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• (1535)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec-Centre, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to meeting number 29 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee is meeting today as part of its study of supplementary estimates (C) for 2025-26.

I'd now like to welcome the Minister of Public Safety and the many officials who have kindly prepared for and come to this meeting.

I now invite the minister to give his statement.

Welcome, Minister. You have the floor.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and honourable colleagues.

[*English*]

I would like to start by acknowledging that we're meeting on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for inviting me to speak today on supplementary estimates (C).

[*English*]

I want to take this opportunity to introduce to the committee the new commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada, Talal Dakalbab, who joins us here today.

The safety and security of Canadians and everyone who lives here are a key priority for our government. Whether it is by protecting our borders, preventing a crime, securing our critical infrastructure or giving law enforcement the tools they need, we're committed to doing all we can to keep Canadians safe.

[*Translation*]

That's because we all deserve to feel safe, secure and free in our homes and communities. That's why our government will continue to invest in programs and initiatives that advance public safety.

[*English*]

Public Safety and its portfolio partners are seeking additional authorities through the supplementary estimates (C) to support its work.

A key commitment in our border plan and in budget 2025 is an increase to the number of RCMP officers, with the hiring of 1,000 new personnel. These new personnel will keep our border communities and everyone who calls Canada home safe and secure. To that end, the supplementary estimates (C) contain support for those new resources. This funding will allow the RCMP to recruit and retain the personnel we need to strengthen their federal policing mandate.

Another top priority of ours is ensuring that foreign interference and transnational repression have no place within our borders. The Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act establishes an independent commissioner and a registry to help combat attempts at illegal and unlawful foreign influence.

Anton Boegman's nomination for commissioner was recently approved by both Houses, and authorities sought through the supplementary estimates (C) will support this implementation once the act comes into force. Let me take this opportunity to thank my colleagues from all parties for ensuring the swift passage of Mr. Boegman's nomination through the House.

We also know that transparency and oversight of the work of Public Safety and its portfolio are essential to ensuring that the public has trust in us and in the work we do. Increasing this transparency and oversight across all agencies has been an important commitment of our government.

To support that work, we're seeking funding for national security and intelligence review requirements faced by Public Safety, CBSA, CSIS and the RCMP. We're also seeking funding to establish the public complaints and review commission, which will review public complaints against CBSA and the RCMP. This independent body will provide external oversight for the agency, and investigate complaints about officer conduct or systemic issues in a fair and transparent way.

Additional funding requested by the Correctional Service of Canada will enable CSC to deliver on its public safety mandate and legislated requirements.

Lastly, within the supplementary estimates (C), we're also seeking funding to support the RCMP and CBSA's initiatives to counter drug-impaired driving.

[*Translation*]

I think all my colleagues here can agree that the safety and security of our country and our communities are some of the greatest responsibilities we face as parliamentarians.

[*English*]

I encourage the committee to support the additional authorities we are seeking.

I want to thank all colleagues who are joined here in support of the work we do.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

I will now give the floor to Mr. Caputo for six minutes.

[*English*]

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you to you, Minister. Welcome.

I welcome all of the witnesses, with a special welcome to Commissioner Dakalbab. Welcome to the table and welcome to your new role.

Minister, during the last election, Prime Minister Carney called China our greatest security threat, yet he signed a memorandum of understanding with respect to matters of intelligence. Canadians have not yet seen it. I asked for it roughly a month and a half ago. Where is it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Let me acknowledge that I have addressed this issue on a number of occasions, but let me just repeat today that there is an imperative for Canada to ensure that we meet countries where they're at, not where we want them to be. As a result—

Frank Caputo: Minister, with all due respect—I'm going to reclaim my time—I'm not talking about meeting countries. Where is the memorandum? Why haven't we seen it? When will we get it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: What I will say, Mr. Caputo, is that the memorandum of understanding was signed while the Prime Minister was in China. It was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was an understanding between our RCMP, as well as—

Frank Caputo: Minister, I didn't ask what it was. I asked where it was. Where is it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: If I may, Mr. Caputo, I'm going to ask the commissioner to answer that question.

• (1540)

Frank Caputo: I'm asking you. The buck stops with you. You are the Minister of Public Safety. Where is it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, if I may suggest, the MOU involves the RCMP, and it was signed by Minister Anand on behalf of the Government of Canada. I'd like to ask Commissioner Duheme to answer that question.

Frank Caputo: If I'm not going to get an answer from you, the top person in this portfolio, and that's no disrespect to the commissioner of the RCMP... If you don't know the answer of where the MOU is or when we might get it, I have an issue with that, and I think Canadians will as well.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: You have means by which to obtain that information.

Frank Caputo: I am asking you a new question.

Terrorists in the IRGC are roaming in Canada. There are far too many of them. You have deported one; that's it. With a precise number, how many IRGC operatives do you know to be in Canada? I want just the number.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: At this point we are tracking 24 [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

Frank Caputo: Okay. You know about only 24.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Let me go on the record here, because I don't think my mic was on.

Frank Caputo: You are tracking 24. That's what I heard.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: We are tracking 24 individuals who are deemed inadmissible and who are going through the process of being removed. One of them has a scheduled removal date. We have six who have voluntarily left. We have one who has already been removed. The other 24 will go through the process of being removed. We have due process—

Frank Caputo: I have received things from constituents. A constituent of Persian heritage was so worried that they approached me and emailed me with documents of this.

I'm not sure you answered the question I asked. I didn't ask how many you're tracking. I asked how many IRGC operatives, or related to the IRGC, are in Canada. I just want the number, please.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: What I will say, Mr. Caputo, is that there are a number of assessments we've done. First, there are close to 18,000 files that we've reviewed for admissibility.

Frank Caputo: Minister, with all due respect, I didn't ask you about how many assessments you did. I asked you for—

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, I think it's important that—

Frank Caputo: This is my time.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: We have a point of order.

Frank Caputo: The Liberals are going to rescue the minister. That's great.

You have time to think now, Minister, about how many there are.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Caputo. I unfortunately have to interrupt.

I will turn to the point of order in a second.

As you noted, I was somewhat patient with the overlap of conversations, which was unfortunate for the interpreters and very unfortunate for those who need interpretation to understand the flow of the conversation. Having noted that, I will most likely be more strict with the conducting of those conversations.

I will now turn to the point of order by Mr. Ehsassi.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Chair, it's really unbecoming of a member of this committee to ask a witness a question—

The Chair: What is your point of order, MP Ehsassi?

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: My point of order is that this is not the way to go about asking witnesses questions, and the member, Mr. Caputo, is fully aware of that. He has been around long enough. You cannot ask a person a question and then, when they are attempting to respond comprehensively, cut them off and not allow them to provide you the response.

Frank Caputo: On the same point of order, Mr. Chair—

The Chair: Thank you, MP Ehsassi. That's complementary to what I just said.

MP Caputo.

Frank Caputo: On the same point of order, it is unbecoming of a member of Parliament from the governing party to attempt to rescue the minister when they're not answering the questions—

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: I'm not attempting to do that.

Frank Caputo: I didn't interrupting you, Mr. Ehsassi. I'd appreciate the same courtesy. Thank you.

The Chair: I think we now have a clear invitation to be as serious, engaged and tough on questions as we need to be. At the same time, we need the conversation to be understandable and understood by everyone listening.

MP Caputo, can I turn to the minister for the answer?

Frank Caputo: No. That's two minutes we'll never get back.

In that two minutes, Minister, I hope you were able to consult with officials so you can just give us a number. How many IRGC operatives, or those related to them, do you believe to be in Canada now—not who you're looking at and not who you're scanning? How many are there?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, we are in the process of going through 24 individuals, who are deemed to be members of the IRGC, for removal.

Frank Caputo: This is the last time I'm going to ask this. I didn't ask you how many you are going through. I asked you how many are from a terrorist regime. Iranians across this country have been subject to terrorism. I'm asking, how many—just the number—of IRGC terrorists are there in Canada? If you don't know, please just say you don't know.

