

August 19, 2021

On the morning of August 18th, the Halifax Regional Police and Bylaw officers evicted residents living in tents and crisis shelters around the city. Halifax City Council claims all residents were offered other accommodations, but journalists on the ground and members of Halifax Mutual Aid who spoke with shelter residents say this is not true and many residents did not know where they were going to go. Despite many residents offering to leave immediately, multiple residents were served fines.

As the day progressed, peaceful protesters gathered to stand in solidarity with shelter residents and call on the Halifax Regional Police to cease the destruction of emergency housing. The protesters were met with an appalling use of excessive force from the police. Multiple protesters were arrested without cause and the police pepper sprayed the crowd - including spraying a 10-year-old child and other minors at close range.

The Canadian Federation of Students-Nova Scotia is devastated by this atrocious display of inhumanity and lack of empathy towards those who have been severely affected by the current housing crisis in Nova Scotia. We also condemn all acts of violence by the Halifax Regional Police against the protestors who came out to stand in solidarity with their unhoused neighbours.

Housing is a human right and all Nova Scotians deserve access to safe, accessible, and affordable housing. We need immediate and long-term solutions to the housing crisis, not violence and criminalization to punish those without adequate housing.

We, the Canadian Federation of Students-Nova Scotia, stand in full solidarity with crisis shelter residents and eviction protesters. We demand Halifax City Council:

- Cease all eviction notices, allow all remaining Mutual Aid Shelters and tents to be left standing, and immediately remove police presence from shelter sites;
- Immediately drop the fines issued to emergency shelter residents and the solidarity protesters' charges; and
- Adopt all recommendations from the Housing for All working group's report released in May 2021 as long-term, sustainable solutions to Nova Scotia's housing crisis.

We encourage our members and the Halifax community to participate in solidarity actions, including contacting City Councillors and donating to emergency funds for the evicted shelter residents and arrested protesters. To learn more about what is needed, follow Halifax Mutual Aid (@halifaxmutualaid).