



## **Media Advisory: BCCLA at Supreme Court of Canada to Fight for Jury Diversity**

**What:** BCCLA at Supreme Court of Canada to intervene in case of *R. v. Chouhan* to argue for jury diversity

**When:** October 7, 2020 at 9:30 am EST / 6:30 am PST

**Where:** Supreme Court of Canada (Ottawa)

Ottawa - On Wednesday, October 7, 2020, the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) will make oral arguments at the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Chouhan*, a critical case about jury diversity. The Court will determine whether the law abolishing peremptory challenges violates the *Charter*. Peremptory challenges allow both sides to block potential jurors.

The BCCLA will argue that jury diversity is essential. Jury diversity limits racial bias and promotes jury impartiality. But Canadian juries are not diverse. White, wealthy property owners are consistently overrepresented on our juries. Abolishing peremptory challenges will make our juries even less diverse and will therefore violate the *Charter* right to be tried by an impartial tribunal.

Joshua Sealy-Harrington, counsel for the BCCLA, states: “Black and Indigenous people in Canada are simultaneously overrepresented as accused, yet underrepresented on Canadian juries—*Chouhan* represents a critical opportunity for the Supreme Court of Canada to reaffirm the central importance of diversity to the equitable functioning of Canadian juries, and to hold the government accountable to a meaningful conception of our constitutional right to an impartial jury.”

The BCCLA is represented by Joshua Sealy-Harrington and Jennifer Klinck of Power Law.

### **Media Contacts:**

- Joshua Sealy-Harrington, counsel for the BCCLA, available for comment in English or French at 520-509-2446 or [JSealyHarrington@powerlaw.ca](mailto:JSealyHarrington@powerlaw.ca)
- Jessica Magonet, BCCLA staff lawyer, available for comment in English or French at 604-359-2415 or [jessica@bccla.org](mailto:jessica@bccla.org)