• (1545)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, this is a very serious matter. If you will permit me, I will give you the answer that I think Canadians deserve.

Frank Caputo: Give us a number.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Right now, there are 24 individuals who have gone through an assessment, and they've been deemed to be members of the IRGC. That is the position of the Government of Canada. We are in the process of removing them, Mr. Caputo, but I can also elaborate in terms of the numbers—

Frank Caputo: Minister, I don't think I'm getting a serious answer.

Minister, how many people? The last time you were here, we learned through CBSA that 32,000 people had warrants out for them, as in you didn't know where they were. That's one-third of the city of Kamloops. What is that number today?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: That information, Mr. Caputo, is available online.

Frank Caputo: You're not going to tell us.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: It's available online, Mr. Caputo. I can ask—

Frank Caputo: Are you kidding me?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I don't think there's anything funny here, Mr. Caputo.

Frank Caputo: Nor do I.

Canadians, behold your public safety minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I would say that the president of the CBSA—

The Chair: I am sorry to interrupt again, but that's my unfortunate job.

We'll have to conduct this in a manner that is suitable to everyone's understanding. Given that the time is over, we'll need to turn to MP—

Frank Caputo: I have 15 seconds more, by my watch.

The Chair: I can give you 15 more seconds.

Frank Caputo: Thank you.

Minister, Canadians are experiencing crime at an unprecedented level, and you just said it's not your job to know. For that, you should be ashamed. It is your job to know. The buck stops with you.

That's my time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Caputo.

Now it's MP Acan for six minutes, please.

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's a sad start for me to see this. Being respectful is a different thing and asking straightforward questions is a different thing. Once again, we are seeing a very disrespectful start to this meeting, and finishing that 15 seconds with this comment will definitely make good clips for our colleague across the table.

Going back to the minister, I had the privilege of joining you and members of this committee in witnessing the graduation of the officers in class 25C of the CBSA, who will be stationed at points of entry and facilities across our country. Once again, thank you very much for including members of this committee and inviting us to that meaningful day.

Graduation ceremonies like the one we attended symbolize the investments made by CBSA instructors into training new officers, but they are also a reminder of the investments made by the department and the government to support the recruitment of border agents.

Regarding the recruitment of 1,000 new RCMP and 1,000 CBSA personnel to strengthen our border, could you please speak to how the funding in the estimates will supplement the recruitment initiatives outlined by our government?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Thank you, Ms. Acan.

I want to thank members of the committee who were at the first CBSA graduation several weeks ago. I note that on April 2, the first cohort of canine units trained on fentanyl will also be graduating, along with other members of CBSA.

I would like to invite President O'Gorman and Commissioner Duheme to give a response to your question.

Erin O'Gorman (President, Canada Border Services Agency): In terms of CBSA officers, we've hired 50, and we currently have 90 at the college. I'm hoping—God willing—they all graduate.

It's a tough curriculum, but they should graduate by June. Every cohort after that will have members who are attributed to the 1,000 officers.

Sima Acan: Thank you very much for your answer.

Can you also explain, Minister, how this funding complements existing recruitment work and the training programs already under way with the RCMP and CBSA?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Commissioner, do you want to answer this?

Commissioner Michael Duheme (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Yes, sure.

When you're looking at the request for funding in the supplementary (C)s, it's hitting three key areas: federal policing when it comes to our investigative capability; cross-border criminal activity; and targeting clandestine laboratories and synthetic drugs.

On drug-impaired driving enforcement, the RCMP has the lead to train law enforcement from across the country to keep them up to date, with the continuous training and certification of individuals. The last money we're asking for in the supplementary (C)s is for the national security and intelligence review requirements. The last two are recurrent funding that were always related to the TB sub-

mission, to have a proper team to respond to any NSICOP or NSIRA requests.

As for the 1,000, I can share with you that the budget for the RCMP will be coming on April 1, and we've already planned a series of hiring for 750 police officers.

• (1550)

Sima Acan: Thank you very much, Commissioner.

The following question can probably be answered by Ms. O'Gorman and you, Commissioner.

Will this funding be directed towards modernizing the training facilities, equipment or technology to support increased frontline capacity for the agencies?

Erin O'Gorman: I can start.

Part of the funding will be for increasing the stipend that's available. That will allow us to recruit a broader, diverse array of people into the college. It will also equip all of our new officers. In tandem, we've received money through the border plan for significant new equipment: large-scale imaging, detector dog teams and handheld devices.

There will be equipment, large and small, in addition to the personal equipment that all new officers will receive.

Sima Acan: Thank you very much.

Commr Michael Duheme: Are you referring to the budget for the 1,000 new officers?

Sima Acan: I meant the funding that will come to the agencies.

Commr Michael Duheme: I would separate it into three different areas.

One is investigative capability, which touches on national security, transnational organized crime, Arctic security, covert operations, our international footprint and our technical capabilities. That would be one tranche. The other one is with regard to the program training intake model, to look at a training unit for federal policing and applicant screening, because there is a considerable number of new people coming through the process. There's also funding for data digitalization for federal policing in order to upgrade our current systems to improve efficiencies.

Sima Acan: Thank you very much, Commissioner.

Minister, you and many of my colleagues know that I use all opportunities to go around the country and visit with law enforcement and do site visits with them. I had the opportunity to visit the Cornwall point of entry and understand the different operational needs that frontline officers require when it comes to stopping smuggling at the border. This includes the use of different equipment or specialized units to support investigations and operations, whether it's a tactical unit, a canine unit or the surveillance unit.

Regarding the allocation of funding, could you please speak to how these strategic investments will support personnel at our borders, in particular RCMP border integrity units in regions experiencing cross-border smuggling and organized crime?

The Chair: Unfortunately, we went over the time, MP Acan, so I would invite the—

Sima Acan: That was a good question.

The Chair: It was a great question. The time is not so great, so we'll have to find a way for you to get the proper answer from the department and the minister.

[*Translation*]

We now go to Mrs. DeBellefeuille for six minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being with us, Minister.

We'll quickly try to understand the cuts. I've read your departmental plans for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the RCMP, which include 173 full-time job cuts, representing \$130 million over three years. Given what the Auditor General noted in her report about the RCMP's difficulty in recruiting, I don't see how you'll be able to attain your goal of hiring 1,000 border officers, especially since you stated in a press conference that, to keep people safe, the gaps identified by the Auditor General would be filled from among the 1,000 officers to be hired.

I'd like to hear your explanation for that because, right now, I don't agree with you at all. The 1,000 officers need to be dedicated to border management. Are you telling me that these officers are essentially going to be taken away from the border? The number one priority was to have 1,000 officers dedicated to border security. I also doubt that you'll be able to recruit within the deadlines you've set.

How do you explain your answer that officers will be sent to national police services or indigenous jurisdictions?

• (1555)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Thank you for the question, Mrs. DeBellefeuille.

[*English*]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I just want to clarify that with respect to the CBSA, there is a plan, and we can elaborate on the plan itself. People are already graduating from CBSA, from Rigaud, and they are going out into the community—

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: I was talking about the RCMP, Minister.

[*English*]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: With respect to the RCMP, there is a plan in place, which is primarily for federal policing. The 1,000 new RCMP officers are for federal policing, not necessarily for border control. They will undertake a range of functions—

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Excuse me for interrupting, but I just want to understand.

You publicly stated in response to the Auditor General's report that the 1,000 officers you asked the RCMP to recruit for border security could be assigned in the provinces to the provincial police and to indigenous jurisdictions. That's what you said, and we have proof of that.

Are you telling me today that the 1,000 officers will be used for border management?

I'm a member of Parliament in a riding at the border, and I can honestly tell you that there's a lack of resources for managing land, maritime and rail borders. As we speak, there's already a shortage of officers, and you're talking about taking your 1,000 officers and sending them to the provinces or indigenous jurisdictions in response to the Auditor General's report. Is that what you said?

[*English*]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I'm sorry. I believe there's some misunderstanding on this. I will be glad to clarify.

