

Police Governance and Human Rights

Insights from the Peel Police Service Board's Governance
and Human Rights Committee Community Consultations

December 3, 2024



Executive Overview

In 2019, the Peel Police Service Board (PPSB) and Peel Regional Police collaborated with the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) to launch The Human Rights Project, aimed at examining and addressing discriminatory practices within the police service.

As part of this initiative the PPSB formed the Governance and Human Rights Committee (GHR) in October 2022, to incorporate a human rights perspective into police governance.

To assist in redefining the committee's objectives and reviewing policies, the PPSB enlisted Professor Akwasi Owusu-Bempah, an academic who examines the intersections of race, crime and criminal justice, and Dr. Alex Luscombe, who recently defended his Ph.D. thesis in Criminology at the University of Toronto. The committee's efforts included a commitment to engaging with residents and community organizations, and in July 2023, the committee announced a series of community consultations to discuss key issues related to police governance and human rights.

These sessions, held on September 5, 2023, October 3, 2023, and February 20, 2024, marked a significant step in exploring the intersection of police governance and human rights, and in hearing from community organizations and leaders about the systemic challenges related to policing in the Peel Region. The consultations were instrumental in gathering a wide range of perspectives on enhancing policing practices, community safety, and overall well-being.

The consultations conducted by the GHR Committee were extensive and involved a wide array of stakeholders. These included local organizations from Peel, as well as provincial and national organizations, covering a diverse range of interests and sectors. Participants featured civil liberties and human rights organizations, groups focusing on racial issues, and representatives from various places of worship and faith communities. The discussions also drew in government and quasi-governmental officials, community advocacy groups, and organizations dedicated to social services. The latter encompassed organizations involved in mental health, disability support, food security, women shelters and refugee assistance. Participants from the education, legal, and technology sectors provided additional perspectives often overlooked in the police governance and police operations space. Moreover, the consultations engaged parties who could offer insights into the justice system, including aspects of detention and reintegration. This comprehensive approach ensured that the committee could hear from a broad spectrum of voices, crucial for shaping policies and practices through a human rights lens in policing.

To enhance the effectiveness of the consultations, presenters were encouraged to submit a written version of their presentation in advance. This preparation allowed the PPSB to review detailed submissions and contribute to more comprehensive discussions of the diverse viewpoints represented. Presenters were specifically encouraged to focus on the lived experiences of their communities and stakeholder groups, highlighting how these experiences intersect with issues of policing, governance, and human rights. This focus was intended to provide the PPSB with real-world insights that could inform the development of its policies and strategic planning.

The GHR Committee outlined several key objectives for the presentations. These included helping Board members better understand the needs and concerns of the community regarding policing and governance, building trust between the community and both the PPSB and the police service, promoting fairness and

equity in policing practices, especially addressing systemic racism, including anti-Black and anti-Indigenous discrimination.

While the PPSB regularly offers community members and organizations the opportunity to make deputations on agenda items during public Board meetings throughout the year, these specific consultations offered a broader and more in-depth platform for engagement. This approach allowed stakeholders to present detailed information, share personal experiences, and provide expert feedback, all aimed at supporting their perspectives and informing police governance policies.

To optimize the impact of the presentations, Chief Nishan Duraiappah and his leadership team were invited to attend all three consultation sessions as observers. This allowed them to gain direct insights into the community's concerns and suggestions, and to ensure that leadership was fully involved, enhancing the effectiveness of the PPSB's ongoing strategic planning and policy development. Additionally, Professor Akwasi Owusu-Bempah and Dr. Alex Luscome were present at these sessions. Their role was to assist the PPSB in evaluating the presentations and to consider the insights gathered in shaping the PPSB's ongoing governance and oversight activities from an academic perspective.

The consultations elicited a strong response from the community, demonstrating significant interest in participating in the process. Stakeholders took advantage of this opportunity by submitting a variety of materials. These submissions included detailed reports, visual presentations, and comprehensive research previously conducted by participating organizations. Some stakeholders also conducted new surveys and gathered current views from their groups specifically for this consultation, ensuring that the PPSB received relevant and up-to-date information.

To uphold transparency and foster inclusivity, the consultation sessions were made accessible to the public. These sessions were live streamed on the PPSB's official website (peelpoliceboard.ca), ensuring that anyone interested could view the proceedings in real time. Additionally, recordings of these consultations are archived on the website, allowing for ongoing access and serving as a resource for future reference.

This report aims to summarize the specific discussions, thematic analysis, and collective insights drawn from these consultations. It serves as a foundational document that can guide the PPSB in making informed decisions to improve police oversight and policy, which directly impacts certain police operations, to ensure they are equitable, just, and respectful of all community members' rights.

