CALGARY HERALD

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2020 PROUDLY CALGARY SINCE 1883 POSTMEDIA

WAITING FOR CANADA'S SHOT

U.S. vaccine-maker talks timing **NP1**

BEST OF THE BEST

What makes an elite runner? **NP7**

PART 1 OF 3: RACISM IN CALGARY

SHINING LIGHT ON HATE

PHOTOS: AZIN GHAFFARI

From left, Cheryl Foggo, Adam North Peigan, Teresa Woo-Paw and Adora Nwofor have experienced discrimination and are calling for change. In a special series, Postmedia journalists Alanna Smith, Sammy Hudes and Azin Ghaffari spent months researching the deep roots of racism in Calgary, and the growing movement for equality. **A8-9**

NP

WORLD

Iran promises to avenge slain scientist **NP4**

SPORTS

RACING

Formula One driver escapes fiery crash **NP10**

Huge surge of COVID-19 pushing hospitals to limit

As Alberta ICU admissions near 100, care for other patients is put at risk

STEPHANIE BABYCH

Alberta reported its second-highest number of new COVID-19 infections Sunday — behind only the total of a day earlier — as the number of Albertans in intensive-care units neared 100.

Ninety-five of the 435 people in hospital with COVID-19 now require intensive care, an increase of seven from Saturday. Alberta hospitals exceeded the benchmark of 70 full acute-care COVID-19 beds last week and are preparing another 400 to cover the surge of ICU admissions.

Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's chief medical officer of health, said during Thursday's news conference that passing that threshold means "we'd be crossing into territory where we'd be impacting other patients' care."

When hospitals are overrun, care winds down for people who can "wait a little longer for it," which is a serious cause for concern with the continuously rising number of ICU admissions, she said.

It's been five days since Premier Jason Kenney announced an assortment of mandatory public health measures, including a ban on indoor social gatherings, a 10-person limit on wedding and funeral services, and a closure of grades 7 to 12 in-person classes — which starts Monday.

The effects of the new restrictions are not yet felt as Alberta Health reported an additional 1,608 cases of COVID-19 on Sunday after 1,731 cases Saturday — the highest case rates the province has seen since the pandemic began. The positivity rate Saturday was about eight per cent, and dropped slightly to just under seven per cent Sunday.

Almost 45,000 tests were conducted between the two days.

There are 15,692 active cases across the province, about 36.7 per cent of them in the Calgary zone. The Edmonton zone has the greatest share of active cases with 46.1 per cent.

Hinshaw posted on Twitter to urge people to connect with loved ones virtually while social gatherings are prohibited.

"The next few weeks will be hard for all of us in light of the restrictions on social gatherings. I want to thank all of you for doing the right thing and making these sacrifices to help bend the curve," she said Sunday.

"While we may be physically separated from each other, I strongly encourage you to reach out to your friends and family and stay connected virtually."

Another 14 deaths were recorded over the weekend — five Saturday and nine Sunday — bringing the provincial death toll to 533.

SEE **COVID-19** ON ***A3***

Court rejects bid to delay energy inquiry

JASON HERRING

An Alberta justice has dismissed an injunction from an environmental law firm that would have paused the provincial government's controversial inquiry into alleged foreign-funded campaigns against Alberta's energy industry.

Justice Karen Horner of Alberta's Court of Queen's Bench said in her ruling there is no evidence the inquiry contains unfounded or untested allegations against Ecojustice that would cause irreparable harm to the Canadian non-profit.

The ruling is a setback for Ecojustice, which is also suing the government, claiming the inquiry itself is illegal.

The case was supposed to be heard in April but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. No new date has been set.

SEE **ECOJUSTICE** ON ***A2***

BURDEN TO BEAR

RACISM IN CALGARY

ABOUT THIS SERIES

This special three-part series documents the ongoing struggle against racism that has persisted in the Calgary area for generations.

Monday: Calgary's anti-racism movement
Tuesday: Painful realities; police reconciliation
Wednesday: Paths forward; leaving hatred behind

To watch videos related to this series, go to **calgaryherald.com**.

An unwillingness to learn Indigenous history is still pervasive, says Adam North Peigan, president of the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta.
PHOTOS: AZIN GHAFFARI

CALGARIANS HARNESS

Summer demonstrations ignited a fire that anti-racism advocates say can't burn out

ALANNA SMITH and SAMMY HUDES

Candle wax melts onto the brick steps at Olympic Plaza as flames dance during a sunny July day.

The makeshift memorial honours the many lives lost to police brutality worldwide. Cardboard signs left by some of the thousands of protesters, who just minutes earlier packed the park from corner to corner, lay next to the burning candles. They read "Black Lives Matter," "Power to the People" and "Make Injustice Visible."

A red rose drapes over a hand-drawn image of George Floyd, whose death catalyzed protests across the globe.

He died in May after a white police officer in Minnesota kneeled on his neck for almost nine minutes.

But the injustices these Calgarians were protesting are far closer to home.

In the middle of a pandemic, droves of mask-clad people thundered through the streets in numbers rarely seen in Calgary, screaming, crying and chanting in peaceful but powerful protests. Some were speaking out against injustice for the first time. Others had always been.

Indifference is no longer an option, they heard. They need to drown out a sound that has long roared in this city.

Racism is a problem that's long existed in key institutions — in government, policing and our schools — and in everyday interactions.

The fire ignited that warm summer day can't burn out as it has so many times before, say anti-racism advocates, educators and people with lived experience reflecting on the summer demonstrations.

Months later, there's still no clear path forward. But the same energy that pulsed throughout Calgary's streets must continue beating behind closed doors, they say.

Racism in these parts has long been "covert and insipid," says anti-racism activist Adora Nwofor.

Prejudices are harboured deep inside, strengthened by generations of trauma, neglect and established norms. But today, she says, that won't necessarily result in "the N-word to your face" from a stranger during a casual encounter.

"They will walk around and talk to you saying, 'I have to cross the street because there's something over there that I need,'" Nwofor says.

"And once you're gone, they cross back. It is very purposeful."

There are important distinctions between the brand of intolerance provoking anger south of the border and the local variety. In the U.S., racism is often overt. You know what to expect, explains Shuana Porter, founder of the United Black People Allyship movement.

"When we look at America, we are looking at the man who would come to us with the gun in our face," she says.

"The City of Calgary and the Government of Canada is like the sniper on the roof. We don't even know what to look for. Are they less dangerous because you can't see them?"

Those who identify as Black, Indigenous and people of colour "aren't looking for revenge," Nwofor says.

They're looking for fairness.

"People are pushing back and saying that 'all lives matter,'" she says.

"We have to remind people that Black lives matter. If there's a burning house, you don't put water on the whole block. You have to put water on the burning house."

The roots of racism run deep in this city.

Calgary has served as a breeding ground for white supremacist groups. It's been at the centre of civil rights abuses. And many of its residents, then and now, know the cruel consequences for the mere colour of their skin.

It was around 3:30 a.m. one May morning when three people scrawled "China virus" in black spray paint on the front wall of the Chinese consulate in downtown Calgary.

The incident left members of the community shaken. For months, they've faced targeted backlash related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"We know that racism has always been part of Canada and also anti-Chinese, anti-Asian sentiments and racism has always been there," says Teresa Woo-Paw, a former MLA and chair of Asian Canadians Together to End Racism.

"But I think the undercurrent is now at the surface. Some people need to find blame, to lay blame and then find scapegoats."

Those same sentiments have persisted for more than a century — since before Calgary was incorporated as a city in 1894. Two years earlier, a race riot broke out after white residents blamed the Chinese community for a smallpox outbreak. A mob of men looted and destroyed Chinese businesses and assaulted Chinese residents.

Local police refused to act. It "might have developed into a massacre" had Mounties not shown up, reported the Calgary Daily Herald.

"An incensed crowd of between two and three thousand white people had surrounded the Oriental section of the town with the intention of forcibly evicting the Chinese element when a force of Red Coats galloped in from Gleichen," read the newspaper's account of the violence.

News archives contain some of the few historic records of momentous civil rights battles in southern Alberta.

One such case is the story of Calgarian Charles Daniels, a railroad inspector.

When Daniels was denied a seat at a local theatre and told to sit in the "coloured" section in 1912, he launched a lawsuit against the Sherman Grand Theatre, manager William Sherman and Senator James Lougheed.

Daniels was steadfast in his fight for justice.

Opponents initially didn't take his case seriously, before later resorting to attempts to discredit Daniels' version of events.

Legal documents demonstrated a defence riddled with racism.

"If a man goes to the theatre with his wife and next to his wife he saw a coloured man, his wife would not want to sit there," the defendants stated.

Black people in Calgary and southern Alberta have done incredible things in the face of incredible obstacles.

CHERYL FOGGO, above, author and historian

It is not certain if Daniels was ever awarded damages, but it marked one of the earliest civil rights cases in Western Canada and a landmark moment for members of Calgary's Black population in their struggle against racism.

