

# Crowd violence during Nuit Blanche 'concerning'



Toronto civil litigator [Sarah O'Connor](#) says it's unfortunate and concerning the way surly crowds confronted police at Yonge-Dundas Square in Toronto during this year's Nuit Blanche event and she hopes the violence isn't a harbinger of what may happen with the Blue Jays in the playoffs.

"I would just caution the public to be safe while celebrating — or whatever the mood is after the playoffs," she tells [AdvocateDaily.com](#). "People should keep in mind that police have a job to do and for people to be respectful of not only the officers but of their fellow citizens."

O'Connor, the principal of [O'Connor Richardson Professional Corporation](#), makes the comments after revelers became hostile with police — in some cases throwing objects including a bottle at officers while cheering and recording what was happening — in the Square during the all-night outdoor arts festival, reports [CBC News](#).

Toronto's Police Chief Mark Saunders described the incidents as "extremely disturbing."

Police moved into the crowd to investigate reports of someone carrying a gun and when officers arrived, a fight broke out, says the national broadcaster.

Officers arrested a person who was carrying an imitation gun, a knife and a collapsible baton.

Video [that was captured on YouTube](#) shows objects being thrown at police. The objects cracked two police helmets and one officer suffered a broken hand bone, says the article.

O'Connor, who handles state accountability cases, says the public is so quick to jump to criticize when police don't follow procedure, but she's says it's worth noting how officers in this instance maintained the professionalism that the public expects from the police.

She says the events last weekend during the arts festival really highlight the "tough line that they have to walk to patrol and police without being overly aggressive.

"It's a two-way street. The public can't have this mob mentality where they can throw objects at the police and then expect the officers not to have their backs up moving into a situation like that," she says. "I am really impressed by how the police handled this, but I am concerned that this Nuit Blanche crowd is going to affect how officers might patrol any upcoming Blue Jay celebrations."

Toronto's police chief said the incidents during Nuit Blanche point to a need for a discussion about how to behave in public to counter a perception that police confrontations are "to be encouraged, supported and broadcast," says the CBC.

Saunders also said police "will be ready" to handle any large crowds or incidents stemming from the Blue Jays' appearance in the playoffs.

O'Connor says it will be interesting to see how the fans and the police handle the post-season.