



British Columbia's  
Office of the Human Rights  
Commissioner

**TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Human Rights Commissioner to intervene in case to clarify *Charter* rights of encampment residents**

Vancouver B.C. – B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner has been granted leave to intervene in a case before the Court of Appeal on the rights of unhoused people living in encampments.

The Commissioner's intervention in the *Abbotsford (City) v. Matsqui-Abbotsford Impact Society* appeal will focus on the scope of international human rights law and *Charter* protections for the rights of encampment residents.

"This case has the potential to affect how the rights of encampment residents are protected in British Columbia," said Commissioner Govender. "I am looking forward to providing legal submissions to the Court of Appeal about how to interpret the protections of the *Charter* and international human rights law in the context of homelessness."

For more information about the case and the Commissioner's intervention, please visit:

<https://bchumanrights.ca/inquiries-and-cases/cases/case/abbotsford-city-v-matsqui-abbotsford-impact-society/>

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### **Media contact**

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

### **Media kit**

[Visit our media kit](#) for images of Commissioner Kasari Govender, pronunciation guidance, bios and more.

### **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](https://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.

## About interventions

The Commissioner can apply to intervene in court cases with the potential to make a significant impact on human rights across the province and can intervene as a matter of right in B.C. Human Rights Tribunal cases. Interventions can impact how the law evolves, making them an important tool in systemic work to promote and protect human rights.

If the Commissioner's request to intervene is approved by a court, BCOHRC provides submissions (also called legal arguments) to the judge in the case in question. These submissions are usually about how to interpret a narrow point of the law. Intervenors do not represent either side in a case; their submissions must be different from the arguments being made by the parties to the case, and submissions must not advocate for either side to win or lose.

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