



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS

### **NAJC Statement on Black Lives Matter**

**Winnipeg, Manitoba – June 9, 2020**

The National Association of Japanese Canadians supports the call for an end to the violence against Black people.

We protest the racism experienced by Black Canadians and Americans which has all too often included their deaths at the hands of law enforcement. We question how this could happen especially in their homes, and jogging and driving in their neighbourhoods. We need to understand and check our privilege. We need to learn more about the history of our country and the challenges faced by Black Canadians. We need to have the hard conversations to do better at home, at schools, at our workplaces, and in our communities.

For those who say “all lives matter” open your hearts, recognize the systemic racism, and know as we stand with the Black community in their time of need, this does not diminish the importance of any other group of people. We will continue to speak out against the rise in anti-Asian racism with the COVID-19 pandemic. We know the suffering of Indigenous peoples since colonial white settlers first came to their traditional lands and the injustice which persists to today. We acknowledge our ancestors are settlers, and their ethnicity, just like other racialized settlers, made them targets for racist abuse by white settlers.

Injustice is injustice. Our work to combat racism must include ensuring racialized and Indigenous peoples are in the Canadian narrative. We must call out the systemic racism. Silence is not an option.

Black lives matter.

*The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) was formed in 1947 to fight for the rights of 22,000 Japanese Canadians who were stripped of their rights and interned during and after the Second World War. The NAJC led talks for Redress, and in 1988, the Canadian government acknowledged and apologized for the injustices. The NAJC strives for equal rights and liberties for all, in particular racialized and Indigenous peoples.*