Following the positive outcomes of the initial consultations, the GHR Committee has decided to make these engagements a continuous feature to ensure sustained learning and feedback. Moving forward, the committee plans to conduct consultations on a regular basis, potentially focusing on specific themes or issues that are particularly relevant to current events or significant advancements in policing.

These targeted consultations will aim to understand the evolving impacts on police governance and human rights. By aligning these sessions with current developments and innovations in the field of policing, the committee intends to keep the consultations dynamic and responsive to new challenges and opportunities. This approach will help the committee adapt and refine its strategies and policies to better meet the needs of the community while upholding and promoting human rights within the realm of policing.

Consultation Framework

The consultations held by the PPSB were designed to specifically address the mandate of police governance, in alignment with the requirements set forth in the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* (CSPA). This legislation mandates that a police board must ensure the provision of adequate and effective policing within its jurisdiction. Key responsibilities under the Act include employing police service members, recruiting and appointing the chief of police and any deputy chiefs, preparing and adopting a strategic plan for policing services, and establishing the police budget, among other responsibilities.

The PPSB's strategic plan is expected to outline both quantitative and qualitative performance objectives and indicators. These objectives cover a range of functions including community-based crime prevention initiatives, community patrol, and criminal investigation services. Another significant aspect of the plan is measuring community satisfaction with the policing services provided, among other key goals.

Furthermore, the *CSPA* stipulates the necessity for community consultations as part of the strategic planning process. These consultations are meant to capture the community's needs and concerns regarding policing, and the strategic plan must demonstrate how these insights have been integrated and addressed.

In this context, the PPSB prepared a series of questions for presenters to consider when contributing to the consultations. These questions, which are listed below, were designed to guide the discussion towards meaningful insights that could directly inform and enhance the strategic planning process. The intent was to ensure the final strategic plan not only aligns with statutory requirements but also reflects the specific needs, concerns, and aspirations of the community it serves.

- What are the primary concerns or issues your community has in relation to police interactions?
- How can policies and practices be improved to better serve your community?
- Are there specific areas of police training or awareness that would benefit your community?
- What is your perception of the current state of police governance by the Peel Police Service Board?
- How do human rights factor into the current police governance framework?
- Which human rights priorities should be at the forefront of police governance strategy?
- How can mechanisms be established to hold police accountable to human rights principles?
- How can communication and collaboration between the police and your community be enhanced?
- What best practices can the Board adopt to ensure effective policing?
- What measures can gauge the police service's alignment with human rights principles?
- How can community trust and collaboration with the Police Board be strengthened?
- Looking ahead, how do you envision an ideal relationship between the Police Board and your community?
- What immediate steps are necessary to realize this vision?

What We Heard

Over the past several years, the PPSB and Peel Regional Police have actively implemented numerous recommendations and actions aimed at addressing systemic discrimination within policing. These efforts have led to substantial changes and tangible outcomes, reflecting a committed shift towards a more progressive, human rights-centered approach to policing. Initiatives such as enhanced community engagement, human rights and de-escalation training for officers, the adoption of body-worn cameras, and the introduction of a new mental health crisis response strategy have contributed to noticeable improvements in community trust.

In documenting 'what we heard' at the consultations in this report, the Board has consciously chosen not to reconcile these views with the changes implemented over the last several years. This approach, consistent with the method employed during the consultations themselves, emphasizes the Board's commitment to respecting and considering the lived experiences and perspectives shared by the participants. While many examples provided by presenters have been identified by the PPSB and the police service in the past and progress has been made to address them, the Board remained committed to fully respect and consider the lived experiences and perspectives of the participants, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued in their own right.

During the consultations, we noted that some of the views or feedback, although grounded in research or lived experiences, were not specific to Peel but pertained to law enforcement practices more broadly or to other police jurisdictions specifically. The Board has chosen not to discount these perspectives because they provide an opportunity to learn from broader law enforcement experiences. By considering these examples, the Board believes it can gain insights that will aid in further improving police governance and policing practices within Peel.

GHR Consultation Findings

Since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2020 by Peel Regional Police (PRP), the PPSB and the OHRC to address systemic discrimination in policing and restore trust with Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities, PRP has made meaningful and substantive changes to all areas of the Service. A summary of the deliverables completed and those which are ongoing are described in the 'Human Rights Project – Alignment' sections corresponding to each of the GHR categories below.

1. Strengthening Board Governance

Presenters made numerous observations directly relevant to the Board's governance mandate, along with suggestions and feedback concerning the police service that are also crucial for the Board's governance role, such as enhancing transparency and accountability. Accordingly, the feedback was synthesized to underscore its relevance to improving the Board's governance and accountability.

The consultations highlighted the critical importance of strengthening board governance and enhancing the competence of board members to ensure effective oversight and leadership within the PPSB. Presenters focused on several key areas to improve governance practices, and the skill sets of board members to better serve the community and guide the police service towards greater accountability and efficiency.

