

## **Jaku Konbit Welcomes Report of Steering Group on Canada Black Justice Strategy: *An important step in the development of the Strategy***



*Jaku Konbit president, Ken Campbell led a three-person delegation to Parliament Hill last February for a Roundtable meeting with Canada's Minister of Justice, the Parliamentary Black Caucus, and Canada's Black Justice Strategy's external Steering Group.*

**July 8, 2024 – Ottawa, ON** – Jaku Konbit welcomed the recent publication of the external Steering Group's Report: *A Roadmap for Transformative Change: Canada's Black Justice Strategy*, which includes direct input from the national capital African-Caribbean-Black (ACB) community towards addressing Anti-Black Racism and Systemic Discrimination. The Steering Group composed of nine experts and leaders from Black communities across Canada had been established in February 2023 to provide advice to the Minister of Justice on the development of the Strategy.

Last August 2023, Jaku Konbit had accepted an invitation from the Justice Department, and quickly assembled a high-performance team to lead a two-month project engaging and gathering input from a representative range of ACB community individuals and organizations across Eastern Ontario. Out of submissions by 11 other selected organizations across Canada, the efficiency and efficacy of Jaku Konbit's work, and the resulting report were singled out by Justice Canada staff.

***“We fundamentally understand how Anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination adversely impacts Black people in Canadian society,”*** remarked Ken Campbell, president of Jaku Konbit. ***“Addressing this is critical to building a fairer Canadian criminal justice system. Jaku Konbit’s two decades of experience tells us collaboration and constructive dialogue is an effective and meaningful approach. That is why we not only welcome this report, but also the opportunity to have led this important initiative locally. We remain optimistic about the road ahead.”***

Notably, Jaku Konbit is referenced three times in the Steering Group Report which sets out 114 recommendations to address anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination that has led to the overrepresentation of Black people in Canada's criminal justice system, including as victims of crime. The recommendations include eight overarching accountability measures; and 106 short, medium, or long-term actions for implementation under five pillars:

Pillar 1 – Social Determinants of Justice (Employment and Income; Housing; Education; Health and Mental Health; Child Welfare; and Immigration and Settlement)

Pillar 2 – Policing

Pillar 3 – Courts and Legislation

Pillar 4 – Corrections

Pillar 5 – Parole, Re-entry and Reintegration

All told, the Report identifies actions to transform the criminal justice system to ensure that all people in Canada receive equal treatment before and under the law.

***“The Steering Group’s recommendations are certainly encouraging,”*** Campbell stated. ***“We are also encouraged that the real-life accounts of our Ottawa community on anti-Black racism’s impact have been factored, including two direct quotes, one related to ‘victims and witnesses’, and the other on the matter of ‘the system’s responsiveness’. We are now eagerly looking forward to the Government of Canada’s response.”***

In response to the Steering Group's Report, Justice Canada will develop and release a government response outlining the actions that the Government of Canada will undertake.