With respect to the 1,000 RCMP personnel—and I use the term “personnel” very deliberately—they are meant for federal policing. They're not for provincial or first nations policing. The recruitment mandate, the \$1.7 billion we received through budget 2025, is for investment in what's called “federal policing”. This also includes border control. The range of work includes cybersecurity, transnational organized crime and anti-terrorism, as well as issues of national security.

The commissioner can talk to you about the recruitment plan—

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Excuse me for interrupting again. Don't you find it strange that, on one hand, you're going to cut \$130 million and 173 full-time positions at the RCMP and, on the other hand, the RCMP is still going to recruit 1,000 officers and assign them to the border? The RCMP is having a hard time recruiting. It's documented.

How can you assure us of this recruitment, Minister? I'm concerned; I'm an MP who's very active on border issues, and every day, I see the lack of equipment and personnel needed to ensure proper border security.

Is there anything you can say to reassure me? Right now, I'm still very concerned about the RCMP's ability to recruit, train and hire 1,000 new officers in three years and assign them to border management.

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I have every confidence, Madame. If you would like for me to ask the commissioner to elaborate, I can, but let me just say that the 1,000 new RCMP personnel are strictly for the federal role of the RCMP, which will include border security as well.

As you're aware, the financial crimes agency of Canada will also be established this spring. About 150 individuals will be earmarked for that—

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Excuse me, Minister.

You said “will include”. When you drew up your border security plan in response to the demands of the President of the United States, you stated that the 1,000 RCMP officers would be assigned solely to border security.

Today, you said “will include”. That's not quite the same thing. I ask you again: Will the 1,000 new officers be assigned to border management, to the security of land, rail and maritime borders, as announced in your border security plan?

The Chair: Unfortunately, although the question was excellent, time is up. The good news is that there will be an opportunity to come back to this question, and the minister will have already heard it, so he'll be even better prepared to answer it.

That brings us to Mr. Lloyd for five minutes.

[English]

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister and witnesses, for being here.

Minister, the declaration period for firearms owners is scheduled to end next week. So far, only 2.5% of the estimated two million affected firearms have been declared, and 98% of firearms owners haven't made a declaration. If they're not declaring by next week, what's your plan, Minister?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: If you will recall, the number of prohibited firearms is far fewer than I think your number indicates. We have over 26,000 individuals representing, I believe, over 52,000 prohibited firearms that have been declared.

The plan we have is that as of March 31, the time to complete the enrolment will be done. The RCMP and other agencies will be available throughout the spring and summer to do the collection.

• (1600)

Dane Lloyd: Minister, you're saying that RCMP members... We just heard an Auditor General report say that we're short 3,400 members. We're dealing with a wave of violent crime across this country. Are you saying that your plan is, over the spring and summer, to deploy RCMP officers to go door to door to firearms owners and seize their firearms?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: This is a voluntary program, Mr. Lloyd, as you're aware. In terms of the RCMP resources and the resources we will use with law enforcement, it does not contemplate in any way using existing resources. These are additional re-

sources—those who are off duty and those who may be retired. In Quebec, for example, SQ has their own mechanism.

Let me be very clear: In no way is this to take away from existing police resources. The resources we have available contemplate individuals who are off duty.

If you want the commissioner to comment, I can ask him to do that.

Dane Lloyd: Minister, I just find it very concerning that we're going to be sending police officers door to door, because, frankly, many police forces across the country are refusing to participate in your program. I think they have very good reasons not to want to participate in this program.

Are you not concerned at all, Minister, about people who are no longer serving as RCMP officers going door to door?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I think you may not understand the full extent of the program, Mr. Lloyd. It's not a door-to-door program. It is a mobile collection that will occur. Individuals will be bringing forth prohibited firearms.

Dane Lloyd: Are those the people who have declared, Minister?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: They are people who have declared.

Dane Lloyd: What about the people who haven't declared?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Well, the program we have in place is voluntary. It's strictly voluntary. They're not compelled to take part in the program.

Compliance with the law is not voluntary, and as you are aware, as of October 30 of this year, the amnesty that was extended expires.

Dane Lloyd: After that amnesty expires, what's your government's plan for firearms owners who might still be in possession of these firearms?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Every police of jurisdiction will, as you're aware, need to enforce the law. Canada is a rule of law country, one that requires adherence to the law.

Dane Lloyd: Thank you, Minister.

A few years ago, we had your predecessor Minister Mendicino here. I asked him if your government had conducted any studies to show that this firearm confiscation program would do anything to reduce crime in this country. At the time, they didn't have any studies. The government hadn't produced any papers or research to show that this would do anything to reduce crime. In fact, in a 2018 engagement paper, your own department stated that based on international experiences, there was no evidence that this would reduce crime.

Has your government produced any reports since then to show that this planned nearly \$1-billion—possibly more—firearm confiscation will actually reduce crime?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: As you're aware, the Mass Casualty Commission report called upon governments to—

Dane Lloyd: That's not the same as a report, Minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: If I may just finish, Mr. Lloyd, I'm getting to your answer.

The Mass Casualty Commission report—

Dane Lloyd: Is there anything other than the Mass Casualty Commission report?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: There's also our experience in Australia. As you're aware, right after Bondi Beach, Australia embarked on the second round of the compensation program. They launched it recently. I've spoken to their minister myself.

Dane Lloyd: That's a very different jurisdiction, Minister.

It's interesting that the PBO suggested that you're going to spend over \$700 million on this gun confiscation. We see in your departmental reports that you're cutting \$132 million from Correctional Service Canada. I've been told that most of that money is for the reintegration and rehabilitation of criminals.

Why are we spending nearly \$1 billion to seize firearms from people who have never committed a crime and cutting funding for programming? You had the correctional investigator resign in protest against your government, and now you're cutting the funding even further for people who are the most at risk of committing a crime in our communities. How can you justify that, Minister?

The Chair: That's another great question for which we will not be able to provide an answer right now.

MP Ehsassi, go ahead for five minutes, please.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you also to the minister for being here once again and for providing very comprehensive responses to all the questions put to him.

I want to follow up on a question that was asked of you. Unfortunately, you were interrupted.

I know you take the issue of IRGC individuals here on Canadian soil very seriously. You have personally told me that. Of course, I hear about this issue quite a bit from my own constituents and other Iranian Canadians.

Given that you are committed to doing a thorough job, could you kindly explain to us what your department is doing?

• (1605)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Thank you, Mr. Ehsassi. It's a very important question.

I think there have been some misconceptions about the work of the federal government vis-à-vis ensuring that we are void of IRGC members.

First of all, Canada listed the IRGC as a terrorist entity in 2024. Canada listed Iran as a state sponsor of terror. Over 500 individuals

have been sanctioned and are ineligible to come here. We have reviewed 17,800 applications for individuals who want to enter Canada through a number of different streams. Based on that, 239 visas were disallowed on suspicion of membership in the IRGC. Among people who are in Canada, there are 32 cases that we have thoroughly investigated.

It's very important to recognize that when somebody is alleged to be a member of a terrorist entity, we have due process. We also have a legal standard we must abide by. Based on the legal standard set by the Government of Canada, 32 people have been established as credible members of the IRGC, out of whom six have left. My previous number was 28. Six have left, and one has been removed, so we're in fact working on 23 individuals who are still in Canada, and we're aggressively trying to remove them.

Make no mistake. Every single individual who is a member of the IRGC in Canada will be removed.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you for assuring everyone that you're moving aggressively on this issue. It seems to me that the member opposite doesn't understand that there is due process and that we live in a rule of law country.

How are things proceeding? Can you give us a sense as to where we're going to be pretty soon?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: We're tracking one removal. By all accounts, it should be completed very shortly, barring any last-minute issues. The others are going through hearings. They will go through Immigration and Refugee Board hearings. In some cases, there may be an appeal to the Federal Court.

