



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CIVIL LIBERTIES GROUP CALLS FOR RCMP PARTICIPATION IN DZIEKANSKI INQUIRY

The British Columbia Civil Liberties Association is calling for revision of the Terms of Reference for the “study” Commission of Inquiry into the death of Robert Dziekanski to include participation by the RCMP’s ‘E’ Division and the municipal detachments of the RCMP. ‘E’ Division has the contract for provincial policing in British Columbia until 2012 and the municipal detachments providing policing services under contracts authorized by the *BC Police Act*.

According to Wally Oppal, Attorney General for British Columbia, the RCMP declined to participate in the Commission of Inquiry because the RCMP is conducting “its own review”.

“The implicit message in the RCMP’s refusal to participate is that it answers to its people in Ottawa and not to the people of British Columbia”, said Jason Gratl, president of the BCCLA. “The people of BC pay for policing in this Province, but do not direct or oversee policing in British Columbia. If our Attorney General can’t bring the RCMP to heel, then this police force is not our own”.

The RCMP provide policing on contract to the province as the “provincial police force” as well as to specific municipalities such as Surrey, North Vancouver and Burnaby. The result is a patch work of different standards and systems for police accountability for municipal police forces and the RCMP that does not serve the interests of British Columbians.

The Province of British Columbia is currently renegotiating a 20-year contract with the RCMP for provincial policing. That is a mistake. The Provincial Government should consult the people of BC to find out if British Columbians are willing to continue paying for a police force that is not accountable to them but rather to the Federal government.

The RCMP’s decision not to participate in the ‘policy’ aspect of the Commission of Inquiry demonstrates once again that the RCMP insists on maintaining its own training, policy, regulations and accountability mechanisms for the RCMP that differ from those for municipal police in B.C. If the RCMP refuses to answer to the elected leaders of this Province, then British Columbia should establish its own provincial police force as exists in Ontario and Quebec.

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