

Sunday, July 26th, 2015

Dear Members and the community abroad,

On Sunday July 5th, Andrew Loku, a Black identified South Sudanese immigrant was shot and killed by a member of the Toronto police in his home while under mental distress. When his life was taken, Loku had been living in a complex subsidized by the Canadian Mental Health Association for affordable housing for people living with mental health issues. Due to the various systems of oppression that permeate within our communities, our society, and more broadly in the global context, we understand that this is more than a result of one apathetic cop. His murder was a result of a systemic issue of anti-black racism embedded in the justice system. Since 1988, more than 50% of the victims killed by police officers who had been living with mental illness were black men.

Black people and allies alike are aware of the disproportionate use of force and antagonism toward certain bodies. Further, we have seen countless instances where the justice system has failed to serve and protect marginalized identities living with disabilities. Sammy Yatim was an 18 year-old racialized man living with a mental illness, and was killed by a Toronto police officer in July 2013. As a result, Frank Iacobucci drafted a report of 84 recommendations made to the Toronto police, on how to handle *Encounters with People in Crisis*. Two years after the report was drafted, none of the recommendations have been adapted, and none were used at the time of Andrew Loku's murder.

Anti-blackness is a system of oppression based on socio-economic, political, and historical discrimination against and the degradation of Black bodies, which manifests itself overtly, covertly and institutionally. The Scarborough Campus Students' Union is mandated to ensuring equity in all aspects of university life, as well as working towards an accessible post-secondary education that is free of social and economic barriers. Black students face a multiplicity of these barriers, including discrimination and fear based on race, both on and off campus. It is our collective responsibility to challenge these systems of oppression and support marginalized students, with the ultimate goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination on campus and in our communities. It is with this understanding that the Scarborough Campus Students' Union endorses the Black Lives Matter movement to end police brutality -- a reality students face across the nation. Further, the Scarborough Campus Students' Union condemns the racist acts and policies that continue to be enforced by the Toronto police, and support the recommendations put forward by Black Lives Matter Toronto Coalition.

In Solidarity,

The Scarborough Campus Students' Union