What I want to be very categorical about is that no one who's a member of the IRGC is entitled to be in Canada. They are inadmissible under Canadian law. Whether it's one, 23 or more—as some reports have falsely identified—the fact is that we need to ensure every single person who is credibly alleged to have been a member of the IRGC or, in this case, credibly determined to be a member will be removed. That is the mandate I have. That's the responsibility I have. That's the responsibility President O'Gorman has. I've talked to members of her team. I know they're aggressively pursuing every avenue for those removals.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: It would be fair to say, given everything that your department is doing, that it also has a deterrent effect in the sense that anyone who was considering coming to Canada is no longer considering that option, I would hope.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: There are two deterrents. One is someone outside of Canada who may be coming in, and of course, in a moment where the conflict is highlighted, there are dangers if people choose to come to Canada or look at backdoor ways of coming here. Our message to them is that this is not a country that is open for them to come here. That's why we cancelled 239 visas. We do a comprehensive security check before every visa document is issued.

The other deterrent is.... That's why we have six people who voluntarily left. As the law was catching up, and as our CBSA officials were aggressively pursuing the removals, individuals essentially gave up and said they were leaving. That is the second element of it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Even though there was only one formal removal, the other six essentially speak to de facto removals.

• (1610)

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. I'm sorry to interrupt.

Thank you, MP Ehsassi.

[*Translation*]

I now give the floor to Mrs. DeBellefeuille for two and a half minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, we won't pursue our discussion on the RCMP. However, my question was so excellent that the chair himself asked if you could send us a written clarification with respect to my misunderstanding about the 1,000 officers that are supposed to be hired for border management, not for other things.

My question is instead about the fact that Bill C-12 has been passed, that Bill C-8 is about to be passed and that Bill C-22 has been introduced. All these bills give a lot of powers to the Minister of Public Safety, to other ministers and to officials. These bills also have implications for people's privacy.

I'm therefore very surprised to learn that your government has cut 15% of the budget from the only review agency that monitors compliance and enforcement. I find that unacceptable. That's a lot, 15%. Out of \$15 million, that's \$2.7 million. You're eliminating the equivalent of eight analyst and lawyer positions from the only agency whose primary purpose is to monitor the application of legislation and ensure that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the RCMP are following laws and regulations as they are supposed to. You want more powers, but you're eliminating the positions of those who are supposed to ensure that the laws are respected. This erodes my trust in your government because, if I'd been in your place as Minister of Public Safety, I would have advocated for more funding for the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency to make sure that agencies like the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service comply with the law.

I'm very disappointed that I have not heard you mention the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency at all. Even in con-

nection with Bill C-22 they were not consulted, and that is very serious.

My question now is about border officers. I never refer to 1,000 officers, because we've learned that 800 officers will receive full training for border services and the use of firearms. Another 244 officers will be trained each year, in addition to the 575 officers you were already training.

In the current context, you won't reach that objective with just the Canada Border Services College in Rigaud. The cohorts of recruits were added. Two more cohorts were supposed to start their training in Chilliwack. Have they begun their training and, if not, why?

The Chair: Mrs. DeBellefeuille, I'm sorry. That was a good question and an excellent comment, but unfortunately, there is no time left in your two and a half minutes for an answer.

Mr. Au, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC): Mr. Minister, I have questions for you.

As for my first question, you keep talking about hiring 1,000 more RCMP officers, but we just got the Auditor General's report saying that over the audit period, the RCMP hired 2,262 officers and 2,200 left, resulting in almost no net growth. Also, in the last six months, they actually saw negative growth.

Did the RCMP ever realize recruitment was not keeping pace with attrition, and what corrective actions were taken at that moment?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Au, thank you for the question. This allows me to address the issues around the Auditor General's report.

Regarding the recommendations made by the Auditor General, I had a chance to meet with her on Friday. The commissioner has been working with her. The RCMP has accepted those recommendations. In fact, much of the work has already begun. Some of the lags occurred because of COVID. If you look at the time period of 2023-25, it was just post-COVID, and there were also some issues around policing around the world.

We are absolutely committed to implementing the contents of her recommendations. If you wish, I can ask the commissioner to elaborate, but what I can also say is that we can do both. We can recruit more individuals to serve in the regular service, including in contract and indigenous policing, and we can recruit directly for federal policing.

Chak Au: That leads to my second question.

In your opening remarks, you talked about the trust and confidence of the public in the system. Again, the Auditor General found that this is not only about a shortage. The report also talks about the failure of the RCMP to even determine how many officers it actually needs. There was a failure in setting recruitment targets too low, and it missed its own hiring timelines in 97% of cases.

How can Canadians have confidence in Public Safety when the RCMP cannot even plan for or deliver the officers it knows it needs?

• (1615)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: The RCMP is an independent agency of the government. They report through Public Safety, and I have very limited direction in terms of operations. I have every confidence in the commissioner and every confidence in the organization that the recruitment...and the commitments they made to the Auditor General and the commitments they made to me are fulfilled.

We have the resources for an additional 1,000 RCMP personnel for federal policing, and that plan is something I had direct oversight over. I'm absolutely confident that they will be able to implement the recommendations they have given me.

Chak Au: Minister, I take issue with the answer you just gave, because you are the person responsible for overseeing RCMP operations, and this problem is not new. It has been ongoing since 2018.

How could the government allow this to happen for this long? How could you, as the minister, not take responsibility for it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: If you look at the Auditor General's report, it speaks to the time before I was the minister. Since I've become the minister, I've been very aggressive in ensuring that we meet recruiting timelines, but also in ensuring that we recruit the right type of people. It's a conversation I constantly have, not just with the RCMP, but with all of our agencies, including the Parole Board. These are very live conversations that we have to ensure that the agencies that serve Canadians reflect Canadians.

It is an absolute priority of mine, not just in this portfolio, but also in other portfolios in which I've served.

Chak Au: I find the Auditor General's report very interesting. It says applications were sitting for nearly 60 days waiting to be assigned to a recruiting analyst, and 50% of those positions were vacant. Why are these very important positions needed to process applications sitting half empty while we face a national policing shortage?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: There is definitely a disconnect, and I acknowledge the work of the Auditor General in recognizing the disconnect.

There have been 18,000 applicants since April 1, 2025, who have applied to the RCMP to join the list. There are a number of very important hurdles that individuals need to go through. One of the things we will do is streamline that process and ensure that we have a six-month window in recruitment, from the time they apply to the time they enter training, and we will continue to work with the RCMP on those changes.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Au.

Thank you, Minister.

We'll go to MP Powlowski for five minutes, please.

Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Minister, I'm glad to see you here. You can probably predict my questions, as I always ask you the same ones.

In our budget of last fall, we stated:

As part of additional resources for Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) announced on October 17, 2025, CBSA will work with Public Safety, Transport Canada, and Global Affairs Canada to identify additional ports for container import and export designation, particularly in the Great Lakes-St Lawrence Region, like Québec City and Hamilton. This will help catalyse private investment at ports and is essential to diversifying our trade.

I know Madame DeBellefeuille has this issue as well. We would like to see containers going through our ports.

I represent Thunder Bay, which is part of this process, but I've heard from Picton, Windsor, Goderich and Hamilton, and they're all at various stages of being ready. They want this. What's happened between the budget and now in terms of realizing this? You're welcome to ask the officials.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Thank you, Mr. Powlowski, for the advocacy. Madame DeBellefeuille and I have had so many conversations. In fact, I think we're having another one very soon.

All around Canada, there are a number of demands from ports of entry for CBSA's presence. This reflects our overall frame of expanding trade over the next number of years and reflects the demands—and the opportunities, frankly—of the increased trade that happens in our community, including in Picton. There's a demand for Oshawa. I know Ms. Kirkland is aware of that. We also just advanced on the port of Hamilton very recently.

It's important to also understand the frame and the way we prioritize. I'd like to ask President O'Gorman to give us some further insight into that.

• (1620)

Erin O'Gorman: I think it's building on what the minister said. We took that direction in the budget quite seriously and are working very closely with our partners. That reflected that it's not really a CBSA decision. We will go where the economy needs us to be, no question. We're in the ports now. As more ports come online, we will be there.

