



Press Release

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Premier Jason Kenney blames South Asians following blaming the Filipino community for the spread of COVID 19. Kenney should apologize for his comments which demonstrate systemic and direct racism.

With cases of COVID-19 growing exponentially due to Alberta's inadequate regulations for Albertans, Jason Kenney, premier of Alberta, chases to shift blame onto the South Asian community in Northeast Calgary.

Kenney was interviewed Channel RED FM by Rishi Nagar wherein Kenney immediately noted he wanted to "be blunt and get absolutely to the point" in saying that South Asians in Calgary are the reason that numbers of COVID-19 cases have skyrocketed. Nagar reiterates (which Kenney fails to acknowledge) that the majority of the Northeast consists of immigrants who are employed as janitorial staff, taxi drivers, warehouse workers, grocery store workers, etc. all working mandatorily as they cannot work from home. Kenney additionally failed to acknowledge that temporary foreign workers' immigration status is tied to their employment and without employment they are losing more than just a form of income and also their legal status.

Regarding two viral outbreaks connecting to a meat plant in Calgary, Kenney similarly pointed fingers at the Filipino community as most workers are Filipino in the plant. Kenney, as premier of Alberta, miserably failed to acknowledge working conditions present in areas where the virus has spread, and appears to refuse to do so. Kenney blames ethnic groups selectively with any form of connection to the spread of the virus, ignoring socio-economic barriers that force these ethnic groups onto the front lines. Ironically, he neglects to attend to anti-mask protesters in large public groups.

Clearly, there is micro-aggression in all of Kenney's statements to ethnic minorities regarding the virus. From one ethnic community (Filipino) to another (South Asians), Kenney has displayed scapegoating ethnic minorities to cover his own governing inadequacies. If Albertans were to be "blunt and honest" the way Kenney was, we would conclude that the reason Kenney looks the other way from multiple anti-mask protests without safety precautions is because the protesters are predominantly Caucasian. We would be accused of being racist, is this not what the Premier is displaying?

Dr. Mukarram Ali Zaidi states that "Jason Kenney singles out and blames the South Asian Community for the spread of COVID-19, instead of acknowledging they are in the service industry and work for all of us." He suggests that the Premier publically apologize to the South Asian community for his statement and admit that he failed to protect Albertans by dismissing physicians and public health advice".

For further information and comments please contact:

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Canadian Muslim Research Think Tank is a Calgary based national non-profit think tank a leading source of research and policy advice on Muslim affairs in Canada and Nationally.