It was noted that the effectiveness of the police service, and consequently the board and its governance, can be greatly enhanced by ensuring diversity in its membership. A diverse board is more likely to understand and reflect the community it serves, leading to more nuanced and effective governance.

Feedback included the need for ongoing education and training for board members. This training should cover a wide range of topics including ethical governance, human rights, and community policing. The objective is to ensure board members are well-informed and equipped to make decisions that align with best practices and community expectations.

It was also suggested that the board actively engage with a broad spectrum of the community to gather diverse perspectives and feedback. It was further suggested this engagement could be facilitated through public forums, stakeholder meetings, collaboration with community groups, or by establishing an advisory committee to the board.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: N/A

Summary of work in progress:

To address systemic racism in policing, PPSB and PRP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the OHRC to implement agreed upon recommendations under the seven principles of the OHRC.

Significant highlights:

Formed the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (ARAC) comprised of members from Peel's diverse community to review and provide input / validate the implementation of the agreed upon recommendations.

Ongoing community engagement via in-person meetings and surveys.

[Click here](#) for a complete list of recommendations.

2. Systemic Discrimination in Policing

Presenters discussed various forms of systemic discrimination that impact visible minority communities in Peel. Several presenters discussed Islamophobia as a form of systemic racism, highlighting its impact on the Muslim community. Other presenters discussed the challenges faced by the Black community in interactions with police, including racial profiling and over representation in use of force. The board heard about historic over-policing of Black communities and the community's desire for tailored strategies that include disengagement when necessary. Another presenter highlighted the compounded discrimination faced by racialized children with disabilities, stressing the importance of recognizing these intersecting forms of discrimination to adequately support affected communities.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #:11, 12, 14, 36, 42, 46, 48, 49

Summary of work in progress:

The work specified below is ongoing.

Review and update of directives:

- Reflect OHRC's policy on eliminating racial profiling.
- Racial profiling could occur even if race is only one factor used to single out an individual.
- No member shall devote less time to an investigation based on colour, race, religion, etc.

Training / Implementation of:

- Five pillars of Human Rights-focused training:
 - Pillar 1: History of Racism in Canada
 - Pillar 2: Unconscious Bias Awareness
 - Pillar 3: Procedural Justice
 - Pillar 4: Trauma-Informed Approach
 - Pillar 5: Legislative Authorities
- Duty to intervene.
- Through data collection and training experts, identify key performance indicators (KPIs) for early warning.
- Notify a supervisor of any observed activity or complaint on bias or racial profiling.

While the work continues to update PRP's directives, ARAC sub-committees have been formed to oversee the implementation of the recommendations. The Policy sub-committee's mandate is to review the changes to PRP directives with a human rights lens and ensure alignment to the OHRC's recommendations. In addition, PRP plans to engage an independent verifier to validate the implementation of the recommendations.

[Click here](#) for a complete list of recommendations.

3. Tackling Hate Crimes

Many of the consultations highlighted the serious issue of hate crimes and the need for an effective response to prevent and address these incidents in the community. Presenters discussed the multifaceted nature of hate crimes, which often target individuals based on race, religion, sexual orientation, and other identities, and stressed the profound impact these crimes have on victims and the broader community.

A key theme was the importance of recognizing hate crimes and improving the mechanisms for reporting them. It was noted that victims often hesitate to report hate crimes due to fear of retaliation, distrust in law enforcement, or uncertainty about the process. Presenters advocated for the development of accessible reporting channels that are sensitive and responsive to the needs of diverse and affected communities. This could include the use of technology to facilitate anonymous reporting and outreach programs to educate the public about the importance of reporting hate incidents.

Additionally, facilitating both direct and indirect reporting channels was emphasized by presenters, which would involve outreach events and collaborations with organizations to create accessible reporting toolkits for community leaders and members. Simplifying the process for reporting hate crimes is seen to be crucial and it was suggested this can be achieved by making it accessible through familiar institutions like places of worship, community centres and schools, where individuals feel more comfortable. Such settings would provide a safer and more familiar environment for victims, potentially increasing the likelihood of reporting incidents. This strategy not only makes the reporting process less intimidating but may encourage community participation in safeguarding their environments against hate crimes.

The need for specialized training for police officers to identify, investigate, and manage hate crimes effectively was also emphasized. Presenters pointed out that law enforcement must understand the unique aspects of hate crimes compared to other types of offenses, particularly the deep emotional and psychological impact on the victim and the community. Presenters also suggested that police training should also cover cultural competency, bias awareness, and strategies for engaging with communities commonly targeted by hate.

