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# City police under the microscope

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Posted: Friday, November 4, 2016 6:00 am | Updated: 6:02 am, Fri Nov 4, 2016.

By Matt Vis, CJ Staff | [8 comments](#)

Thunder Bay police will be put under the microscope for its policies, practice and attitudes towards missing persons and death investigations involving indigenous people.

The Office of the Independent Police Review Director announced on Thursday that it will be conducting a systemic review of the Thunder Bay Police Service for its practices for policing indigenous people.

"Alarming questions have been raised about the way the Thunder Bay Police Service investigates the disappearances and deaths of indigenous people," said Gerry McNeilly, the independent police review director, in a news release.

"Indigenous leaders and community members say that these investigations and other interactions with police, devalue indigenous lives, reflect differential treatment and are based on racist attitudes and/or stereotypical preconceptions about the indigenous community."

The systemic review will focus on nine specific terms of reference, ranging from determining whether discriminatory and inadequate investigations were taking place to communication with indigenous family members, communities and leaders.

The review will be conducted separately from other ongoing OIPRD probes of the police's investigation of the death of Stacey DeBungee as well as an investigation into allegations of racist comments made on social media by officers.

"It is critical that these issues be independently examined through a systemic review, which would enable me to effectively address the issues and make meaningful recommendations for improvement," McNeilly said.

In response, police chief JP Levesque issued a statement declaring respect for the OIPRD's mandate and stating the police will co-operate with the review.

"It is our hope that any recommendations arising from the process will assist us and other police services in Ontario, to move forward towards meeting the needs of our diverse communities," Levesque said in the statement. "We will continue to strive to work towards building a stronger relationship with the indigenous community that we serve."

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said he was pleased with the announcement of the review, the terms of reference and the proposed scope.

The police's handling of the case of DeBungee, whose body was found in the McIntyre River on Oct. 19, 2015 and then declared to not be a result of foul play before an autopsy had been conducted, raised concerns.

"These are very recent incidents. I think they serve to highlight what our community has been saying for a long time, that when it comes to working with the police on their cases they don't see that same level of service; that same level of attention being paid to the deaths of their loved ones," Fiddler said.

The grand chief said he anticipates NAN will be involved in the review, as will a number of their communities.

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"We're hopeful this body that will do this review will capture the concerns and the issues people have with the Thunder Bay police and they're able to also bring forward their recommendations of how we can begin to improve that relationship."

Late last month, Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Renu Mandhane wrote an open letter to Levesque and Thunder Bay Police Services Board chair Jackie Dojack.

Mandhane called on the Thunder Bay police to take measures to be able to address human rights concerns.

"As a first step, we encourage the (police) chief and (police services) board chair to publicly commit to a co-ordinated, time-bound and appropriately resourced human rights organization change project," Mandhane wrote.

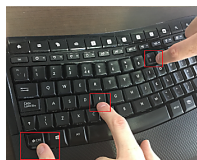
"Such proactive steps would be consistent with your ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code, and may lead to diminished tensions between the indigenous community and members of your service."

The OIPRD is inviting members of the public with expertise and interest in the terms of reference to provide written submissions either through email at [OIPRD@ontario.ca](mailto:OIPRD@ontario.ca) or by letter to their Toronto office, addressed to the Thunder Bay Police Service Practices for Policing Indigenous Peoples Systemic Review by Jan. 31, 2017.

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Calendar grid for November 2016 showing days of the week and dates.

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Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.

6 We'd love to hear eyewitness accounts, the history behind an article.

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### 8 comments:

**Dianne** posted at 9:27 am on Fri, Nov 4, 2016.

Posts: 18

WOW! does it NEVER end with the bloody crying??? Get off your tushes and form your OWN police force then.The police as it is now, CANNOT do their job they are paid to do because if they look sideways at ANY native they arrest, they are put on leave for trying to do their job. I am REALLY sick to death of the TREATY that the white man was stupid enough to give your ancestors a hundred years ago which you do not follow yourselves. YOU are ALL supposed to be living on your reservation. IF you were, you could build your own hospital,clinics AND have you OWN police force. STOP the whinning and look among yourselves for all the violence you are having.MOST of it comes from you own

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**john doh** posted at 9:27 am on Fri, Nov 4, 2016.

Posts: 86

If I was a cop I wouldn't give a 100% effort for a bunch of people getting hammered by a river either. Its a constant cycle of picking up drunk people and bringing them to the emergency ward every weekend, getting called a racist, getting spit on, and getting physically assaulted along the way. It's gotta get to you at some point.

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**JoeBush** posted at 9:24 am on Fri, Nov 4, 2016.

Posts: 1708

For anyone wanting to read the letter from the OHRC to Chief Levesque:  
[http://ohrc.on.ca/en/news\\_centre/letter-thunder-bay-police-service-and-thunder-bay-police-services-board-regarding-systemic](http://ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/letter-thunder-bay-police-service-and-thunder-bay-police-services-board-regarding-systemic)  
He's got a huge job ahead of him to turn this problem around. Good luck!

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**June Bug** posted at 9:02 am on Fri, Nov 4, 2016.

Posts: 54

They NEED to be INVESTIGATED alright....

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**just me** posted at 8:51 am on Fri, Nov 4, 2016.

Posts: 145

There is nothing the Thunder Bay police can do to satisfy the native population. Natives will always pull the race card when arrested or stopped by the police. I suggest the police " drive on " , not worth it. Collect your pay and support your families. The chiefs will never ever accept any responsibility, its the worlds fault.

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**Great White Shark** posted at 8:48 am on Fri, Nov 4, 2016.

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S&P/TSX Ven	760.96	+0.00 (+0.00%)
Nasdaq	5058.41	-47.16 (-0.92%)
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Oil	44.07	-0.59 (-1.32%)

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Posts: 357

If these indian leaders don't like the way Indians are policed, perhaps its time they policed themselves?

We'll just throw them in jail and extradite them back to their reserves. At the expense of the reserves themselves too.

Seems fair to me.

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**Penny** posted at 7:56 am on Fri, Nov 4, 2016.

Posts: 657

Our Police Service gives everyone the same "quality" of service. They treat everyone as if their problem is an inconvenience to them.

And, while you're at it, review their non-existent budgeting program also....

Good luck!

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**chezhank1** posted at 7:42 am on Fri, Nov 4, 2016.

Posts: 772

One does not need a microscope to suspect poor handling by the Thunder Bay constabulary for the reason of death of Mr.Stacey Debungee after reading the findings by Investigative Solutions Network Inc.a private investigation company hired to investigate his death.

The police need to be policed.

Je suis henry wojak

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