

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Complaints Commission Issues Final Report on Afghan Detainee Complaint by Dr. Attaran

OTTAWA, April 27, 2009 – Peter A. Tinsley, Chair of the Military Police Complaints Commission (MPCC), today released the final report into allegations that military police officers failed to investigate the cause of injuries to three Afghan detainees who passed through Canadian Forces (CF) custody in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2006. The complaint by University of Ottawa Professor, Dr. Amir Attaran, also alleged that military police officers failed to treat the three men humanely.

The report deals only with Dr. Attaran's allegations and does not address separate, ongoing investigations into complaints filed by Amnesty International Canada (AIC) and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA).

The Commission's report issued today concludes there was no harm done to the detainees while in military police custody and the injured Afghans were provided with a high standard of medical care.

However, the report criticizes military police for failing to investigate the cause of head injuries to one of the detainees when it was their duty to do so. There is no evidence to suggest a cover-up, according to the Commission, but the report does point to a general failure by military police to understand their duties and responsibilities, to respect the directions set by the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal (CFPM), and to meet the expectations of senior operational commanders in Afghanistan.

In its most far-reaching finding, the MPCC maintains that the measures taken in response to the 1997 Somalia Inquiry report "...have not been fully successful in structuring, positioning and resourcing the military police to enable performance at the required standard..."

The Commission concludes its report by recommending further study into the status and role of the military police to develop a more complete command and control structure, to enhance the overall working relationship between leadership in the military police and the broader Canadian Forces, and to improve training and resourcing for military police.

The Commission's findings and recommendations have been accepted by the CFPM. Recognizing that some of the suggested actions are beyond the CFPM's authority to implement, the Commission's report is currently being reviewed by the Chief of the Defence Staff. A further response is expected before the end of June.

The complete findings and recommendation are attached. The Commission's full report can be found on the MPCC website at www.mpcc-cppm.gc.ca.

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.

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