

Inquiry into the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Ms Andrea Galas

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

This is my complaint and recollection of how the police directly and forcibly intimidated and herded us into a crowd - directly against the CHO directives on Tuesday 3rd November 2020.

I found it extremely confusing and distressing that law enforcement, police officers, who are there to protect and serve the people were intimidating and doing the complete opposite.

In this 3 and a half hours of being unlawfully and forcibly detained, the police officers did not respond to our questions. These police officers did not allow us to go to the toilet or have water until after I was taken to be issued with an unlawful fine of \$1652.

While being herded and forced into a tight group, [REDACTED] forcibly shoved me and hit me. I was in complete shock that a man almost double my size and a police officer used such force when I was standing my ground and didn't want to be pressured into a tight space. I was extremely distressed and in shock.

I then react to protect myself and I grab his sleeve with one hand to distance myself from him and stop him from hitting and pushing me again. I only had one hand free as I was holding my water bottle and recording on my phone in the other. I then, understandably distressed, asked the officers to stop forcing me into a tight space and arrest me, if that's what they wanted as every part of me was wanting to get out of that intimidating situation.

A woman in the crowd who sees what happened, stands up for me and tells the police officer to take his hands off me and to not hit me. She says "You think you're above the law". When [REDACTED] [REDACTED] hears this woman say this he gestures to his sleeve, as if to say that he had to hit me because I grabbed him. This was not the case, he provoked me and I was protecting myself.

I then try to compose myself enough to ask the police officers to arrest me and fine me as I do not want to be confined in this tight space. After another 30 seconds, I then go over to [REDACTED] [REDACTED], the officer who pushed and hit me and ask him for his name and details, politely I will add, which he ignores and does not reply. The other officer with him, [REDACTED] was also disrespectful and used unnecessary force and I take his name too.

From that physical contact between the police and me, on Tuesday 3rd November 2020, I received a cut lip

and a bruise from [REDACTED] hitting me.

In the next 1 and ½ - 2 hours of being unlawfully detained, I saw a woman double over her bike and collapse. Police tended to her, but while they were around her waiting for the paramedics, I was standing next to a nurse who offered her assistance. It was declined, almost ignored, as the woman was on the ground and the police looked through her bag.

I also witnessed a distressed female around early thirties, with her husband or partner who clearly was upset and wanted to leave. As she tries to walk through the policemen barricade the police block her, push her and tell her to step back. Crying, the couple explain that she is 8 weeks pregnant and they want to leave as the stress and environment would not be good for the baby. They say she can leave but her partner has to stay. She declines as they stay together so he can protect and comfort her. After another 30-40 minutes of this they finally allow them both to leave to be processed and fined.

An older gentleman also asked several times to leave as he had run out of his ventolin/inhaler and was having trouble breathing with the heat, lack of water and high air pollen count.

Another woman had issues with her abdomen and needed to use the bathroom and it wasn't until she was doubled over and in a lot of pain was it that the over seeing officer allowed her to leave.

Yet, another man told the police of his pancreatitis health issues and he was ignored for 20-30 minutes until he finally was allowed to leave and seek medical help.

All the while the police were given water and sunscreen to stay hydrated, while we were not allowed to leave, go to the bathroom or receive any water for 4 hours in 30 degree heat, with no explanation of what was going on or why we were forced into a small tight crowd.

I am appalled at how I was treated on Tuesday 3rd November and utterly shocked. I hope you are able to investigate this matter and will be happy to provide any further information.

I have full video footage of the police advancing and when he hit me however the video file is too large to upload. I am happy to email it to you.

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[REDACTED]

Signature:
Andrea Galas