"Black people in Calgary and southern Alberta have done incredible things in the face of incredible obstacles," says Calgary writer and historian Cheryl Foggo.

"He stood up to the most powerful white men in this province at that time."

Nearly half a century later, Ted King, the president of the Alberta Association for the Advancement of Colored People, also took up the fight against segregation.

In 1959, King tried to book a room at Barclay's Motel in Calgary, located on Macleod Trail, only to be refused. He claimed the motel owner told him he didn't serve "coloured people" and there were no vacancies, despite King's recollection of a vacancy sign on display.

In a human rights complaint against the motel owner, King said he suffered "humiliation, indignity and insult."

The motel owner said his actions had nothing to do with race. Instead, he argued King was not a traveller and Barclay's Motel was not a "common inn."

King's case was dismissed by the Alberta Supreme Court over a loophole in the Innkeepers Act. Despite the loss, his legal battle made an impact, considering the Alberta legislature closed the loophole in 1961.

These stories are often untold, says Foggo.

Black history in the region dates as far back as the very concept of Alberta. But too often, the triumphs and struggles of the community are left out of mainstream discourse — a "gap in stories and in history books" imparted on young minds, she says.

"I grew up in an immigrant community, and most of my classmates were first-generation Canadians," says Foggo. "I was aware that my family had already been here, at that time, three, four generations. I was almost always the only Black child in any classroom. My history was one that simply never came up, was never addressed in any way. We were not considered among stories that were shared about our history."

In 1940, white soldiers accused a Black musician of assaulting one of their own after he spoke to a woman a soldier was interested in. A mob of about 300 soldiers marched to his home where they smashed his windows, destroyed the interior and chanted racial slurs, according to newspaper reports from that time.

He was hustled out by police but remained ready to defend himself, grasping a butcher knife should they make it to his location.

Calgary has been considered a safe haven for white men emboldened to perpetrate violence against communities of colour, according to Jason Devine, who leads Anti-Racism Action in Calgary.

The mid-2000s into the 2010s marked the height of influence by neo-Nazis operating in Calgary, says Devine, an activist who has exposed and confronted neo-Nazi organizations and their members since 1999.

At the climax of clashes between anti-racism advocates and white supremacists, skinheads who donned white pride patches on leather jackets and balaclavas marched through Calgary's streets chanting anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic messages.

> *We know that racism has always been part of Canada and also anti-Chinese, anti-Asian sentiments and racism has always been there. But I think the undercurrent is now at the surface. Some people need to find blame, to lay blame and then find scapegoats.*
>
> TERESA WOO-PAW, *left, chair of Asian Canadians Together to End Racism*

POWER OF PROTESTS

In 2009, 60 members of the neo-Nazi Aryan Guard group squared off with counter-protesters in a violent demonstration. That was the second year in a row, on March 22, in which anti-racism protesters outnumbered far-right groups, who recognized the date as a white pride day worldwide.

It also marks the international day for the celebration of the elimination of racial discrimination.

Alberta was home to groups like Western Canada for Us, the Western European Bloodline, Soldiers of Odin and the Aryan Guard, which later became Blood and Honour and has since been deemed a terrorist organization in Canada.

Members remain today.

"We'll never know how many people had their blood run in the streets because of those groups," says Devine, adding many — especially those from racialized backgrounds — don't report violent incidents for fear of retribution.

He says confronting organizations like Blood and Honour was at times "absolutely terrifying."

Devine recalls his home being firebombed, facing death threats and surviving a murder attempt in which suspected members of a neo-Nazi organization broke into his home and beat him with hammers and bats.

"I thought, 'This is it,'" says Devine. "I don't regret it at all. Because if they didn't beat us, who else would they beat? Somebody was going to face this violence sooner or later. So, you just come to accept it."

Racism is at times obvious. Other times it isn't. It comes in the form of hate crimes; of police brutality; and of overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous people in the criminal, justice and foster care systems. It's the underpinning of residential schools and the '60s Scoop.

But it also comes in the form of microaggressions — indirect, subtle or unintentional discrimination toward people of colour.

Police dashboard camera footage from earlier this year showed an RCMP officer tackling, punching and choke-holding Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam during an arrest, after police noticed an expired licence plate on Adam's vehicle.

Helicopter video resurfaced this year of the violent arrest of Godfred Addai-Nyamekye by Calgary police in 2013. Officers charged Addai-Nyamekye with public intoxication and dropped him off far from home in the dead of winter.

He called police for help; instead, one officer repeatedly punched him in the head and kneed him in the back. Const. Trevor Lindsay, the officer connected to the case, retired earlier this year, meaning he won't face a disciplinary hearing for those actions.

Since the start of this school year, multiple recordings have been posted in which Calgary teachers used the N-word in recent years. A spokesperson for Education Minister Adriana LaGrange condemned those incidents, saying "this is unacceptable. Period."

According to Vicki Bouvier, an associate professor at Mount Royal University who specializes in Indigenous studies, the education system remains a key area where decision-makers can begin rooting out the ills of society.

It starts with acknowledging racism is entrenched in Canada's colonial history, which bled into existing systems that distribute power, opportunity and resources to the benefit of white people.

> *We'll never know how many people had their blood run in the streets because of (white supremacist) groups.*
>
> JASON DEVINE, *above, Anti-Racism Action*

"Curriculum is designed to tell the story of colonizers and settlers," she says. "That's racism."

Hidden discrimination, such as omissions in what is taught, can be "so insidious that you receive it and don't realize that it is racist." She says we need to pull apart policies and procedures to understand how racism is embedded in schools. But a lack of understanding — or perhaps, more befitting, the willingness to understand — still pervades the education system, says Adam North Peigan, president of the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta.

Take Alberta's curriculum review and comments by Chris Champion, one of the advisers tasked with examining social studies lessons for students in this province.

An article published last year under Champion's byline referred to the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives as a "fad." He wrote that an exercise designed to teach students about the impact of European settlers "brainwashes children."

The advice of the government's hand-picked advisers includes waiting until the fourth grade to start discussions on "traumatic material" related to residential schools. Drafts of the recommendations referred to equity as a "politically partisan and charged buzzword."

North Peigan called on Premier Jason Kenney to fire Champion in August. Champion remained part of the panel until it was disbanded in mid-November.

"A lot of our non-Native brothers and sisters, they don't want to learn, they don't want to understand," North Peigan says.

"Education is an important tool. Mainstream Albertans and governments, they need to have an open mind, and they need to have a willingness to sit down and learn about the true history of our people in Canada."

The Alberta government says feedback from its curriculum advisers "are merely recommendations." No final decisions have been made, but it plans to include an "anti-racism" focus.

"The new curriculum will teach our students a full history of Canada, including Francophone, First Nations, Métis and Inuit history," says Colin Aitchison, a spokesperson for LaGrange.

"Residential schools will also be covered within the curriculum — the minister has already made it clear that this is non-negotiable."

Aitchison added the social studies curriculum already has a strong focus on issues related to the "histories, cultures, and contributions of Indigenous peoples and people of African and Caribbean descent to both Alberta and Canada."

Unconscious biases still extend far beyond the classroom, however. Chantal Chagnon remembers feeling dehumanized in a hospital waiting room.

A car accident several years ago left her with a hip injury. Her recovery required multiple surgeries.

Chagnon, a Cree Ojibwe Métis activist, needed a prescription refilled to numb the "excruciating pain." The normally routine errand, however, was disrupted by an encounter with a stranger, who recognized her for her community work.

"You're that Indigenous girl who marches for murdered and missing women," they said.

Chagnon, who is white-passing, says health-care staff overheard the encounter. They instantly changed their demeanour.

"They're like, 'Oh, you're Indigenous. I don't think we can give you this prescription. We're pretty sure it's a dependency issue,'" she recalls. "I'm like, 'Excuse me?'"

With tears in her eyes, Chagnon sat in the waiting room for hours until a nursing staff shift change. When a different nurse entered the room she received her usual medication. That's what it took to be treated with dignity.

"She was like, 'I'm really sorry for this.' She was a racialized nurse and she understood exactly what we were going through," Chagnon says.

The incident was no fluke. In health-care settings, racialized communities are often perceived to be "deficient," says Bouvier.

Sometimes it's a woman of colour receiving extra advice during a pregnancy checkup on how to parent. It could be Indigenous people having to wait longer than others to see a doctor or nurse, lest they be refused services entirely.

Members of the homeless population, of which a disproportionate segment are Indigenous, face even further dehumanization.

"There's all of these assumptions," says Bouvier.

"This happens every day. So how can we — in hospitals, in healthcare facilities — ensure that those racist ideas are not dictating how patients receive care?"

Alberta Health Services says in a statement the agency is aware of "unacceptable acts and language" in the past. The health authority says it reviews every concern and takes steps to make amends in situations that warrant an apology.

AHS says employees must undergo Indigenous awareness training as part of their diversity and inclusion instruction.

