

A YEAR OF RACIST ATTACKS: ANTI-ASIAN RACISM ACROSS CANADA ONE YEAR INTO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Chinese Canadian National Council
Toronto Chapter



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the survey respondents for sharing their experiences with us. Retelling our experiences of racism can be traumatizing but we hope that by bringing together our experiences we can raise our collective voices to speak up the growing issue of anti-Asian racism and its impact on our communities. Let us work together towards anti-Asian racism and all forms of hate and prejudice.

This project would not have been possible without the contributions of the Steering Committee organizations including: The Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNC Toronto), Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice, the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, and the Civic Engagement Network Society Of Canada.

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We look to a resilient international network of anti-racist organizing, activism and solidarity in addressing the waves of anti-Asian racism, including groups in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia. Thank you all who continue this collective fight before, during and after this pandemic. Specific thanks to STOP AAPI HATE whose early survey was an inspiration and informed the development of our platform and our survey.

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TOWARDS RACIAL JUSTICE: A STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

We recognize our work against racial violence takes place on stolen Indigenous land. It is our collective responsibility to pay respect and recognize that we are here because this land is occupied. Out of respect for the rights of Indigenous people, we recognize our colonial histories and present-day implications to honour, protect and sustain this land. We recognize these histories and commit to being active participants in supporting decolonization and further advancing the rights and sovereignty of the Indigenous peoples and their nations.

As racialized settlers, we write this report in what we come to call as the city of Toronto, in the Dish With One Spoon Territory. The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishnaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect.

We recognize how anti-Black racism, Islamophobia and other forms of racism and discrimination require urgent attention and that we must all commit to eradicating these types of systemic injustice in order for all our communities to achieve social justice. We also recognize how Asian communities must strive to continue work in support of other racialized communities and their demands for racial and social justice and that we must commit to doing the work in our own communities to address and combat these types of discrimination and injustices.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- From March 10th, 2020 to February 28th, 2021 there were 1150 cases of racist attacks from across Canada reported on our web platforms with 835 cases reported on covidracism.ca and 315 cases reported to elimin8hate.org. Data analysis was conducted using data up to December 31st, 2020.
- 40% and 44% of all cases of racist attacks and incidents were reported from Ontario and British Columbia respectively.
- 11% of all reported attacks and incidents contained a violent physical assault and/or unwanted physical contact.
- 10% of all attacks and incidents included a form of assault through being coughed at and/or being spat on.
- Those who identify as women represent close to 60% of all reported cases, while those who identify as men are twice as likely to report a physical assault.
- While the majority of those impacted are East Asians (accounting for 84% of all reports), Southeast Asians also accounted for 6% of all reported incidents.
- In addition to public spaces, spaces in the food sector (grocery stores, restaurants etc.) were a prominent site of racist attacks accounting for almost 1/5th of all racist attacks/incidents.
- Children and adolescents/youth (under 18) and Older Adults/seniors (55+) were much more likely to report being physically assaulted (42% and 57% more likely respectively) and more likely to report being coughed at and spat on (233% and 250%, respectively) than those who are young adults (Ages 19-35).
- Individuals who reported an incident in Chinese were much more likely to report suffering from emotional distress (34% more likely) and experiencing physical assault (100% more likely) than those who reported an incident in English.
- Individuals who suffered racist attacks and incidents wanted more public education, collective action against racism, policy changes and more individual support.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are arrived at from the data collected from our platform and on-going work in supporting the community within the rising waves of anti-Asian racism.

- A. The severity and pervasiveness of anti-Asian racism reported requires immediate attention from all levels of government. Federal, provincial and municipal governments and all political parties must recognize anti-Asian racism as a distinct area of discrimination that requires immediate action. In particular, the government must:
 - a. Recognize the importance of anti-racism education by committing financial and other resources to community-led organizations to carry out anti-racism education.
 - b. Provide comprehensive, community-based, culturally specific, collective and individual social supports that would be accessible for those from diverse backgrounds and of all language abilities to ensure that victims and survivors of racist attacks and anti-Asian racism can receive the support they need so that our communities can recover holistically.
 - c. Implement comprehensive policies to prevent the spread of misinformation in media and social media which incites negative public discourse and further provokes racism (for example, policies proposed by CCNC-SJ).
 - d. Fund more educational initiatives about the long history of Chinese Canadians and Asian Canadians in Canada, their historical experiences with racism and their contributions to Canada.
- B. Recognize that while anti-Chinese and anti-Asian racism happens to anyone who is perceived to be from such a group, adopt a targeted approach based on intersectional equity, to ensure those who are most vulnerable are protected. Evidence from our data suggests specific attention needs to be paid to: seniors, those with limited English fluency, low income individuals, women, frontline workers, individuals without permanent immigration status, LGBTQ+ community members, those facing mental health issues and others.

- C. In light of the prevalence of racist attacks in restaurants, food and grocery establishments, accounting for almost 1/5th of all reported incidents, and the high numbers of Chinese and Asian Canadian essential workers in this sector, specific attention directed towards the protection of workers, operators and customers in these areas is critical.
- a. Recognize that workers and small businesses in the Chinese and Asian food sector have been impacted doubly: not only by the lockdown measures and economic damage resulting but also from racist attacks and racialized stigmatization of the sector. Provide support to these small businesses and workers in these sectors by ensuring there is robust support and a comprehensive recovery support strategy.
 - b. Equip community, labour and businesses groups from Asian communities with the resources to support local businesses, workers and consumers in responding to racist attacks in these workplaces.
- D. Chinese and Asian Canadians also face racism as workers. As frontline and essential workers during the pandemic, they are vulnerable to racist attacks and the same vulnerabilities that frontline and essential workers face. Fighting anti-Asian racism is also about recognizing how systemic inequity renders racialized communities more likely to be frontline and essential workers, and also ensuring that these workers have the protections they need:
- a. Ensure all workers have access to legislated paid sick days: seven permanent paid sick days in regular times and 14 paid sick days during health emergencies.
 - b. Ensure satisfactory income support during and after the pandemic for all.
 - c. Ensure status on arrival and implement a regularization program to grant permanent resident status to all migrants and people with precarious immigration status.

