



Independent Review - Terms of Reference

Mandate

The mass shooting in Nova Scotia on April 18-19, 2020 took the lives of 22 innocent victims and forever changed countless others. The incident devastated entire communities and saddened all Nova Scotians. As the largest mass shooting in Canadian history, its immense impact must be reviewed with compassion, understanding and an unwavering commitment to determine what happened and make necessary recommendations to avoid such tragic events in the future.

This independent review conducted on behalf of the Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia will be a broad review of the mass shooting in Nova Scotia on April 18-19, 2020 (the event), including the causes, context and circumstances giving rise to them, the responses of police (including the RCMP and municipal police forces), and steps taken to inform, support and engage victims, families and affected citizens. The Review Panel will document its findings and lessons learned and make recommendations on preventing and managing such events wherever they may occur. A final report of the review process and findings will be made to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness for Canada and to the Minister of Justice for Nova Scotia and subsequently released to the public.

The review will include the following issues:

- Contributing and contextual factors including the involvement of gender-based and intimate partner violence;
- Access to firearms;
- Interactions with police, including any specific relationship between the perpetrator and the RCMP, and/or social services, including mental health services, prior to the event and the outcomes of those interactions;
- Police actions including operational tactics, response, decision-making and supervision;
- Communications with the public during and after the event, including appropriate use of the public alerting system established under the Alert Ready Program;
- Communications between and among the RCMP, municipal police forces, the Canadian Border Services Agency, the Criminal Intelligence Service Nova Scotia, the Canadian Firearms Program and the Alert Ready Program;
- Police policies, procedures and training for gender-based and intimate partner violence;
- Police policies, procedures and training for active shooter incidents;
- Policies with respect to the disposal of police vehicles and associated equipment, kit and clothing;
- Policies with respect to police response to reports of the possession of prohibited firearms, including communications between law enforcement agencies;
- Information and support provided to the families of victims, affected citizens, police personnel and the community;

- The status of implementation of relevant recommendations from prior reviews and the process for tracking and implementation of such recommendations.

Authorities

An independent Review Panel chaired by the Honourable J. Michael MacDonald together with the Honourable A. Anne McLellan and Leanne J. Fitch, has been jointly appointed by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness for Canada and the Minister of Justice for Nova Scotia to conduct the review.

The Ministers, on behalf of their governments, will ensure, within the scope of their respective authorities, that all institutions falling under the authority of their respective jurisdictions participate fully in the review, including using their authority to the fullest extent.

The Ministers will also require that the Review Panel be provided, subject to applicable legislation and law, with all documents, interviews and inputs as may be required to carry out its mandate.

Where a lack of cooperation of an institution or an individual involved in the review is impacting the Review Panel's ability to perform the review, the Ministers may be notified in writing, and where the institution or individual fails to cooperate within a reasonable time, the Review Panel may notify the public about the lack of cooperation.

Activities undertaken during the review must not compromise any police investigation being conducted in relation to the events of April 18-19, 2020.

All documents and information collected, received and/or considered by the Review Panel during its work or in the preparation by the Review Panel of any interim or final report shall be kept confidential by the Review Panel.

Process and Expenses

The Review Panel will carry out its work and process guided by restorative principles in order to do no further harm, be trauma informed and be attentive to the needs and impacts upon those most directly affected and harmed.

The Review Panel will report to the Ministers on their findings and recommendations.

Costs of the review will be divided equally between the Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia.

Such professional, advisory and specialized services as determined to be required by the Review Panel shall be engaged to support the Review Panel.

Travel to impacted areas may be arranged should that be of benefit to the review.

Subject to approved guidelines established by the Ministers, the Review Panel may, where, in the Review Panel's view, a victim or affected family member would not otherwise be able to participate in the review, recommend the reimbursement of reasonable costs.

COVID-19 restrictions must be taken into account when:

- travel is being considered;

- in-person meetings are being organized; and
- assessing the implications of the use of IT and videoconferencing on the security, confidentiality, and sensitivity of the review.

Timing and Recommendations

The Review Panel will provide to the Ministers by February 28, 2021 an interim report, to be made public, setting out the status of its review together with any findings the Review Panel has made to that date.

A final report, in both official languages, setting out the findings and recommendations will be delivered to the Ministers by August 31, 2021 and will be made public.

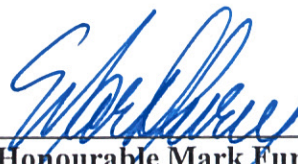
The Review Panel may, in their discretion, provide other public communications on their progress during the course of the review.

Both Ministers commit to fully consider the Review Panel's recommendations and commit to implementation, where reasonable, within a reasonable time.

Signed this 22 day of July, 2020.



The Honourable Bill Blair
Minister of Public Safety and
Emergency Preparedness for Canada



The Honourable Mark Furey
Minister of Justice for Nova Scotia