The agency has also created a Black, Indigenous and people of colour anti-racism advocacy group to "develop anti-racism activities" and an ethnic minority workforce resource group to tackle issues that arise in the workplace.

"However, it is clear more must be done," said AHS in a statement. "AHS has and will continue to take a strong stance against any act of racism, discrimination or intolerance."

For those who have never had to ponder the possibility of facing discrimination based on the colour of their skin, it's no surprise to Bouvier these blind spots remain.

It's not that the majority of southern Albertans are racist or perform blatantly racist actions, like those spread across social media or documented in newspaper articles long ago.

Far from it, actually.

But being actively anti-racist takes something much bigger, she says, than simply lacking hateful views or attending a rally at Olympic Plaza — it takes a commitment to do something about it.

"In order for it to change, people have to give something up," says Bouvier. "People may not see themselves as racist, but they also don't see that they benefit from racism. If all the policies and procedures benefit you, have you ever acknowledged who they don't benefit?

"That is a hard thing to admit."

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CALGARY HERALD

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020 PROUDLY CALGARY SINCE 1883 POSTMEDIA

CANADA'S HISTORIC DEFICIT

Expected to reach $381 billion **NP1-3**

SHEWFELT'S TRIUMPH

Olympian reminisces **NP14**

POLICING THE POLICE

AZIN GHAFFARI

In 1989, Kingsley Massiah, left, was arrested when he approached police asking for help. Decades later, his son Adam Massiah is an activist against police brutality. **A8-10**

Case rates likely to rise before restrictions help

COVID-19 patients in ICU triple average number of influenza cases

STEPHANIE BABYCH

Hospitalizations and case rates are likely to increase for the next few days as the province waits to see the effects of new restrictions, Alberta's top doctor explained Monday while announcing another 1,733 cases of COVID-19.

With 96 of the 453 hospital COVID patients in intensive-care units, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's chief medical officer of health, continues to worry about how much worse the strain on the health-care system will be before it gets better.

"I suspect that we will continue to see cases and hospitalizations rise over the next several days, as we wait for the impact of the restrictions that were announced last week," said Hinshaw during Monday's press conference.

In an average influenza season, at its peak, Alberta has about 30 patients in ICU with influenza. Currently, there are more than triple that number of COVID-19 patients requiring intensive care.

"And if we have continued spread, we are nowhere near that COVID-19 peak, unless we can collectively bring our numbers down," Hinshaw said while providing her usual encouragement for people to follow public health measures closely.

Specifically of concern on Monday was a memo that was sent to health-care workers in the Calgary zone that asked them to "reduce the demand on the bulk oxygen system" while they prepare for an expected increase in demand.

"Clinical measures require everyone to engage in oxygen conservation measures immediately," reads the memo.

Physicians are asked in the memo to assess their patients for oxygen requirements, target the lowest tolerable SpO2 level and avoid using oxygen in a list of certain situations if possible.

The sites pinned as being the most affected by infrastructure limitations on the bulk oxygen systems are Rockyview General Hospital, Foothills Medical Centre and Peter Lougheed Centre.

Alberta Health Services' Dr. David Zygun, a medical director for the Edmonton zone, said there is no doubt the hospital system is under significant strain.

SEE **COVID** ON *A2*

MODERNA BOSS WON'T PUSH PAST CANADA

DON BRAID

Has good news flopped over and died? You could think so, with the flood of bad COVID-19 news in Alberta and all the political animosity at home and in Ottawa.

But consider this. It was only on Nov. 9 that Pfizer announced it has an effective vaccine.

That has since been followed by two others, including Moderna, whose co-founder and chairman is a Canadian guy named Noubar Afeyan.

SEE **BRAID** ON *A4*

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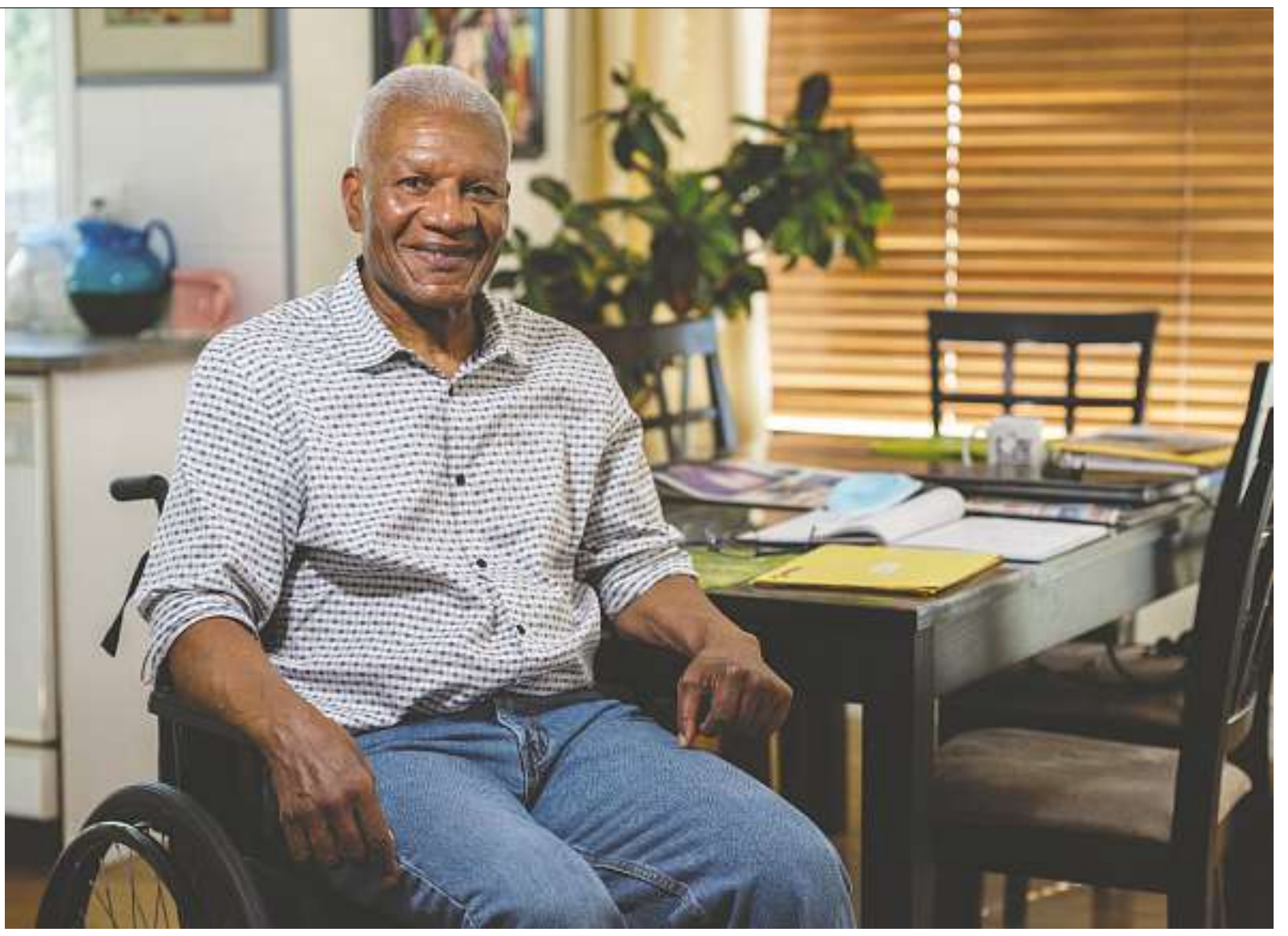


Kingsley Massiah was arrested by Calgary police when he asked them for help. *PHOTOS: AZIN GHAFFARI*

A LEGACY OF RACISM

For racialized people living in Calgary, the sight of a police officer can invoke a sense of fear, ***Sammy Hudes*** and ***Alanna Smith*** write.

Kingsley Massiah scribbled down the feelings he couldn't seem to shake as he thought back to the night of his arrest.

"I have never been and did not deserve to be in that position," he wrote on the back page of a document filled with witness testimony. "I think I was wronged."

It was early in the morning before the sun had risen on Aug. 20, 1989.

Massiah and his brother were leaving the bar after a casual Saturday night out, making their way to the exit of a nearby parkade, only to be blocked by another vehicle whose driver refused to move.

He saw police nearby and approached the officers. Minutes later, Massiah was handcuffed and shoved in the back of a police car, taken away to spend the rest of the night in the "drunk tank."

All he did was ask for help.

Three decades later, his son Adam Massiah leads a protest in Calgary's core against police brutality. His voice blares through the megaphone as he calls for solidarity to stamp out police misconduct that has persisted for generations — along with the powers that allow it to happen without repercussions.

Global protests had been taking place since the death of George Floyd in the U.S., who died in May after a white police officer put his knee on his neck for almost nine minutes. Floyd's final cries were heard in Minnesota — "I didn't do anything." He called out for his mom, repeating the words, "I can't breathe" over and over.

