

June 9, 2020

Investigation commences into March arrest of Indigenous man by RCMP

On June 6, the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) was directed to investigate the circumstances surrounding an incident that occurred on March 10, when RCMP officers had an interaction with a 53-year-old man that resulted in the man's arrest. The man, a member and chief of the Athabasca Fort Chipewyan First Nation, was with his wife and another family member at the time of the incident.

This case provides an opportunity to clarify how ASIRT becomes involved in an investigation. ASIRT, a civilian-led, independent investigative body, was formed in 2008 to fulfil the role of the "integrated investigative unit" that had been developed and defined in the *Police Act*. The scope of ASIRT's mandate is limited by the *Police Act*. Unlike similar units in other jurisdictions, ASIRT does not choose which matters it will investigate. Instead, when an incident occurs where the serious injury or death of a person may have been the result of police conduct, or where there has been a serious or sensitive allegation of police misconduct, the involved police service must notify the director of law enforcement (DLE), who must then decide how the matter should proceed. Of the available choices, the DLE has the option to involve ASIRT. ASIRT is assigned its investigations at the direction of the DLE.

In the current case, as a result of a conversation between the RCMP and the DLE on June 6, the determination was made that the incident fell under the relevant provisions of the *Police Act* and that ASIRT would be directed to investigate. To be clear: prior to June 6, ASIRT had no involvement in the matter in any capacity.

With ASIRT's investigation now underway, there will be no further comment on this matter until the matter has been concluded.

ASIRT's mandate is to effectively, independently and objectively investigate incidents involving Alberta's police that have resulted in serious injury or death to any person, as well as serious or sensitive allegations of police misconduct.

Media inquiries may be directed to:

ASIRT media line
780-641-9099