

Almost 40 Thunder Bay police investigations being reviewed by watchdog group

30 death investigations and 9 cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women getting 2nd look

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Ontario Independent Police Review Director Gerry McNeilly said his office is reviewing 30 death investigations and nine cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women. (CBC)

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Nearly 40 investigations by Thunder Bay police dating back to the 1990s are being scrutinized by Ontario's Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) as part of an ongoing investigation into allegations of systemic discrimination in the local force.

Gerry McNeilly, director of the civilian police watchdog group, said 30 death investigations and nine cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women in the city are being reviewed.

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- [Thunder Bay public meeting on police practices the 'beginning of a discussion,' says First Nation chief](#)
- [Deaths, criminal charges against police chief slows down review of Thunder Bay Police Service](#)
- [Missing, murdered Indigenous women cases face systemic review in Thunder Bay, Ont.](#)

"These cases are mostly of Indigenous people," McNeilly said. "But we're also looking at some non-Indigenous deaths.

"I want to make sure that we are fully aware how investigations are being carried out, and if they're being carried out the same way regardless of the background of the person."

Interviewing officers

McNeilly said the case reviews have been ongoing since late last year.

In each case, documents are being re-examined and officers are being interviewed, he said.

"We get the file from the police service," McNeilly said. "We do a review of that. I have very experienced staff doing that — staff who have investigative backgrounds.

Director has 'concerns'

"We do a paper review, and then, subsequently, we will interview officers particularly involved in those matters," McNeilly continued.

He said, based on what he's seen so far, he has some concerns.

"We're seeing some patterns that obviously concern me," he said. "I really cannot go into those patterns at this time, because we're not completed with our full investigation or examination of matters."

The OIPRD is hosting a public meeting in Thunder Bay on Sept. 25.

"I'm hoping that members from the communities in Thunder Bay, the different, diverse communities, will attend and share with us their views, their suggestions, comments," McNeilly said. "We're going to work really hard with everyone to make recommendations for improvement in Thunder Bay."