

Toronto Police Service News release



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G20 statement from Chief William Blair

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On Monday, November 29, I was interviewed on CBC Radio's Metro Morning, to answer questions concerning the conclusion of an SIU investigation into six allegations against police officers for actions during the G20 Summit.

During that interview I indicated my concern that a YouTube video, used by the Special Investigations Unit to corroborate their finding of excessive use of force, was not what it appeared to be. The tape had been forensically examined by my officers. They concluded it was a compilation of two video segments, with approximately five seconds of audio and video missing.

My language indicated my belief that this gap may have been deliberate and done with an intent to mislead. I wish to make it clear that, notwithstanding there was a five-second gap, there is no evidence to suggest this was done with any intent to mislead. I regret the impression my comments may have created.

In an effort to demonstrate the potential significance of the missing audio and video, I said police were attempting to arrest an armed criminal and that the missing video images might have shed light on the reasons force was used. This statement created a false impression that I wish to clarify. I have no evidence that he was armed or violent and all charges against the injured man have been withdrawn. I regret the false impression that my comments may have created and apologize to Mr. Nobody.

I wish to assure the public that I, and the Toronto Police Service, remain committed to accountability for our actions. We created a G20 Investigative Unit website, asking the public for any information on offences they believe were committed. The unit has received information with allegations against police officers. Those allegations have been forwarded to my Professional Standards Unit where they are being investigated. We conducted our own Professional Standards reviews of other disciplinary matters, such as the wearing of nametags during the G20. We have taken that investigation far beyond the complaints we received. Approximately 100 officers are being investigated.

We are cooperating fully with the investigations of the Special Investigations Unit, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, and the Toronto Police Services Board.

Police officers will be held accountable where there is evidence of misconduct.

It had been my intent to ensure all of the facts are available to the many G20 investigations and reviews currently underway.

Unfortunately, my remarks achieved the exact opposite and I deeply regret any confusion my comments may have created.

Mark Pugash, Corporate Communications, for Chief William Blair