It's about the economics and the work that our colleagues in international trade and transport are doing. They're working with stakeholders and looking at the ground, rail and highway infrastructure.

Be assured that we are part of those discussions. We are on standby, and we will be part of the supply chain, as we are now.

Marcus Powlowski: I know who to advocate to. Who needs to convince you? You said “trade”. What are the pertinent ministries that we have to get on about this?

Erin O’Gorman: Just reflecting on what was in the budget, there’s Transport Canada, in looking at the supply chain infrastructure and looking, as I said, at rail and road, in addition to marine. Then there are our colleagues at trade, as they look at free trade agreements for trade to flow into Canada and out of Canada. They have an important seat at the table as well.

Marcus Powlowski: Are you ready to go, or have you already started working towards having CBSA services in Hamilton?

Erin O’Gorman: The Hamilton decision was with regard to warehousing, and we have been working closely with the proponent there. A separate decision would be involved in the Hamilton port itself, but certainly that’s part of the discussions.

CBSA can’t be a barrier for the future of the Canadian economy. We are an enabler. We need to be at the ports that are functioning and getting containerized cargo.

Marcus Powlowski: We’ve heard about the shortages of RCMP officers. A CBC report came out today stating that it looked like it was getting worse. I know we put money towards 1,000 new officers for federal policing.

In my riding and in northern Ontario between White River and the Manitoba border, they used to have, I think, 25 RCMP officers. It was down to two and a half. I understand that after about a year of trying, they’ve increased it by one.

What more can we do? What other money is available to address this backlog? You’re welcome to ask your staff.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Thank you, Mr. Powlowski.

I’ll pass it to the commissioner to respond to that.

Commr Michael Duheme: When you’re looking at the additional funding, the RCMP’s approach over the last, I’d say, five to six years when it comes to federal policing is that we looked at bringing in the resources to address the key priorities in the different provinces. We saw this in Quebec when I was there several years ago. We shut down several detachments to mobilize resources in the larger centres—i.e., Montreal, Quebec and along the border.

If the threat intelligence picture dictates that we need to increase our footprint, with the 750 who are coming, that’s something we can assess and take into consideration.

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner.

Let me now move to MP Caputo.

Frank Caputo: Thank you.

Minister, there is an offender with the surname Ray. I’m sure you’re familiar with this person. He was released on UTAs. Do you know his incarceration security level?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Not off the top, Mr. Caputo.

Frank Caputo: As minister, would you be okay with him being incarcerated in an environment without fences?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I beg your pardon. What was the question?

Frank Caputo: As minister, would you find it acceptable if you learned that he was incarcerated in an environment that contained no fences? Would that be acceptable in your eyes?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, we have independent bodies that make those decisions.

In terms of the classification of security levels, that is done through Correctional Service Canada. If it’s an issue of parole, that is through the Parole Board of Canada.

Frank Caputo: I understand that.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: These are questions that are devoid of ministerial intervention, as you’re aware. I cannot direct either agency to—

• (1625)

Frank Caputo: You can have a review. If it was the case that this person, this offender, Ray, was housed without fences, would you initiate a review after learning that?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Caputo, I am not going to speculate, and I’m not going to give you responses to scenarios.

If you have a particular concern, I will be more than willing to look at it. I look forward to that. Send me a letter or an email or even talk to me, and I will be more than willing to have that conversation with you.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): I’m going to continue from here. Thank you.

Minister, your 2026-27 departmental plan lists community safety as a core responsibility, one of your targets being 4% or greater of the percentage of Canadians who think that crime in their neighbourhood has decreased. It feels like that’s an admission of failure of your government to address the community safety of Canadians. Perhaps it’s a typo, but I’m going to dig deeper into this to find out.

It feels like you have low confidence that most Canadians will not think that crime in their neighbourhoods will decrease. Why have you set the benchmark at only 4%?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Look, I go across Canada. I’ve met so many police leaders and civic leaders. The top-line numbers on crime are actually trending down. For example, in the city of Toronto area I represent, homicides are down 50%, but the sense is that the feelings of Canadians, their sentiments, vis-à-vis crime and public safety remain high. The role of Public Safety is to ensure that there is greater confidence in our system overall.

Rhonda Kirkland: Would you say you feel comfortable with only 4% of Canadians feeling that their neighbourhood crime has decreased? Are you comfortable with that target?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I would say every Canadian should feel and has a right to feel safe in their communities.

Rhonda Kirkland: Is that a yes or a no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: My answer is that every Canadian has a right to feel safe and to be safe in their communities.

Rhonda Kirkland: That's fair. I'm going to move on.

Do you think that when a convicted first-degree murderer and child rapist who is supposed to be serving a life sentence is released into a community for 72 hours unescorted, as in Oshawa recently, it creates a loss of confidence in our government's ability to prioritize community safety?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Ms. Kirkland, I appreciate the question you asked with respect to this issue. What I will say is that we have a system in place. We have the Parole Board of Canada, which makes those determinations. These are not political decisions, nor are they made by Public Safety. They are made by experts.

Rhonda Kirkland: Excuse me for interrupting. I just want to check this. Was your office at all aware of or briefed on the Oshawa case prior to it happening? Were you aware that it was going to happen?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I believe it may have been concurrent. I believe they were maybe on the same day. I did get some heads-up, I think, at the time this happened. I was advised that the Durham Regional Police were very much involved.

Rhonda Kirkland: Yes. Durham Regional Police issued a warning that we should watch our backs.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Yes, but I will clarify that, Ms. Kirkland, because it's been a number of weeks. I will clarify the sequence.

Rhonda Kirkland: Thank you. I would appreciate your clarification on that.

I've heard from hundreds of Oshawa residents, like loved ones of Darren Pepin, who were outraged by the temporary unescorted release of first-degree murderer and child rapist Ray. Do you personally feel that these individuals have a right to be outraged by his release?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: People have a right to feel safe in their community, and with issues around public safety, when someone's rights are violated—

The Chair: Be very quick, Minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: —and when crimes are as heinous as what we saw with Mr. Ray, it does outrage—

Rhonda Kirkland: Will you commit to reviewing it?

The Chair: I'm sorry; I have to interrupt.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I will commit to getting back to you with the information, and then I'd be more than willing to discuss what other options there are.

The Chair: I'm sorry to interrupt.

Thank you, Ms. Kirkland, and thank you, Minister.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramsay, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

Jacques Ramsay (La Prairie—Atateken, Lib.): First of all, I'd like to acknowledge the nomination of Mr. Dakalbab.

[*Translation*]

Congratulations.

[*English*]

Minister, Canadians have heard what appear to be conflicting messages about the nature of foreign interference and transnational repression in Canada. Can you help us clarify what is happening and the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement and our security agencies?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Thank you, Dr. Ramsay. It's a very important question.

I will ask Director Rogers and then Commissioner Duheme to answer, and then I will add my perspective.

• (1630)

Daniel Rogers (Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service): Thank you, Minister.

CSIS continues to be very concerned with issues of transnational repression and foreign interference generally in Canada. We continue to be very vigilant against the threats from many different countries, and our assessment of that has not changed substantially over time.

That action on our part looks like, as we have said before, intelligence collection, sharing information with law enforcement, community engagement and other types of actions that could disrupt foreign interference. For our part, we remain vigilant against all of the threats that we have previously described.

Commr Michael Duheme: I will add to that.

We work very closely with the service. We have to understand there are two distinct mandates here when we're looking at foreign actor interference. We are aware of foreign states that engage in such activities in Canada. You saw this in the inquiry—the foreign interference commission led by Justice Hogue—that looked into that. You saw my public statement in October 2024.

We're seeing foreign interference as well as transnational repression. We're seeing threats, intimidation and harassment. We're seeing physical and online violence as well as the surveillance of communities, political dissidents and their families. There is interference in Canada's democratic institutions and electoral processes, which we saw last time.

