



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Toronto, Ontario – November 11, 2022

Statement by Autism Ontario: Call for Improved Police Responses Involving Autistic Individuals

Autism Ontario joins the Ontario autism community in expressing our concern and dismay over the treatment of the young autistic man, Abdullah Darwich, who was handcuffed and tasered by Peel Regional Police on Friday, November 4th.

We are disheartened that the Peel Regional Police used [unnecessary force](#) resulting in injuries to Abdullah Darwich. Questions remain as to why Peel Regional Police did not involve a Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team or consult their [Vulnerable Persons Registry](#). When autistic individuals are involved with law enforcement, there is [a higher likelihood of a negative outcome](#).

“I’m so shocked by this,” said parent Mai-Liis Tammemagi. “How is this something that could still happen in today’s society? This was avoidable.”

Autism Ontario calls for increased education and training of police on how to better respond to calls involving vulnerable individuals, especially those on the autism spectrum. We also call for police to review their de-escalation practices to prevent the use of unnecessary force in future situations. In addition, we support the expansion of mobile crisis teams across Ontario.

Autism Ontario encourages the Peel Regional Police to prioritize rebuilding trust within the autism community through a commitment to ongoing education and improved responses involving vulnerable individuals.

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For more information, email Autism Ontario’s media team at media@autismontario.com.

About Autism Ontario: Autism Ontario has a history of over 49 years of representing thousands of families and people on the autism spectrum across Ontario. We are the only organization in Ontario that has elected volunteer parent representation in all areas of the province through our seven Regions. We advocate with and on behalf of all people on the autism spectrum and their families – at all ages and stages of life, reflecting a wide range of expression and abilities. To connect with us, visit <http://www.autismontario.com>.