



British Columbia's
Office of the Human Rights
Commissioner

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Human Rights Commissioner launches book club on international Human Rights Day

Vancouver B.C. – In celebration of Human Rights Day, B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner has launched a new book club to foster conversations and build deeper understanding of human rights issues through the power of stories. The first selections for the [Commissioner's Book Club](#) are *Lullabies for Little Criminals* by Heather O'Neill and, for preschool aged readers, *Strictly No Elephants* by Lisa Mantchev.

"Books have always been an important part of my life and my human rights journey," said Commissioner Kasari Govender. "Stories can help us see the world through other people's eyes or see our own experiences reflected in a way that gives us new insights into the systemic forces that have shaped our lives."

For the adult book list, *Lullabies for Little Criminals* was the Commissioner's pick for December. This novel sheds light on the often-invisible struggles of children growing up in poverty and explores themes of addiction, exploitation and the impact of systemic failures on vulnerable populations. These are pressing issues in the province, as seen in the Office's recent [Rights in focus: Lived realities in B.C.](#) report, which explored these topics through a lens of B.C. specific research and included sections on inequities in child welfare and the social safety net.

For the children's book list, *Strictly No Elephants* offers an age-appropriate introduction to the importance of kindness and inclusion across difference. The story and illustrations capture the emotional connections between the diverse human and animal relationships and are the perfect starting point for family conversations about the role that empathy and care play in building communities that are more vibrant, inclusive, friendly and fun. In addition to the book selection, BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner has also launched a [colouring book](#) to encourage learning about acceptance and respect.

"My hope is that this book club will offer people across the province a chance to find community through reading together and engaging with some of the interesting—and sometimes very challenging – questions raised by each book," said Commissioner Govender. "I hope you will read along with us this month as we explore the complexity of love in the face of trauma through *Lullabies for Little Criminals* and introduce the concept of inclusion through *Strictly No Elephants* to the young people in our lives."

The Commissioner will announce a new book selection for adults and young children each month. Selections will be posted to the Office's social media accounts (@humanrights4bc) and on the Book Club website: bchumanrights.ca/book-club

-30-

Related resources

BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner has released a [From hate to hope colouring book](#) as a companion resource for the book club.

Media contact

To request an interview with Commissioner Kasari Govender, please contact Lindsey Bertrand Manager, Communications, at media@bchumanrights.ca or 604-306-7369.

Media kit

[Download](#) our media kit for images of Commissioner Kasari Govender

About BCOHRC

BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner exists to address the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice in B.C. by shifting laws, policies, practices and cultures. We do this work through education, research, advocacy, inquiry and monitoring. Learn more at: bchumanrights.ca

About the Commissioner

Kasari Govender began her work as B.C.'s first independent human rights commissioner in September 2019. As an independent officer of the Legislature, Commissioner Govender is uniquely positioned to ensure [human rights](#) in B.C. are protected, respected and advanced on a systemic level. In her first five-year term, her work through BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner included a public inquiry into experiences of hate in the pandemic, a report on systemic discrimination in policing, community embedded research about a range of human rights issues experienced by British Columbians, public awareness campaigns about ableism and racism and guidance to government that, among other things, informed the creation of both the *Anti-Racism Data Act* and the *Anti-Racism Act*. Commissioner Govender was reappointed for a second term beginning in September 2024.

Follow us

Get the latest human rights news from us on Twitter ([@humanrights4BC](#)), Facebook (facebook.com/HumanRights4BC) and Instagram ([@humanrights4BC](#)).

