

# WORTLEY REPORT UPDATE

Summary of Department of  
Justice-led Recommendations

On March 27th, 2019, Dr. Scot Wortley released his *Halifax, Nova Scotia: Street Checks Report* (“the Wortley Report”). It makes 53 recommendations that fall under the categories of a street check ban, the regulation of street checks, data collection on police stops, and improving police-community relations.

The report calls for a collective response to bring about change. Government continues to engage with communities, police and other stakeholders to address the recommendations in the Wortley Report.

Since the release of the Wortley Report, representatives from African Nova Scotian communities, Department of Justice (DOJ) and police, and other stakeholders have worked to advance many of the recommendations. Government is committed to increasing awareness about the negative and harmful impact of systemic racism, discrimination and racial profiling.

Our commitment to delivering on the recommendations of the Wortley Report supports government’s work to advance the justice pillar in the *Count Us In: Nova Scotia’s Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent* (2015-2024). The Department of Justice is also partnering with African Nova Scotian Affairs and communities on an African Nova Scotian Justice plan. A major component of the plan will be the establishment of the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute, led by the African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent (ANSDPAD) Coalition. The Institute will create programs and services that address systemic racism faced by African Nova Scotians in their interactions with the justice system.

Government and police are committed to working towards change. This update reflects Government’s progress to date on the Wortley Report recommendations.

Twenty-four of the recommendations which fall under the category of regulating street checks have been addressed with government’s decision in October 2019 to ban the practice rather than to regulate them.

Of the 29 recommendations, 12 are now led by the department, four have been completed and eight are in progress.

## COMPLETED

- **Minister of Justice issued a directive that street checks cannot be used as part of a quota system and performance management tool.** This makes it clear that officers must adhere to their Code of Ethics, relevant policies, and review the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, human rights legislation, and the Wortley Report.  
– March 28, 2019 (Rec 2.13)
- **Moratorium on street checks.** The Minister of Justice issued a moratorium dated April 19, 2019 on street checks of pedestrians and passengers in motor vehicles. – Rec 2.1
- **A permanent ban on Street Checks.** The Minister announced a ban on the practice – October 18, 2019 (Rec 1.1)
- **Coordinated the establishment of the Wortley Report Research Committee (WRRRC)** --- Sept. 2020. (Rec 3.1) The Committee is composed of representatives from African Nova Scotian community organizations, African Nova Scotian community representatives from the Northern Region, Cape Breton Region, and Southwest Region, police, African Nova Scotian Affairs, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, and DOJ. The WRRRC mandate includes:
  - Assessing the impact of the street check ban on community-police relations.
  - Review race-based data collection models on police stops.
  - Examining the establishment of permanent data collection system to record information on all civilian stops.
- **Police training:** DOJ has collaborated with the RCMP to facilitate delivery of the RCMP's African Canadian Experiences (ACE) training to municipal police. (Rec 4.12)

## IN PROGRESS

- **Committee to monitor progress implementing recommendations:** Wortley Report Action Planning Working Group was formed to develop an action plan and accountability framework. While the committee is no longer active, DOJ has continued to engage bilaterally with the African Nova Scotian organizations that participated. (Rec 4.16)
- **Development of Know Your Rights Initiative:** DOJ coordinated an initial meeting with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP, African Nova Scotian Affairs, and the Office of L'Nu Affairs. Work is in the early stages. (Rec 4.10)

- **Strengthening the Police Complaints process:** Amendments have been made to Police Regulations under the Police Act, extending the timeframe to file a complaint against municipal police officers from six months to one year to align with existing timelines for filing complaints against RCMP. Authority was given to the Police Complaints Commissioner to further extend the time limit for making a complaint if it is in the public interest. The next step is to form a committee to review the police complaints process and identify opportunities to enhance it. (Rec 4.11)
- **WWRC is working to advance several of these recommendations, including:**
  - Evaluating the impact on the street check ban on police-community relationships and public safety: (Rec 1.6)
  - Collection of race-based data on police stops of civilians. Various models from Canada, the US and the UK are being studied. (Rec 1.7)
  - Establishment of a permanent data collection system to record information on police stops of civilians: (Rec 3.2)
  - Establishment of an annual or bi-annual report to the public on data collection and research activities: (Rec 3.5)
- **Addressing racial bias in other parts of the criminal justice system, beyond street checks:** The DOJ in partnership with community is developing both an African Nova Scotian Justice Plan and an Indigenous Justice Strategy to help address the broader issue of systemic racism in the criminal justice system. (Rec 4.17)

DOJ has also worked to support the advancement of other recommendations that are not government led. For example, the department provided \$100,000 to support training for law enforcement. Funds have been used to support police agencies to enhance their cultural competency through training modules related to ethics and accountability and racially biased policing

DOJ and police remain committed to ongoing and steady progress. DOJ will work with communities, police and other stakeholders to continue to advance the outstanding recommendations in the report.

The Wortley Report can be viewed at: [https://humanrights.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/editor-uploads/halifax\\_street\\_checks\\_report\\_march\\_2019\\_0.pdf](https://humanrights.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/editor-uploads/halifax_street_checks_report_march_2019_0.pdf).

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Wortley Report Update  
 July 2021  
 ISBN 978-1-77448-212-4