
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Ministry of Attorney General

2025AG0012-000126

Feb. 20, 2025

New committee begins work to dismantle systemic racism

VICTORIA – A new provincial committee has begun work to remove systemic barriers that make access to government programs and services challenging for racialized people in British Columbia.

“Undoing the legacy of racism in our government is more important now than ever,” said Niki Sharma, Attorney General. “The work of this committee will impact all of government’s programs and services going forward. I thank the appointees for stepping up to help improve the lives of all British Columbians.”

The Provincial Committee on Anti-Racism’s first meeting is taking place in Vancouver on Wednesday, Feb. 19, and Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025. The committee will continue meeting throughout the year. The committee is chaired by Hasan Alam, a lawyer with the B.C. General Employees’ Union (BCGEU). An additional 10 anti-racism advocates were selected for the committee by the Ministry of Attorney General through a public application process that identified racialized people in British Columbia with expertise in addressing systemic racism.

“This committee is the result of decades of advocacy by racialized communities to dismantle systemic racism in B.C.,” said Hasan Alam, chair of the Provincial Committee on Anti-Racism. “My fellow committee members and I are committed to ensuring the voices of those most affected by racism are heard loud and clear through meaningful engagement with marginalized communities across the province, so we can finally move toward building a more equitable and just B.C. for everyone.”

While the Anti-Racism Data Committee advises government on how data can be used to identify systemic racism, the Provincial Committee on Anti-Racism will use that information to take action toward dismantling systemic racism. In addition, the committee will:

- help develop anti-racism training standards for public bodies;
- provide input on public education and awareness strategies about anti-racism; and
- consult with public bodies and engage racialized community members on implementing the Anti-Racism Act.

“Systemic racism cannot be dismantled without us all working together,” said Jessie Sunner, parliamentary secretary for anti-racism initiatives. “We look forward to collaborating with this committee to create a B.C. where everyone has the same access to the government services and programs.”

Indigenous perspectives on the Anti-Racism Act and the action plan will be incorporated through direct government-to-government consultation and co-operation with First Nations, the First Nations Leadership Council, the Alliance of Modern Treaty Nations and Métis Nation

BC. The Anti-Racism Act requires the action plan to be published by June 1, 2026.

Learn More:

For more about the Anti-Racism Act, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/30655>

To read the full Anti-Racism Act, visit:

<https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/24022>

For more about the Anti-Racism Data Committee, visit: <https://antiracism.gov.bc.ca/data-act/anti-racism-data-committee/>

A backgrounder follows.

Contact:

Ministry of Attorney General
Media Relations
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BACKGROUND

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Provincial Committee on Anti-Racism member biographies

Vinu Abraham Chetipurackal, founder and former co-chairperson, Deaf IBPOC committee, Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf:

Chetipurackal is an active member of the Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf. His role involves promoting racial equity within the Deaf community by fostering respectful and peaceful relationships.

Denese Caroline Espeut-Post, member, Mental Health Review Board and Health Professions Review Board:

Espeut-Post previously worked for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions as a prosecutor and was a director of the board of the BC College of Social Workers. She was called to the British Columbia bar in June 2009.

Hermender Singh Kailley, secretary-treasurer, BC Federation of Labour:

Kailley is a passionate and unwavering advocate for workers' rights, social justice and anti-racism. His work has been marked by his strong advocacy for justice and inclusion, and his focus on upraising the voices of workers from excluded and marginalized communities.

Athena Presquito Madan, assistant professor, department of sociology, University of Victoria:

Madan has 10 years of experience in health equity and evaluation research and 18 years of experience in humanitarian action. She has worked with various organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and provincial governments, to grassroots non-government organizations, providing subject-matter expertise on anti-racism.

Sireen Suleiman El-Nashar, regulated Canadian immigration consultant, and executive director, Zaytuna Services Society:

El-Nashar is a seasoned community advocate with more than 15 years of experience supporting newcomers and refugees. As the executive director of Zaytuna Services Society, she leads initiatives that empower B.C.'s Arabic-speaking and Middle Eastern communities through education, advocacy and culturally responsive services.

Carmel Ayala Tanaka, community engagement professional:

Tanaka is a community engagement professional. She founded JQT Vancouver (a Jewish queer and trans charitable non-profit), the Cross Cultural Walking Tours and the Jewpanese Project. She holds a masters degree in public health.

Kimberley Lauren Wong, program manager, hua foundation:

Wong designs culturally appropriate and anti-racist programs for Asian diasporic youth through their non-profit work in education, mental-health advocacy and social policy. They are a founding board member of Chinatown Today and were the past co-chair of the City of Vancouver's Chinatown Legacy Stewardship Group.

Hasan Alam, staff lawyer, B.C. General Employees' Union (BCGEU):

Alam practises in the areas of labour and human rights law. He is also the president of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association. In March 2016, he helped co-found the Islamophobia Legal Assistance Hotline, a free and confidential service that offers legal support to individuals impacted by Islamophobia.

Christine Marie Añonuevo, executive director, Upper Skeena Development Centre:

Añonuevo is the executive director of the Upper Skeena Development Centre in Hazelton on Gitxsan territory. She works in sustainable community economic development at the intersection of food sovereignty, renewable energy initiatives, employment services and housing.

Kiyoko Judy Hanazawa, community advocate:

Hanazawa works with the Greater Vancouver Japanese Citizens' Association and is a representative at Act2EndRacism National Network. She used to work for the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development and was a member of the British Columbia College of Social Workers.

Ajay Patel, president and chief executive officer, Vancouver Community College:

Patel is an active community member and was previously the chair for the Vancouver Sport Strategy, vice-chair of Sport BC, and a director at BC Recreation and Parks Association, BC Athlete Voice and SBC Insurance.

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