Joint Statement on the Lamport Stadium Encampment Clearing

In the aftermath of the City of Toronto's brutal assault on the Lamport Stadium encampment, we, the undersigned organizations, advocates, and encampment residents, demand an end to these violent encampment evictions, that all charges laid against community members be dropped, and that Mayor John Tory resign immediately.

During the early hours of Wednesday, July 21st, hundreds of police officers descended on Lamport Stadium Park. City workers proceeded to fence in encampment residents and their supporters. As a drone hovered overhead, security guards warned people to leave or face arrest for trespassing. Then, brandishing steel batons, police moved in.

They hit someone in the face, breaking their nose and splitting open their forehead and lips. They slammed someone else's head into the pavement, leaving them with a concussion. They choked and tossed another person by their neck. Two people are now in casts and will require further X-rays to determine if bones were broken. Police punched, kicked, clubbed, and pepper-sprayed dozens of other people, and arrested 34.

Encampment residents and their supporters were peacefully standing their ground that day, painting signs and having a barbeque. Residents refused to leave because they had nowhere else to go. At least 24 people lived at the Lamport encampment before the eviction. Almost all are still living outside, scattered to other parks in the city.

Some encampment residents wanted to move into shelters, but the City's own data shows it doesn't have enough beds to meet the demand. Many others have recently lived in the shelter system, but they returned to sleeping outside because they felt safer in encampments. People at Lamport wanted permanent housing. The City had none to offer.

We have hosted City officials in encampments to speak with residents. We have made phone calls, sent emails, signed petitions, and given deputations at City Council meetings. We wrote a public letter that detailed the human rights abuses in the City's approach to encampments, and laid out a humane alternative framework.

Instead, the City seriously injured and psychologically traumatized scores of people, displaced encampment residents, and destroyed thousands of dollars worth of tents, bikes, phones, furniture, medical supplies, and other personal possessions.

The City of Toronto has tried to hide the truth by limiting press access and by attacking and arresting reporters at clearings. They call the evictions "reasonable, firm, but compassionate." They claim to make housing offers, even though almost no one is getting housed. They claim to store residents' belongings, but then people find their possessions in a dumpster.

John Tory says the City clears encampments because they are unsafe. But at evictions across Toronto, they have shown that safety is the least of their concerns. They are brutalizing people

indiscriminately, including the residents of encampments. Tory has compared what happened at Lamport to the previous day's eviction at Alexandra Park, saying the former was only violent because of the presence of protesters. This ignores the reality that forced displacement is *in itself* violent.

Meanwhile, Tory is also refusing to intervene in one of the worst mass residential eviction crises the city has ever seen. His mayoralty threatens the safety of communities across every ward.

Shoving houseless people from park to park is not a solution. Hiring security to guard the grass is not a solution. Toronto should be run for the people who live here, not the real estate investors who force us out. John Tory must resign now.

Our demands:

- John Tory's immediate resignation for the violence he has inflicted on working class people in this city;
- End encampment evictions: repeal the bylaws criminalizing people who reside in parks until they leave on their own terms to permanent housing they deem safe and accessible;
- Drop the provincial and criminal charges against everyone arrested at encampment evictions, including at Lamport Stadium, and in the aftermath outside 14 division on July 21st, 2021;
- Adopt the recommendations made by the Toronto Drop-In Network in "A Path Forward".

SIGNATORIES ON FOLLOWING PAGE

If you'd like to add your name or your organization's name to this list, please email parkdaleesn@gmail.com.

Institutions and organizations:

ALAB Resource Clinic Apiecalypse Now Butterfly - Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network Bike Brigade Canada-Philippines Solidarity Organization - Toronto Climate Justice Durham Climate Justice Toronto Communist Party of Canada Community Fridges TO Community Justice Collective CPT - Turtle Island Solidarity Network The Disability Justice Network of Ontario Doctors for Defunding Police Encampment Support Network - Parkdale Encampment Support Network - Scadding Court Encampment Support Network - Little Norway Park/Cherry Beach Encampment Support Network - Moss Park Encampment Support Network - Trinity Bellwoods FoodShare Toronto Fridays for Future Toronto Friends of Chinatown Friends of Kensington Market Grip Films Inc. Hamilton Encampment Support Network Health Providers Against Poverty Jane Finch Action Against Poverty Kensington Tenants Network	Midwifery and Toronto Community Health - SRCHC The More Cooperative Housing Collective Movement Defence Committee of the Law Union of Ontario Naturopathic Doctors for Environmental and Social Trust No Pride in Policing Coalition OISE Student Collective Old Growth Press Ontario Coalition Against Poverty Palestinian Youth Movement - Montreal Chapter Parkdale Community Legal Clinic The Parkdale People's Economy People’s Defence PERENNIAL.WORK Shelter Housing & Justice Network South Asian Allyship Network South Riverdale Community Health Centre SpekWork Studios The Spring Socialist Network SURJ Toronto (Showing Up for Racial Justice) This Way Up Collective Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction Toronto Tiny Shelters TOparks: Housing not Violence Toronto Restaurant Workers’ Relief Fund The Weekly Rant Young Communist League of Canada - Dorise Nielsen Club Young Communist League of Canada - Fred Rose Club

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