It is something we take very seriously. I stated in media interviews that sometimes it can be challenging, from a law enforcement perspective, to bring charges through the judicial process that exists and connect a foreign entity and its involvement. We work very closely with the service on that to reassure Canadians that information is shared. We also work well with law enforcement across the country.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: If I may add to this, it is very important to recognize that we have faced a number of threats over the years in foreign interference as well as transnational repression. It has impacted many communities. As I meet communities across Canada, I hear this in different parts of the country.

One thing that I want to assure Canadians is that every single issue of foreign interference or transnational repression that involves another country is addressed, sometimes through bilateral channels or sometimes through the criminal justice system. We have one particular case that is going through the courts in British Columbia as I speak. It is absolutely critical that every single Canadian, regardless of where they came from and regardless of the country in which they were born, live in Canada free of intimidation by any foreign actors.

We're absolutely resolved in ensuring that those who seek to interfere with or repress Canadians—those who are outsiders and who are state actors and non-state actors—are held to account.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, honourable member.

That concludes the first part of today's meeting.

Thank you, Minister. On behalf of all the committee members, I want to extend our sincere thanks for your time today.

I believe most of the other witnesses are staying with us, so we will say goodbye to Minister Anandasangaree.

I am suspending the meeting for a few minutes.

• (1630) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1635)

The Chair: We'll resume the meeting.

I have two things to say before starting the second part of this meeting on supplementary estimates (C) for 2025-26.

First, there will most likely be a vote in the House at 5:45 p.m., which means we will probably have to end our meeting by 5:15 p.m. at the latest.

Second, I was wondering whether we could quickly obtain the committee's consent on a motion that was debated by the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, which met about two weeks ago. The motion reads as follows:

That the study created on Thursday, September 18, 2025, by the committee regarding the role of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) in supporting maritime trade in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence corridor (Highway H2O) and the study created on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, by the committee pertaining to the agreements concluded between Canada and the United States to allow for the clearance of containers at Canadian ports, be merged into one study; that

the committee undertake no more than three meetings as part of this study; and that the first meeting of this study take place on Thursday, March 26, 2026.

Does the committee wish to adopt this motion?

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: This enables us to continue for the second hour of this meeting with the officials who are in front of us.

We'll start with MP Caputo for six minutes, please.

Frank Caputo: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ms. O'Gorman, you saw my exchange with the minister, clearly. You are aware that last time you provided a figure—I think you probably know what I'm asking about—regarding the number of people who are on warrant at this time. Last time, it was 32,000.

How many is it?

Erin O'Gorman: As I am sure you know, because it's public and updated regularly, there are 33,000 people on immigration warrants right now.

Frank Caputo: I actually didn't know that. I don't have the time every day to check.

Things have gotten worse since the last time you gave us that number. In fact, there are more people at large now on warrants who are foreign nationals and who, as far as I can see, are illegally in the country because there is a warrant for their arrest.

Every time we come to committee, we're told that it's going to get better. Can you tell us why it got worse?

• (1640)

Erin O'Gorman: I have never testified about things getting better or worse. I testify to what CBSA is doing.

Since the last time I was here, CBSA has increased its weekly removals by 50. We've gone from about 400 a week to about 450 a week, but the number of cases coming into our inventory has also increased, from about 500 a week to about 600 a week.

It's not for CBSA a “better” or a “worse”. It's about executing on our enforcement mandate.

Frank Caputo: I understand. Thank you.

Erin O'Gorman: I also want to talk about the fact that we work closely with our law enforcement partners. Some of the people on warrant are actually in prison, and because they are on warrant, when they're released our law enforcement colleagues will call us, and we will come and take carriage of them.

Frank Caputo: I wasn't trying to put words in your mouth. We're told by the government that things are getting better, but things have gotten worse.

To our new commissioner, welcome, Mr. Dakalbab. If I'm not pronouncing that correctly, please let me know.

You and I have spoken before, and I have some questions, some of them pointed. I don't expect you to know the answers. What I would ask is that you get back to me or the committee in writing on these issues.

There have been a number of escapes from minimum security in the last three years. I trust that you know what an override is. Somebody is coming out in the computer at "medium", but somebody makes the decision to make them a minimum-security inmate.

Can you please advise this committee and me of how many of those who have escaped in the last three years were on override status?

Talal Dakalbab (Commissioner, Correctional Service of Canada): You are correct. I don't have the number yet, but I'd like to clarify that there is no doubt, as I start as the commissioner, that my top priority—and I'm happy to work with every member around this table—is the security of the public. This is the number one priority that I have as a mandate, as well as ensuring the security of our staff.

We will make sure that you get the number for these overrides, but to be clear, the system doesn't give the final answer. There is an assessment, and there are criteria in the CCRA that have to be followed in order to establish the level of security.

Frank Caputo: I am aware that the override doesn't just happen. There's policy, but somebody does come out at a number, and Corrections can adjust it or decide the security level.

One thing that's been told to me by multiple people is that there's a use of pseudonyms. I've asked for these things in ATIPs. Have you ever heard of CSC using pseudonyms for people's names—including me, a parliamentarian—in order to avoid access to information requests?

Talal Dakalbab: I am absolutely not aware, but I am on day two.

Frank Caputo: Yes, of course.

Talal Dakalbab: This is something I will have to look into, because if that is the case, that is obviously not the purpose of the Access to Information Act.

Frank Caputo: I would ask that you do a thorough investigation. I would ask that you investigate, frankly, people like me and my name. I have had people come to me and tell me that this is a common practice on encrypted devices. I believe those devices should be examined, and if people are using methods to try to stymie ATIPs, that should be ended immediately. My office is open if people want to talk to me about it—because people already have.

Are you prepared to report that back to this committee as well?

Talal Dakalbab: I would need to verify what is going on, and if it is happening, I am more than happy to be transparent about the actions we will take to address it.

Frank Caputo: Thank you. I appreciate that.

We're already off on a better foot than in previous meetings. I appreciate that.

This is the last thing I'm going to ask you about. There's an ISIS fighter, an ISIS sniper, doing time. I believe that within two years, he was transferred to minimum security. This is a person who went overseas and dreamed of being a suicide bomber. I saw him twice in minimum security, with no fences and townhouse-style living.

How is somebody like that in minimum security when minimum security requires a person to be a low public safety risk? How is that possible?

Talal Dakalbab: I'm not familiar with the case, but if this person has been in minimum for two years—

Frank Caputo: Well, they went into it after two years of their sentence, so very early.

• (1645)

Talal Dakalbab: I heard that you had seen them multiple times in minimum. If they've been living in a minimum institution without a risk of escape, I honestly believe that this means the person has had the proper assessment.

I just want to be cautious, because I've heard at this table multiple times now the reference to minimum, medium and maximum institutions. Obviously, the escape is a different issue, but most of these people are coming back to our communities. We need to make sure we are managing them properly so they can return to the communities in a safe manner and as law-abiding citizens.

I'll look into it, but I—

Frank Caputo: This is an ISIS terrorist and that's an issue for me.

The Chair: I'm sorry to interrupt, but the time is over. Time is always too short.

We'll go to MP Acan for six minutes, please.

Sima Acan: Commissioner Duheme, the Auditor General's report yesterday on recruiting for the RCMP emphasized that work is needed to ensure that the RCMP meets full operational requirements. Last week, your agency released the recruitment plan for 2026 to 2029. The plan outlined key actions the RCMP will undertake to address the concerns outlined by the Auditor General surrounding the application process and workforce planning, which include understanding training times, the application times and implementing a recruitment model that reduces national vacancy concerns.

The recommendation from the Auditor General is for the RCMP to recruit approximately 3,400 additional officers to meet operational requirements across the force. Budget 2025 provided \$1.8 billion over four years to strengthen the organization's response to threats and support the recruitment of 1,000 new RCMP personnel to support its federal policing mandate.

Could you share with members of this committee the actions being taken through the RCMP's recruitment plan for 2026 to 2029? Would you say that these investments and initiatives by the government are steps in the right direction?

