

**8. In consultation with an external consultant with demonstrated expertise in systemic discrimination and anti-Black racism, the Commission should develop and implement an action plan for achieving significant increased representation of Black and other racialized employees at all levels of the Commission, within the next two years.**

- a) This plan should prioritize the hiring of human rights officers, analysts and Complaint Assessment Division managers who have the following experiences and expertise:
  - i. Lived experience of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous racism and/or other forms of racism;
  - ii. Demonstrated ability to apply an anti-racist, anti-oppression, and critical race theory lens to social problems;
  - iii. Experience working in environments that work to affirm the rights of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including Black, Indigenous and other racialized individuals;
  - iv. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the culture, history and current oppressions experienced by Black, Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized groups.
- b) Commit to hiring a Black or visibly racialized manager with the above significant experience in anti-racism in the assessment division within the next year;
- c) Request the appointments of Black, racialized and Indigenous Commissioners with the experience outlined above.

**9. The Commission should improve its data collection practices, and commit to the collection, analysis and public reporting of disaggregated race-based data:**

- a) As quickly as possible, the Commission should allow all complainants to self-identify by race, gender, disability and other demographic data.

- i. The framework and process for the collection of this data shall be co-developed in consultation with an expert with expertise in best practices for the collection of disaggregated data, including disaggregated race-based data;
  - ii. The collection of disaggregated data should be based on the ethical collection and use of data with a view to reducing the disparities in dismissal of race based complaints and access to justice for Black and racialized individuals and groups making complaints.
- b) The Commission should track and monitor the outcomes of race-based complaints, as compared with complaints on other grounds, on a regular basis, with an aim to ensuring that race-based complaints are not dismissed at any higher rate than other complaints. The Commissioners and all of management should receive monthly updates on this data;
- c) The Commission should publish this data on a quarterly basis so that its work is transparent and so that stakeholders can have access to this information.

**10. Develop and implement a comprehensive Black and racialized justice strategy to address approaches and human rights outcomes arising from the Commission's human rights mandates and its new proactive compliance legislation, with a view to ensuring access to justice and achieving substantive outcomes for Black and racialized individuals and groups.**

**11. Consult on and address the lack of mental health supports for Black and other racialized staff at the Commission by committing to expanding, resourcing and improving access to services from an anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lens;**

**12. Establish an Anti-Racism Directorate or Committee, comprised of external stakeholders, individuals and groups with lived and other expertise, and staff from all levels of the Commission, including racialized staff, with a view to addressing systemic racism within and beyond the Commission through:**

- a) The Directorate should have a broad mandate to identify, address and prevent systemic racism through:
- i. Advisory services, research and analysis, the publication of reports and statements, and other products that are consistent with the public interest mandate;
  - ii. Monitoring the Commission's informal and formal practices, policies and meaningful implementation of recommendations and/or action plans;
  - iii. Anti-racist intersectional policy development and intergovernmental action on such issues;
  - iv. Undertake impact-oriented activities in support of the elimination of racial discrimination and the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent.

**Signed,**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/statement-its-time-step-end-racism-0

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March 19, 2021



## Statement – It's time to step up to end racism

**March 19, 2021 – Ottawa, Ontario – Canadian Human Rights Commission**

*To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on Sunday, March 21, Marie-Claude Landry, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, issues the following statement:*

The events of the past year have shone a powerful light on the need for all Canadians to reflect on how white privilege, deeply embedded systemic racism, and unchecked racial biases continue to exist in Canada, and contribute to injustice and inequality.

Proclaiming the day in 1966, the United Nations General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. As we mark this year's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, it is with a renewed sense of urgency and resolve. We must redouble our efforts to confront racism head-on. We must dismantle the systemic racism that is deeply rooted within our society. We must redouble our efforts to challenge racism and racial discrimination everywhere.

Racism in Canada continues to deny far too many Indigenous, Black and other racialized people a life free from discrimination. And over the course of the pandemic, and tragically in recent days, we have seen anti-Asian racism escalate to hate and violence.

Racist comments and racist acts, no matter how subtle, can no longer be ignored or tolerated in Canada. We must make an effort to be actively anti-racist – to call out inequality and to challenge prejudice and bigotry even when it does not affect us. Even the most subtle forms of racism contribute to the conditions that permit overt racism and violence to occur.

But as we know, racism is more than just an event. It is a system and a structure that is deeply embedded in the fabric of our country. Governments, Canadians, and every organization, including the Commission, must acknowledge the existence of systemic racism and discrimination and continuously work to dismantle it.

Now is the time for all Canadians, but especially non-racialized Canadians, to listen, learn and reflect on how white privilege and systemic racism contribute to injustice and inequality in this country. We need to look inwards and have the courage to challenge our biases, fears, assumptions and privilege. We need the courage to have difficult and uncomfortable conversations and to take action.



As we look to recover from this pandemic, we must aspire to build back better – to make a new and better normal. We can dismantle systemic racism in our laws, policies, practices and our institutions. We can challenge white privilege, and confront unchecked racial biases that continue to exist in Canada.

Human rights matter, now more than ever. Racism and racial discrimination violate the human rights that every person has: to live with equality, dignity, and respect.

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## Media Contacts

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## Relevant section of Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) results



### Question 64a. Please indicate the type of discrimination you experienced. Race

Survey year	Organization	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total responses
2020	Public Service	28	72	12245
2020	Canadian Human Rights Commission	46	54	11
2019	Public Service	26	74	12755
2018	Public Service	25	75	11790

### Question 64b. Please indicate the type of discrimination you experienced. National or ethnic origin

Survey year	Organization	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total responses
2020	Public Service	20	80	12245
2020	Canadian Human Rights Commission	57	43	11
2019	Public Service	20	80	12755
2018	Public Service	20	80	11790