

**EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT TO THE
TORONTO & YORK REGION GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2016**

Statement on the Death of Abdirahman Abdi

The Toronto and York Region Labour Council's Equity Committee sends its condolences to the family of Abdirahman Abdi. The 37-year old Mr. Abdi is the latest addition to the list of names of unarmed disproportionately Black males and females who have had fatal interactions with police. Adding to the indignation is Mr. Abdi's reported struggle with mental health issues. As such the name Abdirahman Abdi now takes its place alongside the names of Toronto's Andrew Loku, Lester Donaldson and others. Each of these lethal police interactions involve Black males with mental health challenges and calls into question why de-escalation techniques were not used.

Many will agree that addressing the issue of sanctioned police violence has become almost routine for the Labour Movement. We write statements, call for reform yet the violence continues and the casualties continue to rise. Studies are done, reports are issued then shelved by those in position to implement the change and the violence continues.

This latest act of violence comes at a time when The Province of Ontario is holding public consultations on the role of the Anti-Racism Directorate as it applies an anti-racism lens to government policies, programs and services. The Police service is in our view one of the services that falls under the Anti-Racism Directorate's purview. As such we call on the Anti-Racism Directorate to:

- Develop police protocols that mandate and promote the use of de-escalation techniques.
- Develop legislative reform as to provide justice for those who wrongfully fall victim to government sanctioned police violence.
- Develop a legislative mandate to address mass incarceration of Black and Indigenous peoples.
- Develop a legislative mandate to address police violence due to anti-black racism, Islamophobia, intersectionality all other forms of racial in policing.

While the issue of racial, or cultural bias in policing is not new, neither is the belief of many that our elected officials over many mandates have not viewed police violence on the most vulnerable in society as a priority. As such we call upon Premier Kathleen Wynne and MP Michael Coteau Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism, to construct legislative change that will provide equity to make the lives of all Ontarians matter equally.