



News Release

For immediate release

Complaints Commission "Surprised" by Government Law Suit

OTTAWA, April 14, 2008 – Peter A. Tinsley, Chair of the Military Police Complaints Commission (MPCC), today expressed surprise and disappointment over the federal government's decision to go to court over a Commission investigation into allegations involving military police conduct in Afghanistan.

At issue is the Commission's ongoing investigation into a joint complaint by Amnesty International Canada and the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association. The Commission is examining allegations that members of the Canadian Forces (CF) military police transferred detainees to Afghan authorities, or allowed them to be transferred, notwithstanding evidence that the detainees could be tortured.

"We're surprised and disappointed by the Government's decision to seek a court order to block the investigation and to prevent a public interest hearing into this important case," stated Mr. Tinsley. "It's especially surprising given the fact that the Government did not challenge our jurisdiction a year ago when we first launched our investigation."

Mr. Tinsley added that, over the last year, various Government departments and agencies have provided the Commission with thousands of documents and made several witnesses available for interviews with investigators. The Chair confirmed that the Commission will continue to investigate the allegations.

"We fundamentally disagree with the Government's position," added Ms. Freya Kristjanson, Lead Counsel for the MPCC on this case. "We are confident the Commission acted within its jurisdiction when it launched the investigation and decided to hold a public interest hearing. We will be applying to the Federal Court to present those arguments."

Established by Parliament in 1998, the role of the MPCC is to provide for greater public accountability by the military police and the chain of command in relation to military police conduct and investigations.

- 30 -

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