There's a thread woven between generations of the Massiah family, with experiences of racism stitched into the fabric of their lives. Kingsley and Adam have fought back, each in their own way — by centring Black lives in anti-racism advocacy or testifying on the wrongful actions of police.

At his childhood home in northwest Calgary, Adam listens from a nearby couch as his dad, seated in a wheelchair at the kitchen table, recounts the stories of racism he has faced. There's no noise. No loudspeaker. The only voice is Kingsley's as he remembers an officer yelling at him to "shut up" more than 30 years ago.

Protests in Calgary drew attention to a range of issues, such as racism in education, health care and the media. But racism in policing was at the heart of the movement, as demonstrators called into question police misconduct, oversight and accountability.

"My interactions with the police over the years were, for the most part, negative," says Kingsley, 64.

"You're getting stopped and harassed all the time, for no other reason than, quite frankly, driving while Black, walking while Black or just being Black."

The report drafted by police following his arrest is filled with "just pure lies" to support their position, he says.

As he wrote in his notes back then, Kingsley wanted the chance "to tell my side of the story." He spent the next year going through a citizen review process, arguing the officers acted with malice.

But his complaints of racism were dismissed.

He never received the justice he knew he deserved.

Adam Massiah says racism is part of everyday life for Black people in Calgary. He has been stopped, searched and yelled at by police.

"All this stuff is just part of that system to ensure that you stay in your place. It's just demoralizing," Kingsley says.

"The whole system, the police, are just at the tip of the spear. People like myself have an issue with the police and it's because it is an enforcement mechanism to ensure that those of us who have been deemed to be at the bottom of the whole system stay at that bottom."

Adam, 26, says he has faced it, too. He's been pulled over, profiled by police. He's been forced to listen as officers hurled racist slurs. He's been singled out by police for an aggressive search as he passed through a security check at a concert.

Racism is "normal" to him.

"For me, and other people who look like me who live in the city, it's been a reality for us every single day of our lives," he says. "You either let it break you down and destroy you, or you become numb to it and you make it through it."

Adam serves as CEO of the United Black People's Allyship organization, working toward the betterment of the lives of Black people in Alberta.

Floyd's death was a turning point, he says, coming in the midst of "a perfect storm" — a pandemic that put many aspects of normal life on pause, affording people time and energy to direct their attention toward mounting incidents of police brutality around the globe.

Many were "fed up," including people in Calgary.

After watching the disturbing footage of Floyd's last moments, Adam says he cried for days.

Calgary police Chief Mark Neufeld seeks a balance between those who see the force as a community resource and those who see police as a danger.

"And then I turned that into anger," he says.

"If you still don't believe that racism exists in Calgary, then you're just not listening. You just choose to be wilfully ignorant. And that's a problem."

Summer protests in the city thrust the Calgary Police Service under the microscope.

The organization's principles and practices were called into question as Calgarians laid bare the traumas they've faced at the hands of officers.

Some aired those stories during anti-racism hearings at city hall in July, co-chaired by Malinda Smith, the University of Calgary's first incoming vice-provost of equity, diversity and inclusion. Impassioned Calgarians took to the microphone at those hearings, reopening wounds of the past and present so their realities would be heard.

A panel formed by lawyer Nyall DaBreo, Centre for Newcomers vice-president Francis Boakye, former MLA Teresa Woo-Paw, academic Vicki Bouvier and former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine, also outlined how systemic racism has been perpetuated for centuries.

Calgarians marched in the streets, from Kensington to 17th Avenue, through Chinatown and Olympic Plaza.

Some focused their attention online, sharing the truths they've known all their lives, as conversation ignited across social media.

Calgary police Chief Mark Neufeld recognizes there is work to do but says there's a balance to be struck between some who view the service as a community support resource and those who see it as potentially harmful.

"We have historically (had), and continue to have, good relationships with the community," says Neufeld. "But, at the same time, we have to validate the lived experiences and the realities of people who aren't having those same experiences."

Calgary police list seven core values intrinsic to its organization: respect, honesty, compassion, courage, fairness, accountability and integrity.

They're traits each aspiring officer must demonstrate when applying to join the force — prerequisites to serve the citizens of Calgary, Canada's third-most-diverse city.

But this reputation of cultural openness lies in stark contrast with the perception of police so many in this city hold.

For many who identify as Black, Indigenous or people of colour (BIPOC), the mere sight of an officer doesn't evoke feelings of safety and protection.

Often, those feelings are instead replaced with a sense of fear.

It's anxiety that, out of suspicion, they could be stopped and questioned without any evidence. It's panic induced from lived experiences — and those of their family and friends — that the wrong word or move could lead to violent consequences. It's a realization they could lose their lives, as have Floyd, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Abdirahman Abdi, Olando Brown, Regis Korchinski-Paquet and other victims of police brutality.

Here in Calgary, police have been forced to reckon with a backlash toward high levels of officer gunfire — whatever the motivation — in recent years.

In 2016, Calgary police shot 10 people, killing half of them. It was the highest number of police shootings of any city in the country that year.

The service called it a "significant elevation" in police shooting trends, prompting an independent use-of-force review, completed in April 2018.

Its 65 recommendations included establishing a better understanding of mental health concerns, improved oversight and an emphasis on de-escalation training.

Calgary again led the country with nine police shootings in 2018, six of which were fatal. Police shot four people in 2019, killing one.

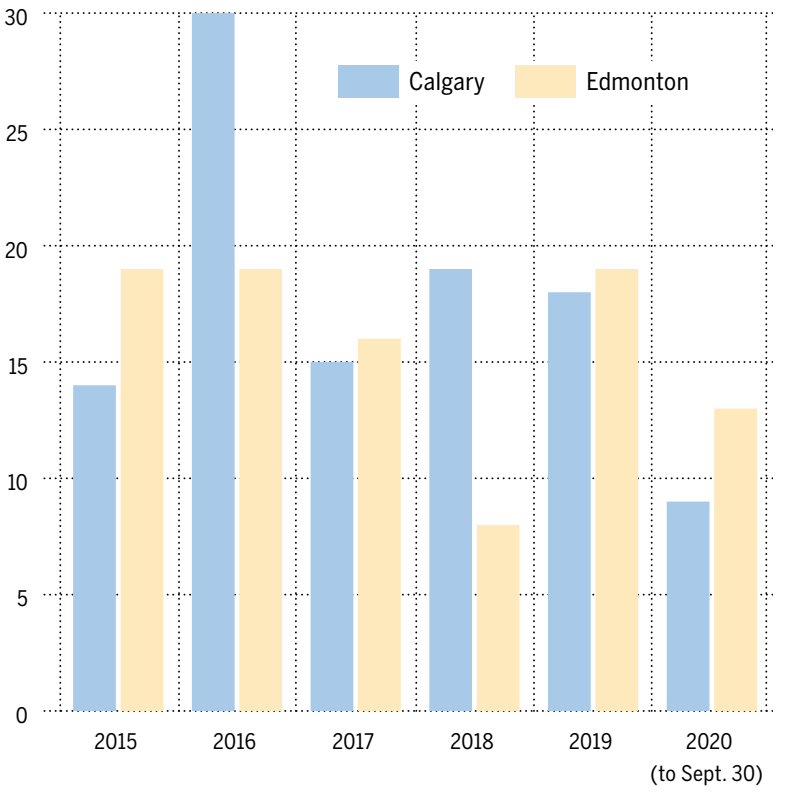
Against this backdrop of surging use of force, a statistical analysis shows alleged police misconduct is unlikely to lead to criminal charges against the officers involved. From 2015 to 2019, Alberta's police watchdog opened an average of about 19 investigations per year into conduct by Calgary police officers, including 30 in 2016.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team — an independent, civilian-led agency staffed by seconded police officers — charged five Calgary Police Service members during that five-year period.

Spirit River Striped Wolf is apprehensive of police following an unnerving encounter in a fast-food restaurant.

ASIRT INVESTIGATIONS

ASIRT has conducted 105 investigations into Calgary police incidents since 2015, compared to 94 in Edmonton. Investigations are opened when police actions result in serious injury or death, or when there are allegations of police misconduct.



SOURCE: ASIRT

DARREN FRANCEY / POSTMEDIA

AND BRUTALITY

Adam Idris says the city isn't devoting enough funding to community policing. Indigenous activist Michelle Robinson, right, says there is a lack of faith in law enforcement.

It has launched nine investigations into Calgary police conduct in 2020, charging one officer as of Sept. 30.

The police service says the vast majority of recommendations from the 2018 use-of-force review are in place or in progress.

Adam says this isn't good enough. He knows too many others who have interacted with officers who have "overstepped boundaries, used excessive force, and acted in a racist manner."

His dad agrees there's no time to wait.

As he thought back on a lifetime of racist encounters with police, Kingsley recalled the time his mother called the police after he was beaten up while walking home from school in Grade 8. But the officers were more concerned with "weapons" Kingsley had — a couple of stray bottles he spotted and grabbed, used to defend himself — than the Grade 9 boy who "knocked him out."

