

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

26 September 2022 / 26 septembre 2022

Submitted by / Soumis par:

Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa

Contact Person / Personne ressource:

**Superintendent Dave Zackrias / surintendant Dave Zackrias
*ZackriasD@ottawapolice.ca***

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-22-05: RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL
SENSITIVITIES AT CALLS FOR SERVICE**

**OBJET: RÉPONSE À LA DEMANDE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS I-22-05 : APPELS
DE SERVICE COMPORTANT UN ENJEU RELIGIEUX OU RACIAL DE
NATURE DÉLICATE**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du
présent rapport à titre d'information.**

INQUIRY

Referencing the June 11, 2022, incident on Parliament Hill where two Sikh members of the public were arrested following an allegation of a threat which proved later to be unsubstantiated after further investigation, a question was raised around processes in place for officers when attending calls for service where there may be sensitivities pertaining to religion or race.

RESPONSE

The question of how to provide culturally sensitive and appropriate responses to community needs and calls for service is matter that the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) takes seriously. The Service is focused on continuous improvement in this regard, with

initiatives underway to ensure that our officers and all OPS members are culturally competent within our community and with respect to the services we provide. Within the past year we have issued foundational human rights and systemic racism training, along with anti-Indigenous racism training and, more recently, a course on cultural awareness and humility for all members. The Service has also introduced anti-Black racism training and will be launching active bystander training shortly. These learnings are part of a multi-year plan to continue to increase the cultural competency of our members. We've invested in Intercultural Development Inventory training, with a number of our members now qualified to deliver this important assessment, awareness and development tool to members across the organization. We also keep informed of recent and relevant case law decisions, and issue Case Alert Briefing Notes to keep our members informed and aware of information pertinent to providing equitable and inclusive service to our communities. An inclusive language guide is also in the final stages of development and will be available to all members shortly, as an additional resource for inclusive and respectful engagement.

Along with these efforts, it is important to remember that community safety must be at the forefront of every response the Service provides. The incident in question presented a potentially dangerous threat to the public. OPS response was appropriate and measured within the circumstance. This incident has been a reminder that we must learn to better integrate cultural awareness with our operational responses. We regularly review calls of this nature, and will incorporate this learning going forward. Since the incident, we have engaged in discussions with the Ottawa Sikh Society and the World Sikh Organization and have gained more knowledge about what occurred and the impacts it had on the community. We have gained better insights and improved relationships with those organizations which will assist us moving ahead. We've learned that we must take greater situational context into consideration. Operational commanders and Platoon Inspectors now engage with appropriate subject matter experts for support and intervention during these types of incidents, and we continue on a journey of continued learning and improvement.