



British Columbia's
Office of the Human Rights
Commissioner

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2023
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Human Rights Commissioner hosts living library event in Nanaimo to advance solutions to hate

Vancouver B.C. – B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner, Kasari Govender, will be in Nanaimo tomorrow speaking with community leaders about the recommendations in her recently completed Inquiry into hate in the pandemic (the Inquiry).

In March 2023, the final report of the Inquiry, titled "From hate to hope," revealed a dramatic spike in hate incidents across B.C. during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Nanaimo event, Commissioner Govender will discuss key findings and recommendations from the report and answer questions. The event will also feature a "living library" session, in which human "books" are made available to "check out" so they can share their experiences and their stories with "readers." Through dialogue, living libraries can combat hate by deepening understanding and celebrating differences between community members from diverse backgrounds.

"There is no question that we have seen a sharp rise in hate incidents across the province. As we enter Pride month, we're seeing new incidents almost daily. But we are not powerless in the face of hate," said Commissioner Govender. "I am grateful for this opportunity to follow up on the Inquiry's findings and recommendations with leaders in Nanaimo, and I am hopeful that this event will foster connections between community leaders so we can move forward together in responding to and preventing hate."

This two-hour event is hosted in partnership with AVI Health and Community Services' Nanaimo Clinic.

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Media contact

Commissioner Govender will be available for interviews, including in-person interviews in Nanaimo, between 11:45 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 15. To request an interview, please contact Lindsey Bertrand, Senior Communications Advisor: media@bchumanrights.ca or 604-306-7369.

Media kit

[Visit](#) our media kit for images of Commissioner Kasari Govender and other resources.

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

B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner, Kasari Govender, started her five-year term on Sept. 3, 2019. Since then, our Office has been working swiftly to build a strong team, to listen deeply to the concerns of British Columbians, to deliver education materials on our rights and responsibilities, to issue policy guidance to protect marginalized communities and to lay a human rights-based foundation for our work. As an independent officer of the Legislature, the Commissioner is uniquely positioned to ensure human rights in B.C. are protected, respected and advanced on a systemic level throughout our society.

About the Inquiry into hate in the pandemic

In September 2020, legal changes to B.C.'s *Human Rights Code* gave the Commissioner new broad powers to inquire into matters that would serve to promote or protect human rights in B.C., including through a public inquiry and to report the findings publicly and to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

A public inquiry is an opportunity to delve deeply into the human rights implications of a particular incident or issue, gather factual and expert evidence, hear directly from those impacted (for example, through witness statements, public hearings or surveys) and make recommendations for how to address the human rights issues raised. An inquiry is not a court of law and cannot make legal findings regarding specific incidents of hate.

The Inquiry into hate in the pandemic was the first inquiry conducted by an independent human rights commissioner in B.C. Beginning in August 2021, the Inquiry analyzed data from multiple sources, drew on extensive independent research and heard from thousands of people in B.C. The final report, "From hate to hope," was released in March 2023. Learn more: hateinquiry.bchumanrights.ca

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