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NEWS



SARAH TURNBULL,
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PM Trudeau condemns COVID-19 racism, as Tory MP calls for Tam to be fired

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Thursday that “intolerance and racism” have no place in Canada, as one Conservative MP questions the loyalty of Canada’s top doctor, and reports continue to arise of COVID-19 related attacks against Asian-Canadians.



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In a video released earlier this week, rookie Conservative MP and leadership candidate Derek Sloan called for Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam to be fired. He also sent an email to supporters questioning "does she work for Canada or China" in leading the country's response to the pandemic.

In the video, the rural MP representing an Ontario riding criticized the Liberal government for its response to the pandemic and for its reliance on advice from Dr. Tam and the World Health Organization, saying the WHO parroted Chinese misinformation.

Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, has failed Canadians.

Dr. Tam must go! Canada must remain sovereign over decisions. The UN, the WHO, and Chinese Communist propaganda must never again have a say over Canada's public health!
#cdnpoli <https://t.co/2u1JxCAdIV>

— Derek Sloan (@DerekSloanCPC) April 21, 2020

"Theresa Tam followed the World Health Organization every step along the way. She accused Canadians who were concerned about this virus initially for being racist, she also suggested that travel bans were unnecessary and as late as January 14 she suggested that human-to-human transmissions of the coronavirus was not happening when very credible evidence suggested that it was," said Sloan.

Responding to this in his daily press briefing, Trudeau said that: "Millions of Canadians of all different backgrounds who are working together—many, many of them on the front lines to help their fellow Canadians—deserve better than this."

Dr. Tam—who was born in Hong Kong— briefly responded to Sloan's remarks on Thursday, stressing that her focus is directed squarely at controlling the spread of COVID-19 in Canada.

"I'm a pretty focused person and I work really, really hard probably over 20 hours a day. My singular focus is to work with all of my colleagues to get this epidemic wave under control. I don't let noise sort of detract me from that," said Tam.

Also asked about the remarks made by Sloan, outgoing Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer dogged questions about his colleague's statements earlier in the day and whether he supports his position.

"So as a rule I don't comment on leadership candidates or on policy announcements or positions of leadership candidates have taken. I'll leave it to each leadership candidate to speak for themselves and explain their views," said Scheer.

He then turned the focus to the leadership of Trudeau and his cabinet through the pandemic and said questions need to be asked about why they chose to "ignore warnings" from Canadian authorities of the severity of the virus.

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Though, Scheer has also been critical of Canada's refusal to condemn China, amid mounting concerns the country concealed information about the spread of COVID-19 within its borders.

"Why were they so reliant on information that was coming out of the WHO, instead of listening to domestic Canadian voices who were advising this government to take this threat much more seriously much earlier on? That is a choice this government made, and we will hold the government accountable, we will hold ministers and the prime minister accountable for their decisions," said Scheer.

While Scheer was reluctant to comment on Sloan, fellow Conservative MP Eric Duncan made **his views known on Twitter** stating that while he may have questions about Dr. Tam's direction, has never questioned "her loyalty to Canada & best interests of Canadians at heart."

This comes after **another report of anti-Asian racism in Vancouver** in March when an elderly Asian man with "severe dementia" was shouted at and shoved by another customer. According to the Vancouver police, some of the comments were related to COVID-19.

There were 11 hate crimes reported in Vancouver last month, five of which, police say, "had an anti-Asian element."

With files from CTV News Vancouver's Kendra Mangione

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