

Shelburne Council condemns anti-Asian racism

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The Town of Shelburne is once again making its stance on racism clear.

The Town issued a statement last Thursday (March 25) condemning hate, racism, misogyny, and violence in the community in response to the March 16 mass shooting in Atlanta, Ga, which saw eight people killed, including six women of Asian descent. In the statement, the Town also recognized the extreme rise in anti-Asian hate crime as well as the increasing violence against women during the pandemic.

"As we collectively process and grieve this tragic loss of life, we stand in solidarity with families and communities who experience violence, including those who are living within our community. We reaffirm that we will continue to name and take action and will not tolerate hate, racism, misogyny, and all forms of discrimination and violence that affect our community. No one should feel unsafe, harassed or that they do not belong," reads the statement issued from the Town.

According to live data from Fight COVID Racism, a website dedicated to tracking self-reported or witness-reported incidents of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia, there have been 977 incidents of anti-Asian hate crimes across Canada reported as of March 30.

A recent report released by the Chinese Canadian National Council's Toronto Chapter titled "A Year of Racist Attacks: Anti-Asian Racism" detailed a surge in anti-Asian hate crimes over the COVID-19 pandemic. The report looks at 1150 cases of racist attacks across Canada spanning from March 10, 2020 to February 28, 2021 and found that 40 percent of attacks and incidents were reported in Ontario, while 44 percent were reported in British Columbia.

According to the report, 11 percent of the attacks contained a violent physical assault and/or unwanted physical contact, 10 percent included a form of assault including being coughed or spat on, and that close to 60 percent of the incidents involved those who identify as women.

The Town of Shelburne, earlier this year, established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee as part of the recommendations given to Council on October 5 from the Anti-Black Racism, Racism and Discrimination Task Force. The mandate of the committee is to provide insight, advice, and recommendations to Council.

"We are defining our role and response to ongoing and systemic racism and the current rise in racist incidents. This includes publicly naming and standing against racism and hate, working with partners to do the same, and advocating for changes across all sectors of society, including our own ability to receive and respond to racist incidents," reads the Town's statement.