Several speakers discussed the role of community engagement in preventing hate crimes. This involves building strong relationships between Peel Regional Police and communities, particularly those vulnerable to hate crimes. By fostering dialogue and trust, police can gain insights into the concerns of these communities and work collaboratively to develop effective prevention strategies.

It was suggested that Peel Regional Police could enhance the effectiveness of combating online hate crimes through the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. These advanced technologies can efficiently monitor and analyze online hate content across various digital platforms, helping to identify and categorize hate speech, which aids decision-makers in addressing it more effectively. Furthermore, AI can be utilized to track and understand the networks behind online hate, connecting data from public sources and social media platforms to provide deeper insights into the spread and influence of hate groups.

The importance of robust data collection and analysis was highlighted as essential for understanding the scope and nature of hate crimes. Accurate data allows for the identification of trends and patterns, which

can inform policy development and resource allocation. Presenters called for comprehensive data collection systems that include details about the motivations behind hate crimes, the demographics of victims and perpetrators, and the outcomes of reported incidents.

Suggestions were made for advocating for improved legislative and policy frameworks to ensure that they provide adequate protection against hate crimes and hold perpetrators accountable. This includes considering enhancements to existing laws to address new forms of hate crimes, such as those perpetrated online or those involving emerging extremist groups.

The need for ongoing public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives was underscored. These efforts should aim to raise awareness about the harm caused by hate crimes and promote values of inclusivity and respect across the community. Education programs can also empower individuals and communities to stand against hate and provide them with the tools to support victims.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: N/A

Summary of work in progress:

Addressed through the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) strategy and continues to evolve through the following initiatives:

- Countering Hate in Peel Committee
- Hate crime reassurance protocol
- Combatting extremism and hate

4. Cultural Sensitivity and Competency Gap

The presenters shared insights into perceived gaps in cultural understanding and awareness within Peel Regional Police. They highlighted concerns that cultural sensitivity gaps might lead to policing practices that are inadvertently perceived as disrespectful or neglectful of the cultural and religious fabric of Peel's diverse communities. This perception, they noted, could erode trust and pose challenges to effective community policing initiatives. The importance of comprehensive training for police officers was a recurrent theme, emphasizing the need for education in cultural sensitivity, human rights, intersectionality, and trauma-informed practices. Presenters noted that such training should not only be ongoing but also be reflective of community feedback to remain effective and relevant.

A particular emphasis was placed on the need for police officers to be aware of the cultural practices, religious beliefs, and languages of the diverse populations in Peel Region. This includes being aware of

cultural nuances that might affect interactions, such as an officer's ability to recognize and respect the background and lived experiences of many refugee families. Police interactions, the presenters suggested, should be sensitive to cultural norms around family dynamics, ensuring that interventions do not inadvertently disrespect or disregard the importance of family unity. This approach helps to maintain the respect and dignity of families, fostering a sense of cooperation and trust with Peel Regional Police.

Moreover, the presentations highlighted the critical role of diversity within the police service itself. There was a strong call for recruitment strategies that not only attract but also retain officers from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds to better reflect.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: 11, 12, 14, 32

Summary of work in progress:

- Release data annually / HRP Report ([click here for 2022 and 2023 Reports](#))
- Community engagements
- Media releases / PRP HRP website
- Direct email to the HRP Project
- ARAC to provide a community perspective on the implementation of recommendations
- Awareness of recommendations through the Anti-Black Racism & Systemic Discrimination (ABR-SD) Collective.
- Disparity reduction plan
- Mandatory human rights training including:
 - Implicit Bias awareness is being weaved through all aspects of training from a self-awareness perspective. This will increase an officer's knowledge, skills and abilities in the following five pillars:
 - History of racism in Canada
 - Unconscious bias awareness
 - Procedural justice
 - Trauma-informed approach
 - Authorities

5. Community Engagement and Building Trust

The necessity of authentic, meaningful engagement between Peel Regional Police and community groups emerged as an important effort for fostering mutual respect, understanding, and collaborative partnership. There were concerns that some existing engagement efforts are viewed as surface-level or sporadic, calling for a more strategic, consistent, and genuine approach to cultivating relationships and trust.

It was suggested that police services should regularly engage with community representatives through forums, advisory committees, and regular meetings, which can serve as platforms for open dialogue and feedback. This engagement is not only about listening but also about acting on the concerns expressed by community members to demonstrate a commitment to change.

Several presentations also pointed out the necessity of greater transparency in police operations, especially concerning incidents involving the use of force or accusations of misconduct. Notwithstanding legislative or regulatory restrictions, transparency in these matters, including public disclosure of investigations and outcomes, was seen as essential for maintaining public trust and credibility.

