



Canadian Association of Black Lawyers (CABL)  
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## **CABL's Response to the June 10<sup>th</sup> incident involving the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM)**

July 20, 2021

In light of the murder of George Floyd by former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in May of 2020, we were shocked and dismayed to see the news footage of a Montreal Police officer using the same technique that resulted in Mr. Floyd's death on a 14-year old Black boy on June 10, 2021.

It is worth noting that the Premier of Quebec, François Legault, declared that he was “profoundly troubled” by the images of the Montreal police officer pushing his knee into the neck of the teenager.

What is even more troubling is that this is the third statement that our organization has issued in a year which involve disheartening interactions between the police in Canada and members of the Black community – incidents involving Mr. Yeboah in Quebec, and Justice Romilly in British Columbia. This speaks to a disturbing trend in policing Black Communities across Canada that must be addressed.

Section 25 of the Criminal Code permits the police to use force to effect or complete an arrest. However, this power cannot and must not be interpreted to give the police license to use force where none is necessary, or as an excuse to use more force than is required in the circumstances. Despite the limitations that the Criminal Code places on police use of force, the list of cases where members of the Black community have been subjected to excessive force continues to grow.

The mentality that underlies this continuing trend is dangerous and destructive to the Black community and the wider Canadian society. These actions engender a loss of trust in police and a loss of faith in the criminal justice system that cannot be underestimated.

Urgent action from our public officials – not just words - is required. The status quo cannot be allowed to continue. We therefore call for a full and transparent investigation into this matter to be conducted.

Furthermore, we urge the police agencies across the country to review their use of force policies and train their officers around the appropriate use of force, especially when engaging with youth, and specifically youth from the Black community and other equity seeking groups.

Finally, we encourage the police across Canada to work together with the Black community to build a better future for our communities and for our children.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAWYERS