



## Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Safety and security for all Canadians through innovative police leadership

### **CACP statement - The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA**

June 10, 2020

The CACP and police leaders across Canada are deeply saddened and disturbed by the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis. We want to see the officers involved held accountable for their actions. We also want peace, justice, and healing, not only for Mr. Floyd's family and friends, but for everyone who has been hurt and impacted by this. Racism is painful, inexcusable, and cannot be tolerated.

Canada is not immune to racism. We live in a great country but as great as it is, racism is an insidious part of Canada's history and it continues to be a reality in our communities today. We are listening to the voices of Black, Indigenous and other members of our community as they peacefully rally and demonstrate across our country. This racism and hatred was recently brought to the forefront due to the increase in the number of anti-Asian hate crimes and hate-related incidents reported in a number of communities since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This powerful moment we are experiencing has culminated after more than a century of systemic racism in Canada. It is time for change in all aspects of society. Tackling racism requires a response from the entire community, including the police.

Many people are hurt and angry right now and police are at the forefront of this conversation. While police have developed many strong relationships in our communities over the years, this is a time for us to listen closely and learn. Please know that we are your brothers, sisters, neighbours, coaches, volunteers, sons and daughters, who serve proudly on the frontlines under very challenging circumstances to keep our communities safe. We all want a better Canada without racism.

It is important to understand that Canada and the United States are distinct in many ways, including our approaches to policing. Canadian police services have, for many years, focused their approach on community engagement and well-being, and proactive crime prevention.

As the frontline public safety response, police are required to step in 24/7 when no other help is available. This means that officers are routinely trying to find solutions for people in crisis where significant gaps in other services exist and long-term solutions are simply not available. These gaps are consistent across the country. Services for mental health, homelessness, and substance use are woefully lacking. Police leaders share this concern and have also advocated for better support and proper resources for people in need.

Police training and civilian oversight in Canada is among the best in the world. Officers are carefully selected and provided with extensive training that goes well beyond basic police skillsets. It includes a wide range of cultural awareness, sensitivity and de-escalation training. Once officers are hired and trained, they have more independent civilian oversight and accountability than almost any other profession. We whole-heartedly support this oversight given the extraordinary powers granted to police by law.

The recent movement to “defund the police” is increasing in prominence across North America and around the world. As police leaders in Canada, we welcome thoughtful and constructive discussion on possible reform to our public safety systems, but that discussion needs to be informed and evidence-based with police at the table.

Policing in Canada is dependent on the trust, accountability, and support of the community – it is a cornerstone of our profession. Your Canadian police community wants to listen to you and work with you, and various levels of government, to find opportunities and solutions that work for the people of Canada. This is our commitment to you.

-Chief Constable Adam Palmer, President, CACP