



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE: Niagara Region Anti-Racism Association Lists 5 Reasons from St Catharines Council Meeting to Doubt Niagara Regional Police Service Openness to Anti-Racism

ST. CATHARINES, ON – Saleh Waziruddin of the Niagara Region Anti-Racism Association (NRARA) on Tuesday, August 11, listed five statements by Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) Chief Bryan MacCulloch at the previous evening's St. Catharines City Council meeting that raise doubts about whether the NRPS is truly open to addressing racism.

At the meeting St. Catharines City Council passed a majority of the 10 police reform recommendations from its Anti-Racism Advisory Committee but not ones about body cameras, street checks, and de-militarization, the last two losing in a tied vote.

Saleh Waziruddin explained “How can we trust the NRPS to be open to discussing racism when they are in basic denial about plain facts such as:

- 1) saying street checks are already abolished when their own web site says otherwise <https://www.niagarapolice.ca/en/community/street-checks.aspx> . Street checks were regulated, not abolished. But the regulations don't solve the problem as the NRPS's own statistics show they disproportionately stopped Black and Indigenous people in 2017 and 2018. (The end street checks recommendation lost in a tied vote)
- 2) saying that their Teradyne Armored Vehicle is not an armored vehicle but merely safety equipment, despite the very name of the product. Chief MacCulloch also said it was not weaponized yet it has gun ports and is used by armed forces. (The de-militarization recommendation lost in a tied vote)
- 3) to deny that tear gas has been used against protesters in Canada unlike in the US, when it was used in Montreal against anti-police brutality protesters as recently as June, let alone all the other instances. (The de-militarization recommendation lost in a tied vote)
- 4) to tell council (1:28:08) “I don't believe that Deputy Fordy denied that systemic racism was occurring in Niagara” when Deputy Chief Bill Fordy told Tom McConnell in a July 9 interview on CKTB 610 “I don't believe that systemic racism exists today in the NRPS” (6m10s mark).
- 5) to tell council that police forces in Canada are more consistently trained than in the USA just because there are fewer police forces, whereas just like in Canada, US police forces are certified and educated at the State (Provincial) level. Or to say that Ontario police have better levels of oversight whereas actually US municipal police forces are directly overseen by municipalities whereas in Ontario police boards have provincial appointees in addition to elected municipal councillors.”

Saleh Waziruddin said “How can the NRPS be truly open to listening and taking action about systemic racism if it not only denies it exists, but even denies that it denied it exists! If it abuses semantics to deny an armored vehicles is an armored vehicle or that tear gas is used against protesters in Canada.”

The Niagara Region Anti-Racism Association was founded in the summer of 2018 by three Black and brown women who experienced anti-Black racism in a previous local anti-racism organization. NRARA's current campaigns include police reforms in the NRPS, employment equity, and school reforms in the District School Board of Niagara.