Furthermore, the role of community policing was underscored, where officers are encouraged to build relationships within the communities they serve, moving beyond the enforcement role to become integral, trusted members of the community. This approach includes officers being present at community events, participating in local initiatives, and being accessible and approachable to the residents.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: 3, 4, 5, 6, 32

Summary of work in progress:

- Community consultations
- Surveys
- Open invitation for public participation
- Media releases / PRP HRP website
- Direct email to the HRP Project
- ARAC to provide a community perspective on the implementation of recommendations.
- Awareness of recommendations through the ABR-SD Collective.

6. Response to Mental Health Crisis and Individuals with Disability

The prevailing provincial legislative model of police involvement in mental health crisis interventions has been critically evaluated for some time. There is a palpable demand for a shift towards a community-based, supportive approach that emphasizes voluntary assistance and minimizes law enforcement interaction, advocating for a paradigm shift in addressing mental health crises and interacting with individuals with disabilities.

Presenters emphasized the importance of a compassionate, non-coercive approach that respects the rights and dignity of individuals experiencing mental health issues or disabilities. It was stressed that police responses under the Mental Health Act, often involving forced or involuntary hospitalization, can exacerbate the distress of those involved and lead to outcomes that are not safe.

Discussions focused on the development and implementation of alternative, community-based mental health crisis response models. These models advocate for a rights-respecting, health-centered approach, leveraging expertise from mental health professionals rather than relying primarily on police intervention. Presenters suggested that such models should follow best practices and guidelines established by health organizations and be informed by decades of mental health support experience.

It was suggested that police officers receive training beyond mental health crisis but also to recognize that non-verbal behavior in individuals with disabilities can stem from a variety of underlying causes including autism, but also hearing impairments, trauma, social anxiety, or language barriers. Such training should not only be mandatory but also integrated into the ongoing professional development of officers to ensure they are equipped to handle such calls with compassion and effectiveness.

Presenters noted the need for partnerships between Peel Regional Police and mental health and disability organizations. These partnerships could facilitate a more coordinated response during crises, ensuring that individuals receive appropriate care and support. The goal is to minimize the involvement of law enforcement in situations where health care providers are better suited to lead.

There was also a focus on the broader societal context that influences mental health and individuals with disabilities, including the need for adequate funding for upstream services, public education and awareness, and the elimination of stigma associated with mental health issues and disabilities.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: 45,50,52,55,57

Summary of work in progress:

- Mobile Community Crisis Rapid Response Team (MCCRT) program
- Civilian-led mental health crisis responders
- Development of a mental health strategy
- Mental health training for members

7. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Response

The consultations emphasized the need for community-based initiatives that educate the public about the signs of domestic violence, the resources available for help, and strategies for safe intervention when someone suspects abuse. Engaging community leaders, educators, and healthcare providers in these efforts was seen as essential to create a broad network of support. The importance of multi-agency collaboration was emphasized, with a call for better coordination between police, social services, healthcare providers, and non-profit organizations.

Presenters highlighted the significant challenge language barriers pose in the effective reporting and management of IPV cases. Victims who do not speak English as a first language may struggle to communicate their experiences, seek help, or understand their rights and the resources available to them.

Simplifying the reporting process was another key theme, with an emphasis on making it as accessible and non-intimidating as possible for victims. There was feedback to streamline the reporting process to minimize the burden on the victim. This includes reducing the number of times a victim must recount their story to different officials, which can be re-traumatizing.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: N/A

Summary of work in progress:

- Part of the Intimate Partner Violence Response strategy
- Part of the CSWB strategy
- Included in the South Asian Community Engagement (SACE) strategy

8. Engaging with Youth

The consultations underscored the importance of engaging with youth in general as well as with at-risk youth, and for Peel Regional Police to engage with the school system.

Presenters discussed the implementation of educational programs that police officers could deliver in schools on topics impacting youth. These programs should be age-appropriate and designed to foster a positive relationship between youth and Peel Regional Police from an early age.

The importance of intervention and diversion programs was also stressed, particularly for at-risk youth, especially programs that divert young offenders from the juvenile justice system into community support and educational programs.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: N/A

Summary of work in progress:

- Included in the CSWB strategy
- Youth Engagement Initiative

9. Food Insecurity and Law Enforcement

The consultations highlighted the critical issues of food security and hunger within the community, emphasizing the complex interactions these issues have with law enforcement and overall community well-being. Presenters discussed various strategies and initiatives aimed at enhancing food security and reducing hunger, recognizing the significant impact that access to nutritious food has on public health, crime rates, and social stability.

Presenters advocated for the integration of food security initiatives into community policing strategies. This approach involves police participating in or supporting local food drives and partnerships with food banks and other non-profit organizations that work to alleviate hunger. By directly engaging in these initiatives, Peel Regional Police can build stronger community ties and address the root causes of food-related issues.