Commr Michael Duheme: There are just a couple of things I want to hit. The funding we got for the 1,000 employees—it's 750 police officers and 250 public service employees with a special skill set—is aside from what came out of the Auditor General's report. The Auditor General's report does say that we would require up to 3,400 additional resources, and that's if I had no attrition. The 3,400 would cost close to \$900 million. Currently, we are funded for simply 40 troops going through, and we're cash managing for 45 to 50 this year.

I think there's an important step here. The Auditor General's report was not a surprise to us. Actually, the RCMP had already invoked some measures to address the shortcomings where the organization had been lagging in bringing people in the door for several years. I'll bring up three points.

The process we have is very linear. We've brought someone in from the exterior who is looking at the whole process. We were comfortable having a more dynamic process based on what we saw with the Five Eyes and with other Canadian law enforcement so that we will be able to get entry, from the time you apply to the organization to when you get to Depot, down to six months. It brings a more human side to the whole process, because that's important. We don't want to lose anybody during the process because it's taken too long. That's one good thing. We're already seeing this with a pilot project that started in February.

The other reason we find ourselves in this situation is retention. At one point, we had the old mentality that anybody who joined the RCMP would serve anywhere in Canada. The reality is that we were seeing a lot of people joining the RCMP, getting fully trained, going to the posting and then transferring to another police department. Then we would be without that resource. We saw several like that, so we adopted a more flexible post, according to priorities and where people want to go.

The last key reason we find ourselves in this position I'd chalk up to leadership not addressing the issues as they're raised. You heard the minister earlier. This dates back to COVID. You had the unfortunate incident of the George Floyd matter, and then you had the defund the police campaign. Citizens had less of an appetite to join law enforcement. This was typical with all law enforcement. I think we were a little slow getting out of the gate for that, and it's about catch-up right now.

Sima Acan: On the topic of the supplementary estimates, the Auditor General's report mentioned the force generation program totalling “nearly \$355 million for both 2023-24 and 2024-25”.

Funding fundamentally plays a role in supporting the training infrastructure at Depot, from instructors to facilities used. Financially, each officer is an investment of experience and capital, as you also mentioned here.

At this committee, we have heard from academics and from representatives of the National Police Federation about dedicated funding for specific programs, whether for border security or training.

Would the RCMP benefit from predictable and dedicated funding streams to support its federal policing mandate? Could you comment on how that would impact operations and recruitment?

• (1650)

Commr Michael Duheme: Very quickly, we are extremely focused on ensuring that all pennies and dollars that come in for federal policing are spent on federal policing. That is Sam's job.

We are doing a detangling exercise, if you wish. We realize that there's some federal funding that comes in to support Canadian law enforcement—not just the RCMP, but Canadian law enforcement writ large. We want to untangle that to see exactly what the government is supporting across the country and where it desires to be in that law enforcement space when it comes to funding.

If funding is dedicated to federal policing, we will have stronger federal policing as we move forward, because the funds are meant for federal policing.

Sima Acan: Thank you very much, Commissioner.

President O'Gorman, as I mentioned, I had the privilege of attending the CBSA graduation in Rigaud, and it was a very exciting day for those officers, who will be working to keep our borders safe and secure.

My question is primarily about CBSA recruitment. Of course, the government has made funding allocations toward 1,000 new CBSA personnel, but I was wondering how that staffing will support our agency's ability on the front line—for example, with removals or staffing ports of entry or immigration detention facilities.

The Chair: Unfortunately, we'll have to see whether Ms. O'Gorman and her team can answer the question in writing. That was a great question too.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, the floor is yours for six minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. O'Gorman, I never thought I'd talk to you about your 1,000 officers because I believed the answer I was given.

We'll stop talking about 1,000 officers and instead talk about 800 officers, because 800 officers will be trained, including in Rigaud, where the full training is provided. I did the math and figured that, to reach the goal of 800 officers, at least 240 more need to be trained every year for three years. These officers are in addition to the 575 already trained in Rigaud. That gave a total of 840 officers trained toward the target set by the minister. It started this year and will end in 2029.

The director of the Rigaud school was so happy to tell me that the target would be met because two cohorts of recruits were being added in Rigaud and two were being added in Chilliwack. I learned that it didn't work in Chilliwack.

Explain to me how you are going to reach your goal of 260 new additional officers this year with just the two cohorts from Rigaud. It's a matter of math for me. Can you explain it to me clearly and briefly?

Erin O'Gorman: We can train at least 750 officers in Rigaud per year.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Yes, but with 150 officers, you can't—

Erin O'Gorman: I said 750 officers.

Claude DeBellefeuille: You said 750 officers?

Erin O'Gorman: Yes, it's 750 officers and 10 cohorts.

We lose up to 300 people because of attrition and departures. In recent years, that figure has been about 150. This means that we'll be able to train approximately 850 candidates in Rigaud over the next three years. We don't think we'll need Chilliwack. If we find that we need Chilliwack, we'll use it. If we train 750 people, minus losses because of attrition and people who leave, we have the capacity—

Claude DeBellefeuille: We won't argue about math. I know that, in the past, with the number of people who were trained and the people who left, things would more or less break even. It balanced out. There weren't many more. With the surplus, I expect that there will be more officers and that attrition won't be taken into account. According to my calculation, that makes 840. You say you'll be okay with only two more cohorts in Rigaud. Is that right?

Erin O'Gorman: In past years, we had additional expenses. In recent years, it wasn't just attrition. We had money for other government initiatives.

• (1655)

Claude DeBellefeuille: Okay, but I'm talking about the recruitment of the 800 new officers. We're not talking about the other 200 officers, because they won't be trained in Rigaud and they won't have their firearms course. I don't want to argue with you, because you're very good and it's hard to be right with you. However, I know it's going to be difficult with just Rigaud. I was hoping the two extra cohorts from Chilliwack would serve as reinforcements for the border officers who, I will say, are short on human resources. You know, in my opinion, the Canada Border Services Agency plays a crucial role in security, but also in regional economic development.

In addition, as Mr. Powlowski said, being so tight on human resources prevents you from addressing the situation in the port re-

gions and from having a different and less rigid business model. I find that the agency is rigid and not creative. It doesn't innovate to help small regions manage and develop businesses using a much less rigid model. I find the agency is rigid.

The fact that you are recruiting 1,000 new officers over three years, or rather 800 officers, won't provide more officers to Valleyfield or Mr. Powlowski's region to take care of small or medium-sized ports, which are important partners in the supply chain. That's very disappointing for us. Even though it's in the budget, Mr. Powlowski and I know we won't have officers at the ports. We know this because you chose other ports that already have or will have infrastructure, and that's very disappointing.

I'll discuss it with the minister again this week, but it's a struggle that Mr. Powlowski and I share because these are our regions, and we're expecting flexibility from the agency, but we're not seeing it. We know you're short on resources, but we expect you to be able to do more with less in that case. However, we don't sense that political will in your organization.

I wanted this message to be heard because this is the reality for a number of Liberal and Bloc members here. Our ridings are located along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. We're at our wit's end because the agency isn't supporting us in developing new, less rigid, more modern methods that take change into account and the way business is done in port regions.

I don't know if I have time left, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: No.

Claude DeBellefeuille: That is my appeal to you.

The Chair: Yes, we heard it clearly. It was clearly expressed but, unfortunately, time is already—

Claude DeBellefeuille: That's fine. As part of my study, I'll have time to ask you other questions.

The Chair: It's already done.

Mr. Lloyd, you have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Dane Lloyd: Thank you.

I'm going to start with Ms. Geddes.

I asked the minister if you had any studies or internal analysis on whether the gun confiscation plan, which will cost nearly \$1 billion, will actually reduce crime. Can you tell this committee if you have any documentation of this kind that you can share?

Tricia Geddes (Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): I'm happy to provide you with more details on the analysis that went into the design of the program.

Dane Lloyd: I'm not asking about the design of the program.

People don't build a playground in this country without a feasibility study, and your government is putting \$1 billion into a gun confiscation regime, money that could be spent on so many different law enforcement and public safety priorities.