Later in life, he remembers being ticketed by an officer after his new car was hit. Kingsley had just moved. He hadn't updated the address listed on his identification.

"Who do you go to to report these sorts of things?" Adam asks. "Do you go to the police to police the police? That ends up absolutely nowhere."

Indigenous activist Michelle Robinson says conversations critical of policing are "really uncomfortable" for a lot of people because when they call the police, they are safe to do so.

"But when Indigenous people, racialized people, call the police, it's a very different outcome and that's unacceptable," says Robinson.

"We need to have faith in our law enforcement and nobody does at this point."

Those interactions can permanently alter the way people approach even the most mundane actions they take in their lives.

For Spirit River Striped Wolf, it's the apprehension he now carries when using public facilities.

Striped Wolf remembers being in a washroom at a fast-food restaurant when police burst inside, banging on the door of his stall and demanding he come out to explain what he was doing. The officers claimed they'd been asked by staff to check on him, believing he was using their restroom to do drugs.

"That was a pretty awkward, horrible, embarrassing experience that I went through," he says. "I just don't think a lot of folks realize how common that is."

Vulnerable members of racialized communities are even more susceptible to dehumanizing interactions with police, says Robinson, leaving them further at risk and lacking protection that others take for granted.

> *When Indigenous people, racialized people, call the police, it's a very different outcome and that's unacceptable. We need to have faith in our law enforcement and nobody does at this point.*
>
> MICHELLE ROBINSON, *Indigenous activist*

"We face it when it comes to our homeless population and our sex worker population," she says.

"Women who are on the other end of domestic violence don't feel comfortable calling the police because when they do, they will shoot and kill us," she adds, underscoring feelings of fear and mistrust in the system.

Robinson says "oblivious, unseen racism" continues to permeate law enforcement, as BIPOC members of the community are "over-policed and over-surveilled."

Calgary police do not collect ethnicity-based data. However, they have committed to doing so as part of their anti-racism efforts following criticism faced this past summer.

Calgarians have varying opinions on how to confront systemic racism in the police force.

Some point to reform. Many want to see a reallocation of police resources to community initiatives. And others say an entire overhaul of the existing system, too far gone to make meaningful change, is needed.

An expansive shift to a community policing model would help rebuild relationships between local law enforcement and those they serve, says activist Adam Idris.

He says this approach would require Calgary police to identify the most marginalized communities who are disproportionately affected by policing tactics within the city. They would then assign officers to be embedded in those neighbourhoods.

Officers would "actually become part of that community in a meaningful way," explains Idris. Arresting people would not be their priority.

Instead, they would establish connections and gain new understandings of those communities, their cultures and their struggles.

"Every minority community in Calgary is dealing with different things," says Idris, a community policing expert.

Communities, for example, could be dealing with a significant uptick in drug abuse, an epidemic of violence or high rates of post-traumatic stress after leaving their countries of origin.

Each one of those issues could potentially lead to criminality, says Idris. But addressing struggles proactively through community policing removes the need for enforcement later on.

It's a model proven to work.

Currently, there are six officers on the Calgary Police Service diversity resource team, out of about 2,200 sworn members, tasked to engage with the city's diverse communities and investigate hate-motivated incidents. The force has one Indigenous liaison officer and is filling a role in December to oversee their "strategy for reconciliation."

Neufeld says there is potential to expand those roles.

"Maybe we haven't kept up with (diverse communities) the way that we needed to," says Neufeld. "I think we need to look at what is the demographic now and where the greatest need is."

Local police are in the process of launching a police and community engagement program in which officers and civilian employees can volunteer with the diversity resource team.

In 2018, Idris was one of four Canadians selected by the U.S. State Department to be part of a visitor leadership program.

They spent three weeks meeting with police forces across the U.S. about community policing initiatives and integration of "more empathy and kindness within policing."

Idris describes the state of affairs in most of those law-enforcement agencies as "cautionary tales" of what the Calgary Police Service could become without meaningful efforts to build understanding. Approaches in cities like Baltimore and Chicago "were really kind of horrifying," he says.

"The big problem is the 'us versus them' mindset from the police and from the citizenry that they're here to serve," says Idris. "The idea that we're not on the same team is troubling.

"The police are looking at their citizenry as the enemies and (racialized communities) are looking at the police as the enemies."

Calgary's not there yet, he pauses to clarify.

But Idris adds the city isn't devoting enough funding to community policing initiatives and training. Instead, it's an "enforcement-heavy, investigative-heavy, prosecution-heavy" approach that doesn't reduce crime.

Experts in police methodology agree it's an unsustainable model, he says.

"We're going to end up having to teach our children that police are to be feared. And when that happens, there's not going to be any security or any peace within those communities that feel like they're under siege by police," says Idris.

"It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. Those fatal encounters will create more distrust and then the circle goes on and on and on."

In June, Neufeld acknowledged systemic racism in the force after saying just days earlier he was "not so sure" about it.

He is more firm in recognizing its existence four months later, as he sits down in October for a conversation at police headquarters about the organization's ongoing efforts to address systemic racism.

The service has committed to an independent review of the school resource officer program, which puts officers in Calgary Board of Education and Calgary Catholic School District schools, Neufeld says.

An internal service-wide census is planned in early 2021 to respond to grievances outlined by Calgarians this year.

Neufeld says the scrutiny brought forward by this summer's demonstrations was "difficult" for many officers.

Some responded defensively.

In a column penned for the fall edition of the Calgary Police Association's magazine, Const. Geoff Hoover called Black Lives Matter a "police hate group" and added "systemic racism does not exist" in Calgary's police force.

The police chief sympathized with Hoover but says he doesn't share his opinion.

SEE **RACISM** ON ***A10***

Change is long overdue, anti-racism advocates say

RACISM FROM A9

"I don't think we've ever seen a situation where people are protesting us," says Neufeld. "The reality of it is, there may be a small number of people who we may not be able to change. But at the end of the day, what's in your head is not as important as what you say and what you do and how you serve the community."

But anti-racism advocates say progress is long overdue.

Eighteen years ago, Calgarian Adora Nwofor was pulled over by police on a bridge near Deerfoot Trail. She was driving her partner to work around 4 a.m., as her three-year-old son slept in the back, a blanket draped over his car seat.

Nwofor recalls the police shutting down the bridge, as police cars surrounded her vehicle. They questioned what was in the back seat, then told her she matched the description of a known drug dealer.

"They just made up some excuse because I was driving an old car at four o'clock in the morning and I'm Black," alleges Nwofor. "So, I got out of the car as he's holding the gun. And I opened the door and pulled down the blanket — of course, it's my child."

Formal complaints to police don't amount to anything, says Nwofor.

Calgarian Godfred Addai-Nyamekye filed such a complaint after he was beaten during a police interaction in the dead of winter in 2013. The officer linked to the violent arrest, Const. Trevor Lindsay, was convicted of aggravated assault in a separate on-duty incident. Lindsay resigned before facing an internal disciplinary hearing into Addai-Nyamekye's arrest, allowing the officer to avoid police proceedings.

In October, police released a statement admitting the "system needs improvement" to reprimand officers charged with misconduct following the trial of a constable charged with on-duty assault.

Security footage showed Const. Alexander Dunn slamming a handcuffed Black woman face-first into a concrete floor during a 2017 arrest. Her nose was broken and lip cut open. Dunn was relieved from duty with pay "pending further review" after being charged. He was reinstated to administrative duties a year later. A judge will rule on Dunn's case in December.

Last week, city council considered reducing the police budget to address gaps in crisis and outreach services. The official budget submission by Calgary police suggested shifting $8 million to those initiatives in 2021.

Instead, council opted to pull $8 million from city reserves, stopping short of slashing funds designated for police.

> *They just made up some excuse because I was driving an old car at four o'clock in the morning and I'm Black. So, I got out of the car as he's holding the gun. And I opened the door and pulled down the blanket — of course, it's my child.*

The decision followed weeks of renewed tensions with the province, as Justice Minister Kaycee Madu said the idea of "reallocating" police funds had been pushed by "radical activists." He called it a "buzzword" that means defunding. Madu also called reallocation "nonsensical," going so far in September to threaten provincial funding to municipalities that reduce police budgets.

But last year, council was forced to compensate for UCP budget changes that left a $13-million hole in the Calgary police budget, during Madu's time as Alberta's municipal affairs minister.

Now, Madu says he's in favour of police reform — not defunding.

Neufeld has voiced support for reallocating some resources to social services, but characterizes the "defund the police" movement as people who looking to "punish, disarm, or abolish" the police.

A review of the Alberta Police Act is ongoing and will address issues related to officer misconduct.

In November, Madu announced an immediate province-wide ban on carding, the act of police stopping someone to be questioned without evidence they're connected to a particular offence. Neufeld says the police service is working closely with the province to make it easier to discipline officers for misconduct.

The Police Act became law in 1988 and has only seen piecemeal updates since.

Outside of government legislation, Kingsley Massiah says reform is only possible if "untouchable" police unions are dismantled.