The need for a collaborative approach with health and social services was emphasized, highlighting the multi-faceted nature of food insecurity. Collaborations can include joint initiatives that not only address immediate food needs but also tackle underlying issues such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of affordable housing, which are often connected to food insecurity.

More directly, it was suggested that offering food to individuals, especially survivors of violence, before taking their statement can help clear confusion and provide comfort during potentially traumatic experiences. This approach emphasizes the human element of policing and can greatly assist in calming and stabilizing situations.

Training for police officers on issues related to food security was suggested, including educating officers on how nutritional deficiencies, such as low potassium, can mimic conditions like dementia and lead to erratic behavior. This knowledge can inform more compassionate and effective responses to individuals in distress.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: N/A

Summary of work in progress:

- Included in the CSWB strategy
- Included in the SACE strategy

10. Foreign Interference and Public Safety

The consultations highlighted the growing concern over foreign interference and its impact on public safety within the community. Presenters discussed how international tensions and conflicts can manifest locally, influencing community dynamics and potentially leading to incidents that affect public safety.

Presenters raised the need for heightened awareness for officers and education about the nature of foreign interference and its potential effects on local communities. Presenters suggested that law enforcement and community leaders should be equipped with the knowledge to identify signs of foreign interference, such as targeted disinformation campaigns, exploitation of diaspora communities, or manipulation of local political and social issues.

The consultations stressed the importance of working closely with communities, especially those potentially targeted by foreign interference. By doing so Peel Regional Police can better understand community concerns, share relevant information, and counteract attempts to sow discord.

Enhancing collaboration with human rights organizations was identified as an additional strategy to effectively counter ideologies of hate and extremism. These partnerships can provide valuable insights and strategies for combating extremism, contributing significantly to the community's resilience against such threats.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: N/A

Summary of work in progress:

- Part of the CSWB strategy
- Included in the reassurance protocol through the combatting extremism and hate in our community strategy
- Addressed in our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy
- Included in the SACE strategy

11. Awareness and Communication

The consultations highlighted the crucial role of educational campaigns in enhancing community awareness, safety, and trust. Presenters discussed various aspects of how Peel Regional Police could leverage educational initiatives to address community concerns, improve police-community relations, and promote public safety.

Educational campaigns were identified as key tools for raising awareness about critical issues such as hate crimes or to educate community members about their rights. The goal is to empower community members with knowledge that can prevent incidents before they occur.

The effectiveness of educational campaigns was tied to the strength of partnerships between the police and local community organizations. By collaborating with NGOs, faith-based groups, and other community stakeholders, Peel Regional Police can ensure their messages reach a wider audience and are endorsed by trusted community leaders. These partnerships can also provide the police with insights into community-specific concerns that need to be addressed in their campaigns.

To maximize reach and impact, presenters advised that Peel Regional Police should utilize a variety of media channels for their educational campaigns. This includes traditional media such as news outlets, as well as digital platforms like its website and social media platforms. The use of digital media is particularly important for engaging younger demographics and ensuring the campaigns are accessible to everyone in the community.

Educational campaigns were seen as opportunities for Peel Regional Police to enhance transparency and open communication with the public.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: N/A

Summary of work in progress:

- Part of the CSWB strategy
- Included in the reassurance protocol through the combatting extremism and hate in our community
- Addressed in PRP's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategy
- Included in the SACE strategy

12. The Role of Data-Driven Accountability and Transparency

An emphasis on robust data collection and thorough analysis that is accessible to the public was identified as essential in monitoring policing activities, identifying inherent biases, and implementing measures to ensure accountability and equitable policing. A number of presenters pointed to this approach as vital for building trust.

Feedback focused on the implementation of advanced data collection systems that track interactions between police and the community, including stops, searches, arrests, and the use of force. The goal is to ensure these interactions are documented and analyzed to prevent discriminatory practices and improve police accountability. Presenters advocated for the utilization of technology that enables real-time data analysis, providing law enforcement with actionable insights that can lead to immediate improvements in policing practices.

Transparency was also a repeated theme, with a suggestion for public access to data concerning police operations and outcomes. This transparency is seen as vital for building trust with the community, as it allows citizens to see firsthand how incidents are handled and how officers are held accountable for their actions.

Additionally, presenters noted the potential for data to inform police training and policy development. By understanding trends and patterns from collected data, Peel Regional Police can tailor their training programs to address specific issues highlighted by the data, such as particular types of incidents that occur frequently.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: 50, 56, 60

Summary of work in progress:

- In collaboration with industry experts in Race and Identity-Based Data (RIBD) collection, the HRP report is released annually
- Race and Identity-Based Data strategy in place
- RIBD Community Advisory Panel in place to review RIBD data.
- Claudia McKoy from UpSurgence engaged for the Disparity Reduction and Well-Being plan to incorporate community perspectives, maintain transparency and ensure an inclusive, independent voice.

