

June 5, 2020

A Statement of Solidarity in the Wake of Loss

The Roundtable of Diversity Associations (RODA) expresses its sorrow and revulsion by recent acts of anti-Black violence across North America. We continue to witness the violence perpetrated against Black, Brown, and Indigenous bodies. And we continue to witness the senseless loss of so many Black, Brown, and Indigenous lives. Once more we have seen how the law - ostensibly intended to protect the most vulnerable - is instead subverted to victimize. As practitioners of the law, we recognize this tragic reality and must speak out against a false truism: we are not all equal before nor under the law. We cannot allow this reality to persist.

We know that our colleagues, friends, and family are experiencing a tremendous amount of pain right now. These recent events trigger an immense emotional burden. We want to reiterate our commitment to supporting you in carrying this heavy burden and in supporting you in any way possible. We speak for many when we say we want to do more. We want to help. We will start with simply affirming that we stand with you. You are not alone. We will not let you be alone. And we know we must do more - act more.

We must not let fear or apathy or indifference or discomfort prevent us from stepping into these moments and working for change. We must do more to [educate ourselves](#) and those around us on the history of anti-Indigenous and anti-black racism on which our society is built. We must develop a deeply nuanced understanding of how our own - and our society's - overt and covert white supremacy and racism contribute to maintaining this untenable status quo. We must interrupt racism and oppression when we see it. We must roll-up our sleeves to reconstruct our society on the foundations of anti-racism and anti-oppression.

RODA stands together with CABL and echoes [its comments and calls to action](#) made on this sombre occasion. Here in Canada, the recent tragic deaths of Regis Korchinski-Paquet and Chantel Moore must be investigated promptly and thoroughly with a view to ensuring justice is carried out. Much more must be done by our governments, political leaders, and the various agents of our criminal justice system to provide appropriate and ongoing education, training, and supports to all persons responsible for law creation and enforcement. Much more must be done by all of us and the time is now.

RODA wants to get more engaged in this issue. To start the action, RODA asks each of its constituent organizations and their membership to do the following:

- 1) Provide one, concrete change/idea for change that RODA can develop and move forward to raise awareness and prompt action on these issues;
- 2) Send RODA a short statement about one focused racist experience you have had. We will compile these into an anonymized document and send it to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and the Attorney General

of Ontario and ask for concrete steps to be made to address each of them. We will invite the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and the Attorney General of Ontario to come and speak with us about it to hear some ideas about how to tackle these issues; and

- 3) Ask each of you to send one personal message of hope and encouragement to someone that you know is hurting today.

We stand with you in solidarity.

Dina Awad, Chair

Adrian Ishak, Vice-Chair

The Roundtable of Diversity Associations (RODA) is an umbrella organization founded in 2011 that brings together a coalition of 20 equity-seeking Canadian legal associations* with the goal of fostering dialogue and promoting initiatives relating to the advancement of equity, diversity and inclusion in the legal profession, the judiciary, and within the broader legal community. As part of our mandate, we monitor and provide input on policy developments within the profession and legal system. RODA can be reached via its Chair or Vice-Chair or at: roundtableofdiversityassoc@gmail.com

*Arab Canadian Lawyers' Association
Association of Chinese Canadian Lawyers of Ontario
Canadian Association of Black Lawyers
Canadian Association of Muslim Women in Law
Canadian Association of Somali Lawyers
Canadian Association of South Asian Lawyers
Canadian Hispanic Bar Association
Canadian Italian Advocates Organization
Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association
Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers
Hellenic Canadian Lawyers Association
Indigenous Bar Association
Iranian Canadian Legal Professionals
Korean Canadian Lawyers Association
Macedonian Canadian Lawyers Association
OBA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law Section
OBA Equality Committee
South Asian Bar Association
Toronto Lawyers Association
Women's Law Association of Ontario