Earlier this year, the Calgary Police Association said it was "eager to contribute" to anti-racism action but pushed back against a proposal that would have reallocated some of the police budget to social services.

CPA president John Orr says any potential cuts would "force us to take steps backwards" and further stretch resources.

The union, as is highlighted in its mandate, often backs officers facing serious misconduct allegations. One officer, Sgt. Les Kaminski, even continued serving as president of the association while facing charges of perjury and assault with a weapon in 2017, in connection with the arrest of Hells Angels member Jason Arkinstall nine years earlier. Both charges were eventually dropped.

"At the end of the day, if you do not have consequences put in place — the antecedents for good behaviour and then consequences for bad behaviour — you will never have the tip of the spear reform itself," says Kingsley.

In a recording studio in northeast Calgary where Adam Massiah spends much of his time, he points to the motivators in his life who fuel his work. It's his family and those like him who have shared painful stories of racism.

It's the hundreds of people who continue to show up at protests.

"I think I was born for this. I was raised for this. I've been living this my entire life," he says.

"It's going to be a challenge. It's going to be a battle. It's about staying focused, remaining strategic and remaining tactical. It's about never letting your emotions overtake your logic."

He clutches the documents his dad has saved for more than 30 years. For Adam, it's a reminder from decades past that so much work lies ahead.

His tireless efforts draw from the experiences of his family — his grandfather, father, mother and siblings.

Kingsley is proud of his son. But also fearful. People have died doing this work. Adam could, too.

"He knows that I'm concerned about his well-being, because it's just the way the system works. Once you emerge to threaten the established order, the system is designed to ensure that as soon as you trip up, you are weakened," says Kingsley.

"I hope he survives it."

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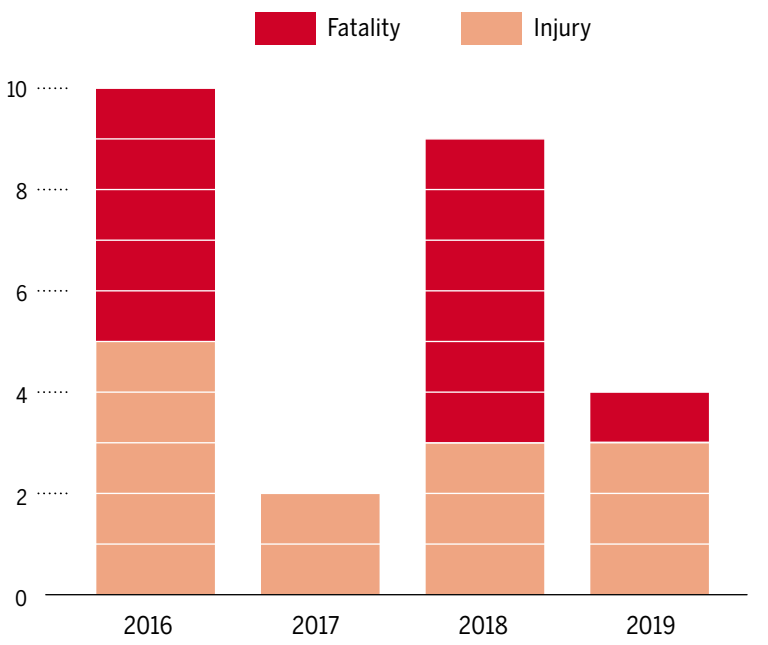
With editing by Ricky Leong

SHOOTINGS BY CALGARY POLICE

Over the past five years, 12 people have died in police shootings. There have been no shootings in 2020.



SOURCE: CALGARY POLICE SERVICE DARREN FRANCEY / POSTMEDIA

Check out five eye-catching deals on Postmedia's Local Marketplace

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POSTMEDIA CONTENT WORKS

The holidays may look different this year, but Albertans are finding ways to keep their festive spirits up. Dive into the season of generosity with Postmedia's Support and Buy Local Marketplace, now open to Dec. 7. The special online sale brings deep discounts to holiday shoppers and a boost to the local economy.

Consumers can save up to 40 per cent on a wide range of products and services, which will be posted throughout the sale period — so check back daily for the hottest new deals.

The Marketplace is a great way to jumpstart your Christmas shopping, whether you're looking to treat yourself or give a gift to a loved one. But be sure to act fast! All items have limited quantities.

For the savvy shopper, here are five eye-catching deals on the Marketplace.

VDG Salumi's Holiday Box is filled with farm-to-table products. SUPPLIED


Aviation enthusiasts will love sitting in a Boeing 737 simulator at the Altitude Flight Simulation Center. SUPPLIED

GIFT CERTIFICATE TO LA-Z-BOY

Retail Value: $2,000 | Marketplace Price: $1,400

Most of us are planning on binge-watching TV shows and film series this winter, so why not do it in ultimate comfort? Whether you're looking for a traditional or modern piece, La-Z-Boy has the perfect sofa ready to take your viewing experience to the next level.


Relax in comfort this holiday season with furniture from La-Z-Boy. SUPPLIED

Make high-quality wines with this wine kit from UWinemaker. SUPPLIED

WINE KIT FROM UWINEMAKER

Retail Value: $340 | Marketplace Price: $204

If you've been looking for a new pastime, the search ends here. This wine kit is a great way to pick up a new hobby and enjoy the fruits of your labour. The award-winning UWinemaker offers a stress-free, streamlined process that yields high-quality, aromatic and delicious wines.

HOLIDAY BOX FROM VDG SALUMI

Retail Value: $99.99 | Marketplace Price: $60

The foodie in your life will be thrilled with this ultimate holiday box. Filled with exclusive farm-to-table products, each box comes with a wooden charcuterie board (made locally in Calgary), a decadent black truffle tartufo salami, three special holiday salamis, a written holiday note and more.

GIFT CERTIFICATE TO PRESTIGE MEDI-SPA

Retail Value: $750 | Marketplace Price: $525

To really unwind and release the stress of 2020, you'll want to treat yourself to a day of relaxation at Prestige Medi-Spa. The spa uses effective, non-invasive medical grade technology and all natural products to help rejuvenate your skin and catalyze the natural healing processes of your body.

GIFT CERTIFICATE TO ALTITUDE FLIGHT SIMULATION CENTER

Retail Value: $169 | Marketplace Price: $118

This gift certificate will make a great gift for any aviation enthusiast. Feel like you're in the captain's seat of a Boeing 737 as you take off, cruise and land at airports around the world in this realistic Calgary flight simulator experience. They'll be grinning from gate to gate.


Treat yourself to a day of relaxation at Prestige Medi-Spa. SUPPLIED

Support and Buy Local Marketplace closes at 9 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 7.

Visit CalgaryHerald.com/supportlocal to view all the items available.

