

Minister
of National Defence



Ministre
de la Défense nationale

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K2

SEP 27 2017

Mr. Stephen Fuhr, MP
Chair, Standing Committee on National Defence
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Colleague,

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, I am pleased to present the official Government Response to the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence entitled: "*Protection of our Military Personnel*," which was tabled in the House of Commons on April 6, 2017.

Allow me to express my gratitude for the Committee's recommendation. Indeed, the importance of protecting Canadian Armed Forces personnel was underscored by the abhorrent incidents highlighted in this report - the murders of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo in October, 2014, as well as the attack on recruiting personnel. The deaths of Warrant Officer Vincent and Corporal Cirillo in particular were grieved by Canadians across the country, and were a stark reminder of the inherently dangerous nature of military service. They highlighted the need to review the suitability of force protection measures in place given the threat environment at the time.

The protection of our men and women in uniform is taken seriously by this Government, as demonstrated in Canada's new defence policy. We continue to make concrete investments to ensure CAF members are better prepared and equipped to meet a range of threats and challenges, now and into the future. Attached is the Government's response to the specific recommendation made by the Committee.

Again, thank you and the other members of the Committee for undertaking the study to produce this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Harjit Sajjan'.

The Honourable Harjit Sajjan, PC, OMM, CD, MP

Canada 

c.c. Elizabeth Kingston
Clerk, Standing Committee on National Defence

Public Safety Canada

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENCE'S REPORT: PROTECTION OF OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL

Introduction

The Government of Canada has considered the Fourth Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), entitled "*Protection of our Military Personnel*," which was tabled on April 6th, 2017.

The NDDN's report identifies three incidents which precipitated the study:

- The death of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, who died after being deliberately hit by a car near a Joint Personnel Support Unit, a support centre for ill and injured military members, in St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, on October 20th, 2014;
- The death of Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who was shot while standing guard at the National War Memorial in Ottawa on October 22nd, 2014; and,
- The injuries of two Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members who were stabbed at a recruiting facility on March 14th, 2016.

In its study, the NDDN investigated the threat environment, the roles and responsibilities of CAF members with respect to force protection, risk mitigation and force protection measures, as well as CAF cooperation with other government departments and police forces. The committee also considered internal CAF studies on force protection and lessons learned. While initially focused on the issue of domestic force protection, the recommendation applies to force protection both at home and abroad.

The Government would like to thank the members of the Committee for undertaking this study. A response to the recommendation put forward in the report is provided below.

Recommendation: That the Government of Canada continue to strengthen its plans and processes to ensure the protection of CAF personnel at all CAF installations.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation. The protection of our men and women in uniform is taken seriously by this Government. As demonstrated in Canada's new defence policy, we are making concrete investments to ensure CAF members are better prepared and equipped to meet a range of threats and challenges, now and into the future.

The protection of CAF personnel is referred to as force protection, a risk management process in which commanders focus resources on the protection of assets, including personnel, which are deemed critical to mission success. Force protection includes an assessment of threats, and includes the mitigation measures employed.

CAF members face a variety of threats, including deliberate threats, such as the conscious efforts of others to cause harm, to threats outside the inherent danger of combat operations, such as occupational and environmental hazards. Given the focus of the NDDN report, however, only protection from deliberate threats are considered in this response.

Within the CAF, a number of organizations are responsible for force protection, including:

- The Director General Defence Security, whose mandate is to protect, promote and support security in defence activities, analyze risks, and develop and implement effective security programs;
- The CAF Military Police Group, whose mandate is to provide security services to the CAF; and,
- Commanders at all levels, who are responsible for the security of the CAF personnel under their command.

Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) is responsible for setting the national force protection level within the CAF, ensuring that the levels are flexible, scalable and adaptable to the different situations across the country. While other commanders may choose to increase the force protection levels for areas under their command based on the assessed localized threats, they may not lower the national force protection level set by CJOC.

CJOC determines the appropriate force protection level by conducting threat assessments in order to determine what force protection measures would be appropriate. A number of inputs are considered in determining the threat level, including intelligence, surveillance, threat and risk assessments, as well as information/intelligence from a number of sources including government agencies such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Communications Security Establishment Canada, the Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and the Government Operations Centre, as well as other government departments such as Public Safety. Intelligence and information can also come from Canada's Allies and partners, in particular the community known as the Five Eyes (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States). The CAF continues to strengthen information sharing capabilities with its Allies and partners in order to better understand the threat level, in turn enabling the CAF to better anticipate and prepare for likely threats.

While the specific force protection levels and associated force protection measures are classified to ensure information is not provided to those who would seek to harm CAF members, there is a wide array of measures that can be taken, as appropriate, in order to address the assessed threat level. Abroad, these could include various levels of access control to defence installations or various levels of personal protection of CAF members, including protective equipment and firearms. This could also include protection against a wide range of threats, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear. Domestically, measures could include restricting access to defence installations, increasing security checks within defence installations, including for personnel and vehicles, and increasing force protection/security

awareness training and exercises.

Reviews of force protection levels and force protection measures are conducted on an ongoing basis to ensure they are effective against prevailing threats. For example, shortly before the attacks on Warrant Officer Vincent and Corporal Cirillo, due to threats from Daesh and intelligence from a number of domestic sources, CJOC released a directive on force protection which directed increased force protection measures. Enhanced force protection measures cannot, however, protect CAF members from all threats, as CAF leadership must accept a certain amount of risk in order to accomplish the various missions the CAF is tasked with.

While force protection level reviews often occur as a result of intelligence and other information, at times, they are reactive. The incidents cited in this Committee's Report resulted in such reviews. Following the October 2014 attacks, CJOC undertook a comprehensive force protection review, which resulted in the maintenance of raised national force protection levels, and amendments to force protection directives, which included limitations on the wearing of CAF uniforms outside of CAF installations and while performing non-duty activities.

Similarly, after the March 2016 attack on CAF members at a recruiting facility in Toronto, a review of security for CAF recruiting centres was undertaken. This resulted in a directive which sought to better balance the need for force protection requirements with the requirement to carry out the recruiting mission. Some of the increased FP measures included more frequent patrols and inspections of the vicinity surrounding the centres, installation of security camera and alarms, exercising responses to potential security issues, and increased vigilance concerning visitors, particularly those with packages.