



The Honourable
Amarjeet Sohi
Mayor of Edmonton

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The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc
Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada, K1A 0A6
dominic.leblanc@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister LeBlanc,

I am writing today with grave concerns about recent escalation of extortion threats against members of the South Asian community in Edmonton. This has become a national issue and requires immediate attention from the Government of Canada.

Several weeks ago, community members in Edmonton alerted me to the troubling rise of extortion calls and arson incidents targeting South Asian business owners. I have remained in close contact with the affected businesses and the City of Edmonton has been in contact with their industry associations. I immediately reached out to our City Manager, Andre Corbould, and Chief Dale McFee of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) to share concerns and I appreciate the collective efforts of Edmonton Fire Rescue Services (EFRS) and EPS to respond to these disturbing incidents. I have also had informal conversations with several Federal officials from different Ministries to continue to drive awareness.

The situation has escalated very quickly within our City. As of today, we have seen five extortions, 15 arsons, and seven firearms offenses. An estimated \$9 million in property damage has been reported from the arson and shootings, and we have seen an injury to an EFRS member. We need immediate action now.

It is unacceptable that organized criminals can use fear and violence to extort members of our community. All businesses in Canada deserve to conduct their business without fear and intimidation. I have spoken with my counterparts in the Edmonton Metro Region as it has become clear that this issue is impacting communities across the region as well as across the country. Due to the connection with international organized crime, and the instances of extortion



across Canada, it is clear that the federal government has the mechanisms available to act quickly on this issue and I ask that you lead a coordinated response.

I support calls from other Mayors across Canada to take immediate action on this issue. It is imperative that we strengthen coordination between all federal, provincial, and municipal law enforcement agencies across Canada to facilitate the rapid sharing of intelligence and the development of targeted strategies against these criminal organizations to formulate a robust and unified response.

We also need to work collectively to support impacted businesses. The COVID-19 pandemic and preceding impacts of the cost of living crisis have been devastating for Canadian businesses, and the last thing they need is to be victimized by organized crime. Edmonton has worked hard to gain an international reputation as a City where investments and doing business is safe. I worry that such threats, if unresolved, will harm that reputation.

It's clear that the federal government must lead this coordinated response. The City of Edmonton is ready to work with you to take immediate action, and I hope that the Province of Alberta can be involved as this issue demands involvement from all levels of government and law enforcement agencies to address both the root causes and acute instances of crime.

Sincerely,



Amarjeet Sohi
Mayor, City of Edmonton

CC: The Honourable Mike Ellis, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services of Alberta -

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His Worship Bill Daneluik, Mayor of Beaumont - bill.daneluik@beaumont.ab.ca

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