BURDEN TO BEAR

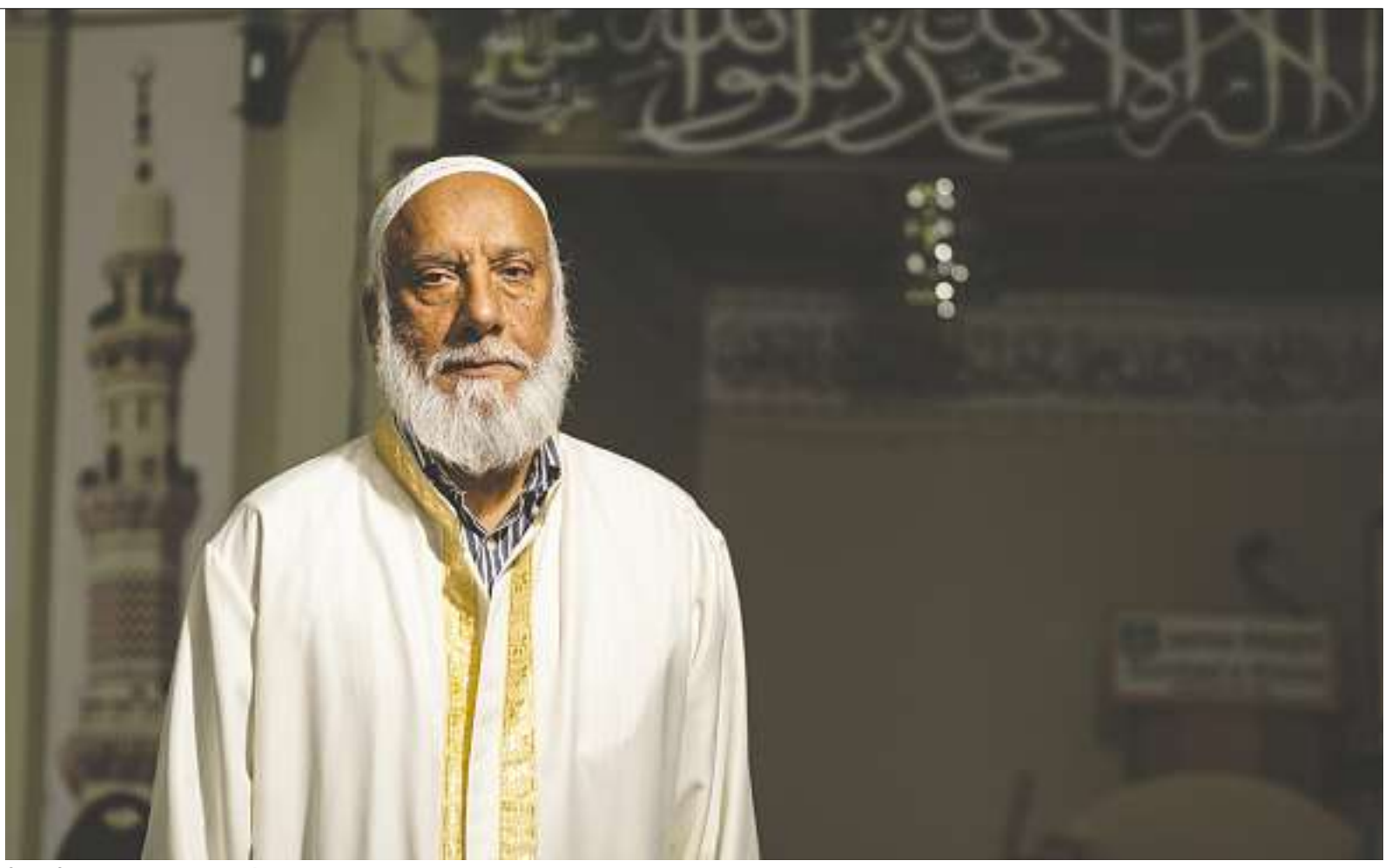
RACISM IN CALGARY

ABOUT THIS SERIES

This special three-part series documents the ongoing struggle against racism that has persisted in the Calgary area for generations.

Monday: Calgary's anti-racism movement
Tuesday: Painful realities; police reconciliation
Wednesday: Paths forward; leaving hatred behind

To watch videos related to this series, go to **calgaryherald.com**.



Syed Soharwardy, Imam at Al Madinah mosque, says he believes education is one of the keys for tackling racism. *PHOTOS: AZIN GHAFFARI*

FACING THE UGLY TRUTH

Advocates for racial and religious minorities say there is a way to change things

SAMMY HUDES AND ALANNA SMITH

A cramped hotel suite serves as a place of refuge for an Airdrie family afraid to go home.

In a dimly lit common area, Ahmad Yar speaks of his family's two-year-long nightmare, enduring incessant racial mockery and intimidation from neighbours.

He says his children now "hate their own skin."

The family of eight fled to a hotel in October after hostile relations with their neighbours hit a breaking point.

Yar alleges his children have been followed and photographed, and his wife's traditional garb mocked. They've tried to park in front of their home, only to find someone else's car taking up two spaces.

It feels never-ending.

"This is public parking and this road is not meant for 'brownies,'" Yar says they've been told.

"We are basically the only Muslim minority in that neighbourhood. No one treated us the way it's supposed to be."

Yar has called Canada home for nearly three decades. Before moving to Airdrie in late 2018, he worked as a civil engineer in the Calgary area for the previous 17 years. He's tried reaching out to the neighbours, as well as politicians and police, but tensions haven't cooled. The relationship has become so strained, it has resulted in duelling lawsuits and temporary restraining orders.

None of the allegations have been proven in court.

"It is so stressful. We're scared to go there. We're scared to live there. We're scared for the safety of our kids," says Yar.

"My little girl, (she says) 'I wish we had white skin.' Unfortunately there are people like this, they just make your life miserable for no reason. No matter how good a person you are, they just hate you because of your colour."

The family says time spent in the gloomy hotel is "a kind of miserable life with no future."

Powerful anti-racism protests across Calgary this summer called attention to high-profile cases, like the death of George Floyd at the hands of a white police officer in the U.S. and the violent arrest of Godfred Addai-Nyamekye by Calgary police.

Members of the crowd at these events also spoke of their personal experiences of racism, whether quietly to friends or loudly over the microphone at makeshift stages.

The reality of racism isn't new. Neither is the fight against it.

Those demonstrations in Calgary and beyond breathed new life into the anti-racism movement. Some called it the start of a "revolution."

But the path to rebuilding the systems that perpetuate racial inequality isn't clear.

In the months following thunderous protests in the city, those at the grassroots level — and those whose experiences underpinned the movement — called on those in power and on everyday Albertans to move beyond the streets.

Anti-racism activist Saima Jamal says failure to act on racism could lead to a "big conflict" of social unrest in the future.

Indigenous leader Chantal Chagnon says it is important for all racialized communities to work together to make necessary changes to society.

Imam Syed Soharwardy says misconceptions about Islam still run rampant. It can result in backlash toward Muslim Calgarians, like being told "you don't belong to this country."

Soharwardy used to grow angry when he'd hear an Islamophobic slur, or a distortion of his religion.

"In Alberta, there is a racist element here. And they are very vocal," says Soharwardy. "They come to rallies at city hall against Islam and against Muslims and those kind of things."

So far this year, 80 incidents are being investigated as hate-motivated crimes by the Calgary police. This is in line with an uptick in recent years, following 73 incidents last year, 81 in 2018 and 77 in 2017.

Motivations for targeting victims include race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and religion.

Between 2012 and 2016, hate-motivated crimes averaged 60 incidents per year.

The police service attributed the recent rise to "current events" and a focused effort by Calgary police to raise awareness about the importance of reporting hate-motivated offences. They are on track to see a similar increase this year for the same reasons.

According to police data, Black Calgarians are targeted the most, followed by Asian and Arab Calgarians when race and ethnicity are the motivations for crime. Hate crimes largely go under-reported.

For Soharwardy, education is the best path forward.

Decades ago, he saw hatred toward the Muslim community reach a pinnacle following acts of violence by extremist groups in the name of Islam. So in the late 1990s, he founded an organization called Muslims Against Terrorism to advocate for peace.

This past July, Soharwardy launched a digital billboard campaign around Calgary, seeking to spread messages of love in response to hate. He says this approach helps cool tensions and erase misunderstandings.

"As an Imam, as a person of the Muslim community, it is my duty not to get offended but rather educate — sit down, talk, have patience, cool down — rather than getting emotional," Soharwardy says. "If I get angry, it means I'm failing."

Soharwardy says the Muslim community should take cues from the Black Lives Matter movement "and show the value that we bring to the society."

Others say people of colour should not have to bear the burden of educating white people about racism and share painful stories — stories of being targeted, harassed and seeing people that look like them murdered — to ring true the reality.

Allyship — or as anti-racism advocate Adora Nwofor calls it, being an "accomplice" — comes from non-racialized people doing the work themselves. Being actively anti-racist means performing research, challenging racism in everyday interactions, and making or giving up space for racialized groups.

"Ally means that you can change your mind whenever you want," says Nwofor, president of Black Lives Matter YYC. "I need an accomplice. You're going down with me or it doesn't work."

White people need to recognize their privilege, regardless of barriers faced, to start anti-racism work. They need to accept any discomfort that arises, she says.

"You keep the momentum going by leaving your feelings behind. And by understanding that, like all of this work, when you open your eyes, it's going to be better."

There are simple, tangible ways people and organizations can do so day-to-day: Hiring Black people for their skills and expertise, ensuring better representation in media and creating Black-centred spaces in the city, such as community centres.

"I can't wait another five years. I mean, I am so tired of this fight," says Nwofor.

"This world is making it so much harder for (my children). I don't want them to be living in trauma anymore. I want them to be living in healing. I need healing. My community needs healing. Black people need healing right now."

As different communities face common yet unique struggles, activists say they must band together to advance each other's goals.

Longtime Indigenous champion Chantal Chagnon, who founded cultural education centre Cree8, says it's counterproductive to tackle only one issue at a time. Racialized communities, instead, need to forge relationships to become a "force to be reckoned with."

"It's not about who's most important, or whose issues are most important. They're all important in different ways. And we can only attack the issue as a whole," says Chagnon.

"Through Indigenous ways of knowing and an Indigenous lens, we see that everything is cyclical, everything is connected. When we see those pieces of interconnectivity, that's when we start to see healing and growth truly happen."

Systemic racism in Canada can be traced back to colonization, which created economic marginalization of First Nations people, displacement through the reserve system, and physical and psychological violence against Indigenous people, explains Spirit River Striped Wolf, the first Indigenous president of the Students' Association of Mount Royal University.

Through a "policy of cultural genocide," as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) stated, Indigenous people have faced "systemic ramifications throughout our society that imbue itself into the structures that currently exist," he says.

Adam North Peigan was just an infant when he and all nine of his siblings were forcibly removed from their home in Piikani First Nation by the Alberta government in the mid-1960s.

They grew up separately in the care of non-Indigenous foster families across the province, bouncing from home to home. North Peigan's childhood was characterized by abandonment issues and a lack of stability.

And there was "a lot of abuse that happened in those homes," he recalls.

