

Emancipation Day: ARC Hub Statement in response to racial violence in Canadian privy council

The ARC Hub would like to take a moment to stand in unwavering solidarity with the racialized staff of the Privy Council and the broader Canadian Public Service. In the wake of the report made public this week detailing normalized instances of racial stereotyping, microaggressions, and verbal violence even reaching the executive level, we must confront an uncomfortable truth that this news, though deeply disturbing, is not shocking. It serves as a reminder of the importance and urgency of addressing the enduring effects of historically entrenched racial hierarchies.

In a world running on the normalization of racial violence we must be ferociously committed to challenging ourselves, our leaders, our systems and our institutions. Today, on Emancipation Day, we reflect on a moment in history when those judged by their place of origin and the colour of their skin, whose bodies and knowledge were exploited to build empires were finally liberated. Yet, in these moments of reflection, it is easy to let the day pass with half-hearted acknowledgements, bowed heads, and mere words of recognition for a shameful past. But don't we all feel that these words fall short when we continue to cling to the principles that this shameful past sought to embed?

In light of recent events, it is crucial that we take bolder steps to heed the calls of communities through history and today who simply ask to experience the feeling of safety and be treated equitably. Today and everyday we call on those who are not racialized to question their relationship to power, to violent histories and to systems of domination. Challenge the inherent racism and extractivism in the structures you operate within and benefit from. Stand up for and build what is just. Be truly and deeply committed and accountable to change.

To racialized communities across sectors and industries we urge you to seek support, to rest whenever is possible, share knowledge and resource with each other, to lean on community, build with one another and to never give up hope that a better future is possible. Our brilliance built this world, and the seeds our ancestors planted bloom every day in every breath we take. In these gardens of hope, sown, watered, and grown over centuries lies the promise of safer, more just, and more equitable futures.

We must recognize that the systemic issues highlighted by this report are not isolated incidents, but part of a broader pattern of discrimination that permeates many aspects of our society. The Privy Council being a cornerstone of our governmental framework should and must be held to the highest standards of integrity, inclusivity and progress. It is unacceptable that racial violence be tolerated at any level, and we join those who call for immediate action to address these injustices.

Today as we observe Emancipation Day, we honour the resilience and strength of those past and present who have fought for justice and for freedom to be experienced by all those who still today must additionally balance their wellbeing in the face of society that so often has and continues to erase them. We remember the countless lives lost and acknowledge those who have endured unimaginable hardships while striving for better futures. It is in their memory that we continue to be committed to building sustainable paths to more equitable and racially just futures.

For folks in Ottawa, let us come together and make our voices heard:

Date: Thursday August 1, 2024

Time: 11:45 a.m.

Location: Meet at the Human Rights Monument by Ottawa City Hall and march to the Privy Council Offices at Elgin and Wellington.

Speakers: Nicholas Marcus Thompson – President and CEO, Black Class Action Secretariat; Alex Silas – National Executive Vice President, Public Service Alliance of Canada; Nathan Prier – President, Canadian Association of Professional Employees; Laurie Antonin – Coalition of Black Trade Unionists

More information: <https://www.northernnews.ca/globe-newswire/on-emancipation-day-workers-rally-to-demand-government-action-on-discrimination-in-the-federal-public-service>

