

## Ontario Human Rights Commission seeks commitment from Thunder Bay police

'Proactive, immediate and independent steps' needed to address allegations of racism, Renu Mandhane says

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Nov 03, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Nov 03, 2016 2:01 PM ET

Thunder Bay police must do more to address allegations of racism and systemic discrimination, says the Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

The police service is currently the subject of [an investigation by the province's civilian police oversight body](#) for the way it handles the deaths of Indigenous people.

The Office of the Independent Police Review Director is also looking into inflammatory Facebook posts from September, alleged to come from Thunder Bay police officers. One stated, "natives are lying" and "let's stop giving the natives money and see how that goes."

- [Thunder Bay, Ont., police face 'systemic review' of Indigenous death investigations](#)
- [Thunder Bay police officer's Facebook post prompts professional standards investigation](#)
- [Thunder Bay police suspend officer who is subject of professional standards investigation](#)

"The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) believes that the allegations of racism and systemic discrimination within the TBPS [Thunder Bay Police Service] require proactive, immediate, and independent steps to build confidence and trust in the TBPS," Chief Commissioner Renu Mandhane wrote in a letter addressed to the police chief and chair of the police services board.

The letter, dated October 27, is posted on the [website of the Ontario Human Rights Commission](#).

In it, Mandhane thanks the police leadership for meeting with her earlier in the month and says she welcomes their commitment to cooperating with the investigation into systemic racism by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director.

The letter goes on to encourage Thunder Bay police to develop and sustain human rights strategies within the service.

Mandhane asks the police chief and the board "to publicly commit to a coordinated, time-bound, and appropriately resourced human rights organization change project."

A spokesperson for Thunder Bay police says the letter is on the agenda at the next police services board meeting on Nov. 15. The session will be closed to the public.

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