
From: David Walsh [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:31 PM
To: Email: [REDACTED] FBergen@hamiltonpolice.ca; crashford@hamiltonpolice.ca; publicaffairs@hamiltonpolice.ca; jpenman@hamiltonpolice.ca; Stevenson, Kirsten <Kirsten.Stevenson@hamilton.ca>; Office of the Mayor <Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca>; info@ohrc.on.ca; info@rchc.ca.
Subject: Re: Need for accountability and transparency - re the Fatal Shooting of Mr. Erixon Kabera

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Date: January 7, 2025

From: David Walsh
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To: Chief Frank Bergen
Hamilton Police Service Headquarters
155 King William Street
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8R 1A7

Subject: Demand for Transparency, Accountability, and Systemic Change Following the Fatal Shooting of Mr. Erixon Kabera

Dear Chief Bergen,

The tragic and fatal shooting of Mr. Erixon Kabera by officers of the Hamilton Police Service happened two months ago.

On November 9, 2024, Mr. Kabera was shot multiple times in his own home and succumbed to his injuries at 00:47 a.m. on November 10. His death has devastated his family, our Rwandan Canadian community across Canada, and the broader Hamilton community.

In addition to being a father to three young boys, Mr. Kabera was a cherished member of his community through leadership, compassion, and unwavering commitment to others. His loss is immeasurable, and the circumstances surrounding his death demand a transparent and thorough investigation.

According to police reports, officers responded to a call from a resident of the apartment building where Mr. Kabera resided. However, the [events that led to his death remain unclear](#), leaving us with critical questions that must be addressed:

- What exactly transpired between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on November 9 to result in such a violent and fatal outcome?
- Why was Mr. Kabera shot?
- Why was the use of deadly force deemed necessary?
- Were non-lethal options, such as Tasers, considered or deployed?
- Why were the officers not equipped with body cameras? If they were, why weren't the cameras on, and could this have provided crucial evidence?

The profound impact of Mr. Kabera's death extends beyond his immediate family and community. It has instilled fear and mistrust among the broader Rwandan Canadian, African, and Black communities in Hamilton and beyond. This fear was exacerbated when the [Hamilton Police Association](#) released a statement on November 13, 2024, unequivocally supporting the officers involved—days after the tragedy and long before any facts of the case were established.

Such statements, coupled with the lack of transparency following Mr. Kabera's death, have further eroded public trust in the Hamilton Police Service. Community members, including children, now fear police presence at public events—a testament to the gravity of this loss and the systemic issues it underscores.

Moreover, the systemic nature of police violence toward diverse communities, as highlighted by the [Hamilton Police Services' 2023 Use of Force report](#), demands urgent attention:

- Black individuals were the targets of 17.2% of use-of-force incidents, despite representing only 5% of Hamilton's population.
- Black individuals are 3.14 times more likely to be subjected to police force compared to others.

These troubling statistics illustrate a pattern of racial bias and over-policing, which raises further pressing questions:

- Was the level of force used necessary to de-escalate the situation?
- Were the officers involved trained in de-escalation techniques, and could this tragedy have been prevented?
- Did racial bias influence the officers' actions, and was Mr. Kabera perceived as a threat because of his race?

Our community believes that the core principle of police is public safety. However, when police fail to protect communities equitably, it leaves us questioning the very system meant to safeguard all citizens. This is why we, alongside the broader community, demand the truth and meaningful reform.

Based on what we've learned so far, it's very difficult to trust the SIU to deliver a fair report when 50% of its members are former officers.

I call for your office to initiate a full and transparent inquiry into the events surrounding Mr. Kabera's death, including:

- **Transparency & Accountability:** Clear and timely updates from Hamilton Police Services, the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), and all relevant authorities to rebuild public trust.
- **Disclosure of Information:** Release the names of the officers involved, audio recordings from the incident, and details of the 911 call that led to this tragedy.
- **Racial Bias Examination:** A comprehensive review of systemic racial bias within Hamilton Police Services and the policies that perpetuate it.
- **Mandatory Body Cameras:** Immediate implementation of body cameras for all Hamilton Police officers.

These actions are not merely requests but necessary steps toward justice and systemic change. Only by addressing these issues head-on can we prevent further tragedies and ensure that Black communities—like Mr. Kabera's—are no longer disproportionately targeted by those entrusted to protect them.

Your action today holds the power to effect generational change. We urge you to use the full authority of your office to act decisively and transparently in this matter.

I await your response and the measures you will take to address these critical issues.

Sincerely,



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Cc:

Hamilton Police Service Board
Mayor of City of Hamilton
Julian N. Falconer, legal counsel
Ontario Human Rights Commission
Community Organizations and Advocates
Media Outlets

BCC:

Other Community Organizations and Advocates
Other Media Outlets

<< RTF: Rich object >>

Relevant Sources:

- <https://pub-hpsb.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=5264>
- <https://www.harrc.ca/post/excessive-use-of-force-on-black-and-racialized-communities-by-police-is-unacceptable>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/use-of-force-report-2022-community-reaction-1.6886644>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/hamilton-police-use-of-force-2024-race-data-1.7248728>