

Local politicians launch petitions, urge feds to act on crime

By **Mark Pavilons** Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A tragedy close to home has led King-Vaughan's politicians to take action, and urge Ottawa to do more to combat crime. Abdul Aleem Farooqi of Vaughan, 46, was murdered while protecting his family in their home. He was shot in his home Aug. 31 in front of his children by home invaders. MP Stephen Lecce last welcomed Abdul and his son at Lecce's annual community barbecue. Aleem was brutally and tragically killed in his home. An unimaginable tragedy for his family and for the entire community. He was a loving father, family man, and generous community leader with a big heart. Justice is owed to his wife, three young kids, and entire family who will forever carry this pain. They have a simple demand: if you commit a violent crime, you face serious jail time, Lecce said. We owe this to Aleem and to every victim of crime in our community. His memory and bravery will not be forgotten. To join the list of supporters, visit

<https://www.stephenleccemp.ca/reinstate-mandatory-minimum-sentences> King-Vaughan MP Anna Roberts echoed Lecce's sentiments. Our community is shaken. Violence has no place in King, Vaughan, or across Canada, she said. Within a period of 5 days, there were two homicides in Vaughan and our community is shaken. In the most recent homicide, Abdul Aleem Farooqi was in his home, a place that is supposed to be a sanctuary for your family. He was senselessly murdered by armed criminals while his family was in the home. These acts of violence have, and continue to increase, all while Canada's Justice Minister accuses those who advocate for self-defence of wanting to live in the 'Wild West.' Every family in King-Vaughan, and across our nation should feel safe in their own home. We need action, now. There's no time to waste, she stressed. Roberts said she's consistently called on the government to fix Canada's bail system and keep violent offenders off our streets. With this petition, hopes are citizens can send an even stronger message together: public safety must come first. No family should ever feel unsafe in the place that is supposed to be their sanctuary. Yet, Canada's broken bail system and weakened sentencing laws have allowed repeat violent offenders to walk free, putting our loved ones at risk. We cannot wait any longer. I am calling on the Liberal government to take immediate action to strengthen our justice system and put the safety of Canadians first. I invite you to join me by signing the petition. Conservatives continue to call on the Liberal government to end their catch and release bail laws and ensure repeat violent criminals remain where they belong: behind bars. Conservatives have proposed to: Repeal the so-called principle of restraint enacted by Bill C-75 which requires Judges and Justices of the Peace to release accused offenders at the earliest possible opportunity under the least onerous conditions. Repeal Bill C-5 that removed mandatory jail time for serious gun crimes. Amend Canada's Criminal Code to make bail more restrictive for repeat violent offenders, particularly those charged with firearm offences, intimate partner violence, and serious violent crimes. Support law enforcement and victims' rights advocates by ensuring the justice system puts public safety first and provides real consequences for repeat violent offenders. End the easy bail system that allows repeat violent offenders to walk free and terrorize our communities. We must stop the revolving door, keep violent criminals in jail, and keep our people safe. For more, visit <https://annarobertsmp.ca/petition-end-catch-and-release-and-protect-our-communities/> York Regional Police Chief Jim MacSween said when discussing Mr. Farooqi's murder and a number of other violent crimes we experienced in York Region over the past two weeks, some took exception to a piece of guidance he provided to citizens in the event they are faced with an armed intruder at their home. Following these crimes and in light of broader, nationwide conversations about citizens' personal safety, I understand this reaction. I understand the feelings of pain and anger boiling to the surface in our community. And I understand why people feel the need to fight back, and are dissatisfied with any direction to do otherwise. When I told citizens not to take matters into their own hands, it had nothing to do with politics, or with concern over force used against the perpetrators of home invasions. It was suggested as a tactic in the hopes of preserving lives, should citizens be confronted with an armed intruder. When it comes to defending property, material items can be replaced, but lives cannot. There is no one piece of advice to offer to citizens who are faced with an intruder in their home: but calling 9-1-1 immediately and avoiding engagement with the suspects has proven to be an effective course of action. These situations are dynamic, chaotic, and difficult to assess in the moment. Ultimately, a citizen should do what they deem necessary to preserve their own safety, and the safety of their loved ones. Our top priority is solving this heinous, disgusting crime and ensuring those responsible are held accountable. That's what the Farooqi family, and all of York Region deserves.