The sunshine and foliage surround him as he sits on a bench by the Bow River. But North Peigan remembers a darkness in this place decades ago.

"There were times where I was homeless in the city of Calgary and I would come down to Prince's Island Park and sleep under a tree for the night," he recounts.

"I know what it's like to be homeless and having to panhandle along Stephen Avenue mall, along 17th Avenue, pushing one of those grocery carts, looking for bottles. I have lived through hell and back, but I'm still here."

Today, North Peigan is president of the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta. He founded the non-profit group to help survivors heal from the trauma suffered at the hands of the state from the 1950s to the 1980s, when more than 100,000 Indigenous children across Canada were taken from their parents by child intervention services and placed in foster homes.

But the emotional toll of the '60s Scoop didn't end when he aged out of the child welfare system and could finally return home. Parachuted back into his community, North Peigan looked around and "it was like a war zone."

Ahmad Yar says his family was recently driven out of their Airdrie home and into a hotel by acts of racism and anti-Muslim hostility from people in their neighbourhood .

OF RACISM IN OUR CITY

He began drinking heavily to cope with the weight that came with adjusting to his new reality. He found his way to Calgary, where the pattern carried on for 15 years.

"I have two older brothers that died on the streets here in Calgary to alcoholism and the lifestyle and the drug addiction. I have an older sister that lived in Calgary here, too, and she's not with me either," he says.

Many survivors of the '60s Scoop are in their 50s to 70s today.

"There are a lot of survivors that still have not made it home and they have not come as far as others have," North Peigan says. "They're still wandering the streets, they're still homeless, they're still drinking heavily, involved in drugs — but they're searching, they're looking for someone."

Trauma in Indigenous communities may not be "as outward or as obvious" as some might think, says Striped Wolf, who, like North Peigan, is from the Piikani First Nation. Both are children of residential school survivors.

Striped Wolf says the next generation has been forced to inherit lingering emotional pain.

Suicides are far too prevalent, especially among youth, he says, and some communities have become numb to frequent upticks in addiction rates.

Communities need action from those in power, Striped Wolf adds. He challenged Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on his efforts towards reconciliation at a forum during last year's federal election campaign.

"One thing I told Trudeau was residential schools were radical policy and we need radical policy to be able to deal with some of the issues that Indigenous people experience," he recalls.

"What can civil society do and what can institutions like universities do? What can companies and the police do and so forth? I think we all have a piece to play."

North Peigan says reconciliation goes beyond "putting together a committee and throwing billions of dollars to it."

He says there needs to be a movement that emphasizes "healing programs." The government can learn from the lessons of the '60s Scoop to reform the child welfare system, where Indigenous children are still overrepresented to this day.

North Peigan calls it the "millennium scoop."

"Because of what happened to the '60s Scoop, we are now in a position to have meaningful influence in child welfare reform," he says. "But the government needs to have that willingness to sit down and willingness to listen."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission published its final report in 2015.

It's one of many government-mandated action items that detail the country's push toward equity for all its citizens. The implementation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988, for example, aimed to recognize and promote "the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society."

The act may have inspired people, explains former MLA Teresa Woo-Paw, but it didn't "have teeth."

On a cool July day, Woo-Paw sits on the edge of a monument in Sien Lok Park, where part of Chinatown meets the Bow River. Just weeks later, dozens would gather there for a protest to call on officials to defund the police.

The large marble structure in the park honours Chinese pioneers who came to Canada before 1947 — a time when the country tried to actively restrict Chinese immigration.

Woo-Paw, who chairs Asian Canadians Together to End Racism, says those in the community often struggle to feel a "sense of belonging."

That anxiety has only amplified as anti-Asian sentiment grows amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Etched into the "Wall of Names" plaque, it reads: "The Chinese have been legally and culturally accepted into Canada with full rights and continue to enrich the Canadian mosaic."

Woo-Paw says Asian-Calgarians know a different reality.

> *You keep the momentum going by leaving your feelings behind. And by understanding that, like all of this work, when you open your eyes, it's going to be better.*
>
> ADORA NWOFOR, president, Black Lives Matter YYC

She says understanding the ideologies that perpetuate systems of exclusion is the first step to addressing systemic racism. It's about understanding Calgarians' deeply held beliefs of who belongs.

"Some Canadians still have to prove they are equal citizens every day," says Woo-Paw. "And there are people that actually just enjoy that privilege without actually having to do anything because of the 'right' skin colour."

She says Calgary has been slow to make meaningful change.

Before becoming an MLA in 2008, Woo-Paw facilitated diversity training in roles with organizations like the Calgary Health Region (one of the forerunners of Alberta Health Services), the Calgary Board of Education and the United Way.

Woo-Paw says she participated in the first cross-cultural training with the Calgary police in the mid-1980s, reviewed health barriers in Calgary in the early 1990s and served on the Diversity Calgary Leadership Council in the early 2000s. But she said they've been aspirational exercises at best.

"We had good initiatives but they were developed and delivered by people, dedicated individuals like front line people, nurses, police officers, social workers, but we have to ask — why did we fail?" she says.

"I think that our system has not actually committed to making systemic change."

Elected officials and institutional leaders weren't held accountable to implement changes, says Woo-Paw.

Regular reports detailing concrete measurements of progress and change are needed, with sufficient funding in place to enforce those calls to action.

And the need is urgent, says Saima Jamal, because those systems have left so many Calgarians behind for far too long.

Jamal, a well-known Calgary anti-racism activist, fears a failure to act could lead to a "clash of society."

"I truly believe there is a big conflict coming up," she says, adding it's unclear what form that could take. "We're going towards a future where there has to be something really big that happens before things calm down or things level up."

Canadians are influenced by their neighbours to the south, says Jamal, pointing to civil unrest, with media and pop culture, rife with stereotypes, that "brainwash" white people to view racialized communities as dangerous or different. But the mentality, arguably more visible in the U.S., still stews in Canada.

When it comes to inequalities at home, there's much more that local leaders can be doing.

If change ever happens, "it has to come from the top," says Jamal.

In September, counter-protesters donning clothes emblazoned with logos of far-right hate groups like Soldiers of Odin disrupted a peaceful anti-racism protest in Red Deer, chanting "all lives matter."

"Obviously, we condemn racism and racial prejudice in any manifestation," Premier Jason Kenney said when asked to unequivocally denounce such white supremacist groups.

"It is un-Canadian and un-Albertan, and I think it's unfortunate that we've got a small number of kooks who go around trying to get attention for a message of hate. I don't think we should give them the attention that they crave."

Jamal says Kenney needs to outright denounce those groups and what they stand for.

"(Politicians) are the ones that are holding the real power to bring the real change," said Jamal. "This awakening that has happened in the grassroots level, it is putting that pressure. But until or unless those people in power change, I don't know how we, as a whole society, are going to change."

But it's everyday Albertans who have the power to make a difference, says Michelle Robinson, an Indigenous organizer. She says it's their "responsibility," too, as much as it is the government's.

"Everybody's going to benefit from us having real conversations about racism, systemic racism, change with settler colonial mentality," Robinson says. "We can really create a better place."

She questions why Calgary, one of the biggest major cities by land mass, continues to expand without input from Treaty 7 chiefs and how scores of Indigenous people can continue to live without housing, as public money gets allocated elsewhere.

"I actually don't feel people are listening," she says. "I don't know if Calgarians really understand their own history."

Hope isn't lost, though.

Advocates like Robinson find inspiration in the next generation of young anti-racism leaders.

During a school day on Oct. 8, hundreds of high school students put down their pens and pencils and walked out the doors of Bishop McNally High School. Teenagers marched through Calgary's northeast streets before stopping in front of Calgary police headquarters.

Hundreds more students from schools across the city staged their own walkouts.

They pushed for meaningful action by those in power, such as the inclusion of Black history in the school curriculum.

Students shared difficult stories of being harassed by police, being racially profiled in shops and having to endure racism in the hallways of their schools. They are unwilling to stand for it any longer.

These young people are joining a growing chorus of Calgarians committed to weeding out the inequalities rooted in everyday systems — through protests, new anti-racism organizations and by holding civic leaders' feet to the fire.

The fight for his family's protection is Yar's own act of resistance.

As he combs through court documents in the gloomy hotel suite, his wife sits to his side, her head in her hands and tears streaming down her cheeks.

The family stays there for 10 days, until mounting costs force them back to the house where they feel surrounded by fear.

That "dream home" Yar built for his family seems less idyllic now, having been adapted with increased safety and privacy measures, like security cameras and outdoor hideaway screens, to ward off unwanted attention. The parents have instructed their children to stay indoors, sealed off from the outside world for their own protection.

The pain this family feels is known by many others.

Too many others.

Those fighting for racial equality in every facet of society know it's vital for their children and grandchildren.

The fight is far from over, they say, but now is not the time to remain complacent. Every person has a responsibility to step up.

Because if society fails today, the burden will fall on the shoulders of generations tomorrow.

And it's a burden too heavy to carry.

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