13. Artificial Intelligence and Policing

The consultations brought to light the potential of AI to enhance policing practices but also underscored the risks associated with its use. Presenters provided a balanced view, discussing both the benefits and challenges of integrating AI technologies into law enforcement operations.

One of the concerns raised was the risk of AI systems perpetuating existing biases or introducing new forms of discrimination. AI algorithms can sometimes replicate or amplify biases present in their training data, which may be derived from historically biased policing practices. This could lead to unfair targeting of specific communities or individuals, exacerbating issues of discrimination within law enforcement.

It was presented that there is a need for transparency in how AI systems are deployed by Peel Regional Police, with clear accountability mechanisms and transparent operational guidelines.

Human Rights Project - Alignment

HRP Recommendation #: 12, 46

Summary of work in progress:

- PRP is working with the OHRC and has onboarded two subject-matter experts to integrate a human rights approach to artificial intelligence (AI).
- In addition, PRP enlisted Claudia McKoy from UpSurgence to co-design a statement of principles for PRP's AI strategy.

Human Rights and Police Governance

The feedback from presenters during the consultations underscored themes that align closely with the principles of human rights-centered policing, an approach Peel Regional Police has been actively implementing since 2019.

We heard that it is imperative every interaction with Peel Regional Police be grounded in the respect for the inherent dignity of individuals, recognizing and safeguarding their fundamental human rights. These rights include, but are not limited to, the right to life, liberty, and security of the person. This expectation is particularly crucial when interacting with vulnerable community members, including those affected by mental health issues, disabilities, newcomers, or those experiencing social and economic challenges. Ensuring that these interactions are handled with extra care and sensitivity not only protects the rights of the most vulnerable but also strengthens the overall trust and effectiveness of policing within the community.

On a broader community level, we heard that building and maintaining trust between the police service and the communities they serve is crucial. As the Board and the police service work towards comprehensive reform to be a leading progressive police service, it is vital that they collaborate closely with community members to identify pressing issues and co-creating solutions that are not only effective but also comply with human rights standards.

We also heard that a transparent approach to police governance is essential. This involves implementing robust mechanisms for accountability to ensure that the actions of Peel Regional Police align with public expectations and uphold the community's trust. This commitment to transparency and accountability is foundational to the ongoing efforts to enhance policing practices and reinforce the community's confidence in the police service's effectiveness and fairness.

Police governance and human rights is an evolving concept that the Board is committed to continuously exploring and understanding. In response to the insights gained from the recent consultations, the Board will continue human rights training for its members as an ongoing practice. This training will enhance their understanding of the lived experiences shared during the consultations. By deepening comprehension of these perspectives, the Board aims to more effectively translate the feedback received into strategic and policy-level changes. This step is part of a broader effort to ensure that the Board's actions and decisions are informed by a thorough grasp of human rights principles as they apply to policing.

Next Steps

The GHR committee has analyzed the feedback received from the consultation participants, carefully distinguishing between issues related to operational matters and those concerning governance. This distinction allows the committee to offer operational feedback to Chief Duraiappah and his leadership team for consideration within the scope of the ongoing Human Rights Project. Meanwhile, the GHR committee will focus on exploring feedback that pertains to governance issues.

The consultations have identified a wealth of insights into the complex interplay of systemic challenges facing Peel Region from a police governance perspective and underscored the collective aspiration for a policing framework that is not only effective but also deeply rooted in principles of equity, empathy, and respect for human rights. While many of the ideas and critiques raised by participants have already been addressed or are in the process of being addressed through the Human Rights Project, there are new suggestions that have emerged from the consultations. These suggestions are currently being evaluated by the committee to determine how they might be incorporated into the PPSB's governance and oversight responsibilities. This ongoing evaluation and adaptation process is crucial for ensuring that the PPSB's governance remains responsive and effectively aligned with community needs and human rights principles.

The concerted effort to engage with and understand the diverse perspectives within Peel Region has highlighted areas where both the PPSB and the GHR Committee, as well as the police service itself, can reflect and grow. These insights play a role in shaping the PPSB's ongoing exploration of how community safety should be conceptualized and implemented, including enhancing cultural competency, building and maintaining community trust, increasing mental health awareness, and ensuring transparent accountability within policing practices.

Moreover, the consultations have served as a reminder of the power of dialogue and collaboration. They highlight the potential for building a more inclusive and safe society when local police services and the communities they serve work together toward shared goals. While the path forward may be difficult, the precedence laid through these consultations offers a plan for continuous improvement and adaptation to the evolving needs of the region.

