

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

**CCNC-SJ Statement: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

For the many of us who are immigrants, we know that this nation has been a destination point, often sought after as a place of refuge, but it has also been a nation that has been hostile to those of non-white skin since its inception. The bodies of our ancestral kin lay buried under lengths of steel and timber stretching across the length of this land. Our national railroad not only tied our vast nation together, it also came to symbolize the structures put in place to manage who may come and go from here, and including the legislated racism of excluding the Chinese from entry.

When we dream of a secure nation, of a safe nation, whose bodies are included within that perfect utopia? When we envision a nightmare and begin to take stock of the threats we face, of what shape and form do the bodies of those threats take? Do they look like me? Or us? Or you?

Over the past three years, the global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an exponential increase in racialized violence targeting Asian bodies. Simultaneously, we have witnessed the renewal of the Black Lives Matter movement through the George Floyd protests and Indigenous people grieving the bodies of their children under Canadian institutions. Canada has not been a place that is safe for racialized bodies. Now, we are once again seeing increasing sinophobia and new waves of anti-Asian sentiment and conspiracy.

White supremacy is commonplace and a very real threat to our society. Fundamental racial inequality exists in our workplaces, schools, and neighbourhoods, and negatively impacts the lives of racialized and Indigenous people. When we consider how to increase the safety and security of those who live here, what actions might we take to make it a safer place for all bodies?

Anti-racism does not mean anti-white; it “is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.”<sup>1</sup> It is important to emphasize that when we talk about white supremacy, we are not critiquing white people as individuals, but rather see it as an invisible pervasive social process by which power and privilege is exercised in a society divided by race and other intersections of oppression.

Understanding systems of oppression, intersectionality, power and privilege, is essential to our ability to understand each other and act in solidarity. We all need to cultivate the ability to have honest conversations, accept our mistakes, take emotional risks, and commit to loving justice. To do this, we need to practice listening and understanding deeply, own our vulnerabilities, and hold this awareness with presence, compassion, and courage.

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<sup>1</sup> Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre <https://www.aclrc.com/antiracism>, [National Action Committee on the Status of Women \(NAC\)](#) International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity as referenced on the [Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre webpage – ‘Anti-Racism Defined’](#).