



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Statement of solidarity from the Department of Social Justice Education

The events of the past week have been heartbreaking, painful and upsetting to all of us at the Department of Social Justice Education, and we especially hold space for Black students, faculty and staff in our department. While many in Canada and the United States may think that anti-Blackness is unique to the United States, scholars in our department understand that state violence against Black people is all too frequent in Canada. This is why we grieve and are enraged by the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis. We grieve the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, an Afro-Indigenous woman who lived and died only a short distance away from OISE.

These two events are not isolated incidents; rather, these practices of killing, executing, and exterminating Black people have been the norm in North America for far too long. Breonna Taylor, Michael Brown, Oscar Grant, Tony McDade, Yassin Mohammed, Finan H. Berhe, D'Andre Campbell, Machuar Madut, Orlando Brown, Sean Reed, Jermaine Carby, Andrew Loku, Abdirahman Abdi and Sammy Yatim, just to name a few, are some of the victims who lost their lives at the hands of law enforcers in Canada and the United States.

Their deaths and many other traumatic experiences reveal systemic violence, rooted in white supremacy and anti-Black racism, which has for centuries taken, and continues to take and threaten Black lives. The violence by police against protestors seeking justice are further extensions of this systemic violence. This violence against protestors continues to uphold power for some, while suppressing the voices and actions—as well as endangering the lives—of others. We know that violence and racism against Black people have been foundational to the creation of Canada and the United States. It is important for all of us to speak up condemning the continued racism that persists in our society.

It is not possible for our department to be silent. Students, faculty and staff have already been responding and taking measures in a multitude of ways, and we support these efforts to imagine and bring about new ways of living and relating. As a department, we have continued to advocate for structural, institutional and ideological changes through our research, writing, teaching and community work. However, the department cannot do this alone. We should and can do more as a collective.

We urge members of our departmental community to be safe, at the same time that we recognize that safety has many meanings and does not come easily. We extend our condolences to the families of George Floyd and Regis Korchinski-Paquet, and to our communities who are grieving and processing the pain. We need to support one another as a departmental community. Further, we encourage supporting various communities committed to liberation of Black lives across what are for now called Canada and the United States.

In solidarity,

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