

Press release
February 15, 2023

Campaign: Police Street Checks in Quebec, a Practice to Ban
We Demand a Ban: Nothing Less!

Montreal, February 15, 2023 – Today, the Ligue des droits et libertés (LDL) is launching a campaign on police street checks. It includes the publication of a handbook entitled *Police Street Checks in Quebec, a Practice to Ban. 10 Questions & Answers*. and a statement calling for a street checks ban by the Government of Quebec. This statement is supported by 20 organizations, including the Ligue des droits et libertés – section de Québec (LDL-QC) and the Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal (RAPSIM).

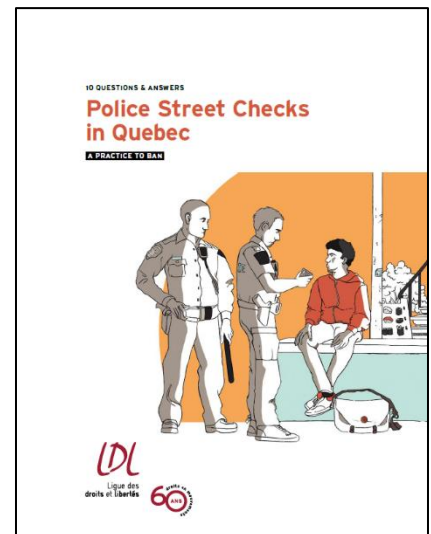
A street check is an arbitrary practice that infringes on various rights and freedoms and is a dimension of racial and social profiling. The street check is a practice which is without legal basis. Police officers do not have the authority, under statute or under common law, to make such stops in Quebec, nor have they demonstrated the necessity of this practice to ensure public safety.

Compared to police traffic stops made of motorists on the road, a street check happens in a public space and is aimed at pedestrians. A street check is an attempt by a police officer to obtain the identity of a person and to gather information, in a circumstance where the person has no legal obligation to identify himself/herself or to answer questions. Such street checks take place outside the context of an arrest, detention or police investigation. One of the purposes of street checks is to gather police intelligence; the information collected can thus be recorded in a police database (the Quebec Police Intelligence Center).

The framework for such street checks which was proposed in 2020 by the *Ministère de la Sécurité publique* and the *Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM)* is nothing but a smokescreen that will not put an end to the violations of rights and to racial and social profiling. It also overshadows the question of the lack of police power to do street checks.

The handbook *Police Street Checks in Quebec, a Practice to Ban. 10 Questions & Answers*. sheds light on the context of street checks, on the difference between a street check and a police traffic stop, on the violations of rights and freedoms, on the lack of a legal basis and finally, on the necessity of banning street checks rather than regulating them.

The LDL invites all those concerned about police street checks, about racial and social profiling and about violations of rights and freedoms to read and share the new handbook and to sign the statement *For a street checks ban in Quebec* (on the website <https://liguedesdroits.ca/>).



Quotes

“The Government of Quebec must ban police street checks, an arbitrary practice that creates insecurity among the people and communities targeted by the police. Any attempt by the authorities to regulate street checks with guidelines is nothing but a smokescreens! says Lynda Khelil, spokesperson for the LDL.

“Eliminating a practice that generates both racial and social profiling, the necessity of which has not been demonstrated, and which has no legal basis, is essential. Police powers are limited and it is the least we can do to demand an end to street checks, when they exceed these powers and cause human rights violations! says Laurence Guénette, spokesperson for the LDL.

“Although often denied, racial profiling is a reality. It results in racialized populations, particularly the Black community, being discriminated against in the public space. Over-policing of Black, racialized and Aboriginal people is racial profiling and a form of harassment.” Says Maxim Fortin, spokesperson for the LDL – section de Québec.

“The last thing a homeless person needs is to be repeatedly stopped by the police. Relations with the police are bad enough and being approached by a police officer can be a source of stress and insecurity, especially when the reasons for this approach are unclear, or even non-existent.” says Jérémie Lamarche, spokesperson for RAPSIM.

Pertinent Facts

Nova Scotia has banned street checks since 2019, following an [independent legal opinion](#) which concluded that police officers in that province do not have the authority to make street checks. The legal opinion was written by a former Chief Justice of the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal, at the request of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. In December 2021, the Minister of Justice of Nova Scotia reinforced its [directive](#) banning street checks.

According to a [report](#) published in 2019 on police stops, including street checks, in Montreal between 2014 and 2017, Indigenous, Black and Arab people are stopped more frequently than white people.

- Indigenous and Black people are 4 to 5 times more at risk of being stopped by police than white people;
- Indigenous women are 11 times more at risk of being stopped by police than white women;
- Arabs are twice as much at risk of being stopped by police than white people;
- Arabs between the ages of 15 and 24 are 4 times more at risk of being stopped by police than white youth of the same age.

According to a [report](#) published in 2021 on police stops, including street checks, in Repentigny, Black people are 2.5 to 3 times more likely to be stopped than white people.

[Statement to sign](#): For a Street Checks Ban in Quebec

[Handbook](#): Police Street Checks in Quebec, a Practice to Ban. 10 Questions & Answers.

The illustrations in the handbook are by Rémi Leroux.

The following organizations support the statement calling for a ban on street checks by the Government of Quebec.

1. Amnistie internationale Canada francophone
2. Association des Avocats de la Défense de Québec
3. Association des avocats de la défense Montréal-Laval-Longueuil
4. Association des juristes progressistes
5. Association québécoise des avocats et avocates de la défense
6. Centre de recherche-action sur les relations raciales
7. Clinique Droit de cité
8. Clinique Droits Devant
9. Clinique juridique de Saint-Michel
10. Clinique juridique du Grand Montréal
11. Clinique juridique itinérante
12. Coalition Rouge
13. Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain - CSN
14. Hoodstock
15. Lakay Media
16. Ligue des droits et libertés - section de Québec
17. Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal
18. RÉSEAU de la communauté autochtone à Montréal

Putting an end to police street checks is a struggle that has been going on across the country for several years. The following organizations from outside Quebec support the fight in Quebec to ban this practice.

1. African Nova Scotian Justice Institute
2. British Columbia Civil Liberties Association

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About the Ligue des droits et libertés

Since 1963, the Ligue des droits et libertés (LDL) has influenced several government policies and bills and has contributed to the creation of institutions dedicated to the defense and promotion of human rights. The LDL regularly speaks out to denounce violations of rights and to make demands of government authorities on the local, national and international scene. The LDL's work of analysis, awareness and consciousness raising is essential to ensure that human rights become the path towards a just and inclusive society for all. As a non-profit, independent and non-partisan organization, the LDL aims to defend and promote the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of the rights recognized in the International Bill of Human Rights.

For information and interviews:

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