In conclusion, while there remains a broad spectrum of feedback to address, several key priorities have emerged from our consultations. These include addressing the underreporting of hate crimes, refining our communication strategy to ensure effective reach across all communities, age groups, and areas within the Peel Region, and exploring the governance and integration of artificial intelligence in policing. We are committed to further study and consultation in these critical areas to enhance our governance role through a focused human rights lens.

Moving forward, the PPSB and Peel Regional Police, alongside academic partners, will reflect on these insights and incorporate them, where appropriate, into our governance, policies, operations and long and short-term strategies. It is through such reflection and action that local law enforcement can use a community safety and well-being lens towards helping to build a community where diversity is not just accepted but celebrated, where public safety is a collective success, and where every individual feels heard, understood, and protected. This report, representing a comprehensive summary of the community consultations, supports a commitment to this vision and a step toward its realization.

Appendix A - List of Presenters and Summaries

1. Amira Elghawaby

Canada's Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia

Summary: Addressed Islamophobia's impact on community well-being, underscoring the need for a comprehensive human rights strategy.

2. Nazish Tayab & Miriam

Sakeenah Canada

Summary: Highlighted challenges faced by victims of domestic violence in interacting with law enforcement and emphasized the need for police liaisons.

3. Imam Ibrahim Hindy

Religious Director of Yaqeen, Imam at Dar Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre

Summary: Discussed an attack on their mosque, highlighting the need for improved police support and addressing community mistrust.

4. Rabia Khedr

CEO, Deen Support Services

Summary: Addressed intersectional challenges faced by people with disabilities within the criminal justice system.

5. Shawn Ullah

National Council of Canadian Muslims

Summary: Addressed Islamophobia within policing, emphasizing the importance of cultural competency training and community engagement.

6. Michael Okolie

Director, IT & Business Operations, Netact Services, Inc.

Summary: Addressed challenges faced by racialized communities, particularly Black individuals, in interactions with police.

7. Fawzi Mana

Mississauga Head Chapter, Muslim Association of Canada

Summary: Presented on Islamophobia's multifaceted impacts, advocating for preventive measures and reporting channels.

8. Nokha Dakroub

Former School Trustee, Peel District School Board

Summary: Shared insights on advocating against discrimination and the introduction of progressive policies, including anti-Islamophobia strategies.

9. Muhsin Kermalli

Executive Director, Naseeha Mental Health

Summary: Highlighted efforts in providing mental health support and advocating for cultural sensitivity in policy frameworks.

10. Vipin Saini

Executive Director, Seva Food Bank

Summary: Focused on food insecurity and its interaction with law enforcement, emphasizing the need for understanding and partnerships.

11. Jaskaran Sandhu

Board Member, World Sikh Organization

Summary: Overlooked challenges faced by the Sikh community in Peel, highlighting hate crimes and the impact of international tensions.

12. Asim Malik

Muslim Council of Peel

Summary: Emphasized the necessity of human rights principles in police governance, focusing on diversity within the police service.

13. Dr. Sukaina Dada

Executive Director, SMILE Canada

Summary: Stressed the need for an intersectional approach in police strategies to support racialized children with disabilities.

14. Ron Cunningham

CEO, Citizens for the Advancement of Community Development

Summary: Highlighted the role of human rights in shaping police governance and protecting at-risk youth.

15. Bayan Khatib

Syrian Canadian Foundation

Summary: Stressed the importance of culturally sensitive and trauma-informed police training for refugees.

16. Khaled Al-Qazzaz

Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council

Summary: Focused on online hate and its impact, urging the use of AI to monitor and analyze hate content.

17. Mohamed El Rashidy

Lawyer, Rashidy & Associates

Summary: Shared insights on systemic issues within the justice system, emphasizing the need for recognition and reform.

18. Taha Ghayyur

Executive Director, Justice for All Canada

Summary: Highlighted the urgency of addressing Islamophobia and its global ideological influences within Peel Region.

19. Richard Miller

Founder, Keep 6ix

Summary: Shared personal journey and focused on supporting marginalized communities and at-risk youth through advocacy and prevention.

20. Samer Muscati & Elaine Amsterdam

Human Rights Watch & Gerstein Crisis Center

Summary: Presented an alternative model for community-based mental health crisis response to address systemic inequities and police violence.

21. Omar Zia

Chair, Muslim Employees Association of Peel

Summary: Focused on the experiences of Muslim identifying students in Peel, emphasizing community engagement and support.

22. Mohammed Hashim & Annamaria Enenajor

Canadian Race Relations Foundation

Summary: Highlighted systemic racism challenges and the need for a comprehensive approach to improve community relations.

23. Marouane Mohamed

Former Advisor, OSCE on Human Rights and Policing

Summary: Shared insights on integrating human rights into policing practices for a safer, more inclusive community.

24. Larry Haiven

Independent Jewish Voices

Summary: Discussed the distinction between criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism, emphasizing the misuse of accusations.