



Toronto Police Services Board
40 College St.
Toronto, ON M5G 2J3

April 25, 2024

Dear Board Chair Morgan and Members,

We are writing to express the Canadian Civil Liberties Association's serious concern with public comments made by Chief of Police Myron Demkiw challenging the authority of the jury verdict acquitting Umar Zameer in relation to the death of Const. Jeffrey Northup. In a press conference following the jury's not guilty verdict, which affirmed Mr. Zameer was fully innocent of all charges, Chief Demkiw made the following official statement, "While we respect the judicial process and appreciate the work of everyone involved in this very difficult cases, I share the feeling of our members who were hoping for a different outcome."

Chief Demkiw's statement conveyed to the public that despite Mr. Zameer's acquittal, he should have been found guilty. His statement cast doubt on Mr. Zameer's innocence, usurped the judicial system's responsibility to determine guilt, and undermined public confidence in the administration of justice. It is well outside the scope of the police's official duties to publicly malign an acquittal delivered after a trial, where relevant evidence against an accused person has been heard and tested. A statement of this nature by the Chief of Police, from the position of power the police wield in the criminal justice system, demands review and oversight. Despite Chief Demkiw's subsequent comments, he has not specifically repudiated or apologized for his initial statement.

The CCLA requests a response from the Board clarifying whether, in its view as the civilian oversight body of the Toronto Police Service, Chief Demkiw's statement was inappropriate. The CCLA further requests that the Board identify what steps it will undertake to ensure the Chief of Police, and members of the Toronto Police Service assigned to cases, do not publicly malign bail decisions or criminal verdicts in future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shakir Rahim".

Shakir Rahim
Director, Criminal Justice Program

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noa Mendelsohn Aviv".

Noa Mendelsohn Aviv
Executive Director and General Counsel

cc Olivia Chow, Mayor of Toronto
cc Myron Demkiw, Chief of the Toronto Police Service
cc Dubi Kanengisser, Executive Director of the Toronto Police Services Board