



British Columbia's
Office of the Human Rights
Commissioner

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Commissioner says misinformation threatens human rights and challenges public to help STOP it in new campaign

Vancouver B.C. – A video shows a helicopter setting fire to a dense forest. The caption that reads, “That’s how your fire started,” implying this is the cause of one of the wildfires burning in British Columbia. The video is fake, but would you have been able to identify the misinformation being spread?

This is the question asked by B.C.’s Human Rights Commissioner’s latest campaign, which is tackling the spread of mis- and disinformation. This video—in addition to several other news items and memes—are part of a quiz that offers everyone the opportunity to see if they can identify misinformation (the answers may surprise them!) and learn how to STOP it.

The Can You STOP It quiz is available on the Commissioner’s website—and is also touring the province in the form of a nine-foot-tall cellphone display. People in Vancouver this weekend may be surprised to see the giant cellphone in the promenade at Library Square (350 W. Georgia St). When they do, they’ll have a chance to take the quiz on the larger-than-life screen. After the quiz, whether online or in person, people will be shown the STOP tool, a memorable acronym that brings together some of the most effective techniques to identify misinformation.

“Mis- and disinformation pose significant threats to human rights,” said Commissioner Kasari Govender. “They drive the rise of hate we see in our communities—and online misinformation can lead to real world harm. This is why my Office created the Can You Stop It campaign: to help people in B.C. to better understand misinformation and provide much-needed tools to STOP it from circulating.”

There are numerous examples of mis- and disinformation spreading across B.C. in recent years. Some examples include the spread of racist conspiracy theories during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) and misinformation that led to harassment campaigns against educators and [LBGTQ2SAI+ community members](#). According to a 2023 Statistics Canada poll, 59 per cent of Canadians said they were very or extremely concerned about misinformation online and 43 per cent said it was getting harder to identify misinformation compared with three years earlier.

The “Can you STOP it?” quiz is available for everyone online now at bchumanrights.ca/stop.

The in-person campaign begins today in Vancouver. The giant cellphone will be at in the promenade at Library Square (350 W. Georgia St) from Sept. 13 to 15 (10 a.m.–6 p.m). The campaign will then travel to Kelowna, Victoria, Prince Rupert and Smithers in the coming weeks, with additional future locations to be announced.

Resources

- [“Can You STOP It” online quiz and additional resources](#)
- [From Hate to Hope: Inquiry into Hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (section on misinformation on [p. 171](#))
- [Right in Focus: Lived Realities in B.C.](#) (section on misinformation on [p. 55](#))

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Media contact

To request an interview with Commissioner Kasari Govender, please contact the Manager, Communications, at 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

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.

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