Do you have a study that says this policy is going to reduce violence and crime in this country?

Tricia Geddes: I think the minister referenced one of the most critical reports we received, which contained the results of the Mass Casualty Commission, the results of a truly tragic event, with a great amount of—

Dane Lloyd: I'm sorry. The Mass Casualty Commission made recommendations, but it didn't provide any academic analysis on whether the gun confiscation policy would reduce crime. In fact, I think there are many questions about why numerous reports were made that the killer in that case had illegal firearms—he did not have a firearms licence—and nothing was done about it. I think that's a question that many Canadians still have today.

The fact is that you've evaded the question. Does the government have a study that shows that gun confiscation will reduce crime?

Tricia Geddes: We have a number of studies at Public Safety that show the comprehensive approach that you have to take in order to reduce crime in Canada, particularly gun crime. This is one element that the government has chosen among many other elements that we are investing in. There's border enforcement to deal with the illicit flow of firearms—

• (1700)

Dane Lloyd: We have a program of nearly \$1 billion, and we have no study that says there will be a concrete reduction in crime as an outcome.

Changing tack here, I see in the departmental reports that the funding for the disaster financial assistance arrangements is dropping from \$1.1 billion to \$156 million. That's an 86% cut in DFAA funding. We know that disasters are getting more widespread. How can this government cut that funding by 86%?

Tricia Geddes: This is a formula. Upon receipt of invoices from provinces and territories, we provide, according to a formula, an amount that is meant to compensate the communities and the provinces and territories that have suffered through an event.

The funds allocated to us in any given year can fluctuate year over year. You see it in our reports at the end of the year.

Dane Lloyd: Do you anticipate that those funds will increase beyond the departmental report?

Tricia Geddes: Certainly.

Dane Lloyd: Okay. Thank you.

My next question is for the CBSA.

I recently learned that the vehicle identification numbers of exported vehicles are being used to clone or mask stolen vehicles in Canada. CBSA has engaged in what I consider to be a monopolistic arrangement with a private sector company to provide them with a monopoly on exported VIN data, which is then sold through comprehensive vehicle reports to used car dealers at a cost to them.

Why isn't this information being provided free of charge by the CBSA to registry agents so that our registries that are registering vehicles can spot stolen vehicles that are being used from exported vehicle VINs?

Erin O'Gorman: Our arrangement with Carfax and Équité, which is a not-for-profit, is working. We've had good feedback. The number of stolen vehicles is down, and the work we're doing with them and with law enforcement is showing results.

Dane Lloyd: Why isn't this information being provided? I can go on the CPIC website and put a VIN in and find out if it's a stolen vehicle, but the government is giving this information specifically to a for-profit company, which is charging its customers for this data. This is data that could be highly useful in stopping the selling of illegal stolen vehicles in Canada. Why is the government not providing this information?

Erin O'Gorman: There are privacy aspects related to this that we have worked out with the Privacy Commissioner and these organizations.

I'm not aware of them profiting off of this. It's a non-profit. We are providing them with information, and they are working with law enforcement.

Dane Lloyd: I think it's a bit ridiculous to say that there are privacy considerations when this information is being sold to car dealerships and anyone can access this information after they have purchased a car. There is no confidentiality and privacy once this information is being sold to dealerships.

Why isn't it being given to registry agents? At a registry, when vehicles are checked, that information is tracked. We could give this information to registries across Canada, and we could identify stolen vehicles today at a much lower cost than what this government is giving. Why aren't we doing it?

The Chair: You have 10 seconds.

Erin O'Gorman: I'm happy to look into that, but right now, the organizations are working with law enforcement to address stolen vehicles through this arrangement, and it's working.

The Chair: Thank you for that exchange.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramsay, you have the floor for five minutes.

Jacques Ramsay: I have a follow-up question for Mr. Rogers that stems from my question to the minister earlier.

Given that Commissioner Boegman will be starting soon, in the budget that has been allocated, is there any funding for the collection and retention of foreign interference intelligence that will be used for the new registry?

Daniel Rogers: Thank you for that question.

Supplementary estimates (C) include only \$9.1 million, and that's intended for very specific things at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

[*English*]

It's for network equipment and some upgrades and for support, as the commissioner and others have said, to review.

Overall, our funding has increased over the last year, and we have increased our ability to do foreign interference-related intelligence collection and response. That's something we're seeking to increase and not decrease, given the state of concern we have over the developments in Canada and across the world. It remains a priority for us, even if it is not specifically funded under this set of supplementary estimates.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Dakalbab, could you tell us more about the operational pressures at institutions related to health, safety, the inmate population and the outdated facilities that would explain higher costs in the budget for the coming years?

Talal Dakalbab: Thank you very much for the question.

To begin, I'd like to say how proud I am to hold this position and to manage an organization like Correctional Service Canada. Honestly, I believe this mandate is extremely important to the safety of the Canadian public.

I'm aware of some challenges we'll face. I know Correctional Service Canada infrastructure is a topic that merits further study, and I want to do that work with my team. Of course, I also want to ensure the well-being of employees and make sure we offer the necessary programs and human services for inmates, so they can integrate into society as law-abiding citizens.

Costs and the inmate population are increasing. Many aspects of the inmate population are increasingly difficult to manage. The population is aging and has greater medical needs. Work is also needed on the system in general, because we're seeing more and more cases of mental health and drug issues.

Federally regulated crimes are also becoming increasingly violent. In terms of organized crime, which was discussed today, there's a real need to adopt a truly holistic approach to tackle the issue.

However, to stay focused on my mandate, I look forward to speaking with employees and members of Parliament. I already have meetings scheduled with some members to hear their feedback. I'd be happy to meet with others as well, and with partners such as non-profit organizations and, of course, unions.

I know there's a challenge. The financial situation requires taking time to look at ways to achieve more stability and address the growing needs of excluded employees. That number is increasing, and, of course, I think more consideration will need to be given to infrastructure.

I look forward to getting involved with everyone, understanding the reality and coming back with a proposal for the minister.

The Chair: Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Claude DeBellefeuille: I'm pleased to hear from you, Commissioner Dakalbab.

It's true that there are major challenges at Correctional Service Canada. I have visited two federal penitentiaries, Port-Cartier and Drummondville. I can sincerely say that I was struck by how dejected and burnt out the correctional officers were. There are never enough of them to meet the minimum ratio, putting their lives at risk. It's discouraging. It really affected me to see correctional officers who also suffer from a lack of recognition. There are many problems related to infrastructure as well. I think federal penitentiaries need some attention and modern equipment.

I think the voices of the people working in penitentiaries need to be heard. They know what's needed to do an effective job. It's also a matter of ensuring safety during interactions between inmates, and between inmates and staff.

I'm glad to see that you're open to meeting with us to hear our feedback on what we've seen during our visits. We'll schedule a meeting.

Finally, I have a quick question for Mr. Duheme.

I don't understand how it's possible to be efficient while cutting \$44 million a year for three years. That's the spending reduction that the government asked you to achieve. You need more tools, more technologies, more equipment, modernization and drones. You need more border officers.

As an administrator and manager, how can you meet these needs while achieving the budget cuts required by the government?

Commr Michael Duheme: Mrs. DeBellefeuille, I would have been surprised not to have a question from you during this meeting.

I can tell you that the RCMP was spared from the 15% budget cuts that all departments faced. In our case, the cuts represent only 2% of expenses.

We can comfortably say that the \$44-million cut won't have any impact on our operations or our recruitment strategy. In fact, the cuts focus more on structure, at RCMP headquarters, and on travel and overtime expenditures, which we want to reduce.

• (1710)

Claude DeBellefeuille: It won't have any impact on—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mrs. DeBellefeuille, but I really must cut you off.

Mr. Gill, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses who are here today. It's always a pleasure to work together to make sure that we can serve all Canadians of this great nation.

I want to start off by mentioning that yesterday, the Minister of Public Safety boasted about the graduation of the first new cohort of CBSA officers, which is a tremendously great accomplishment, and we congratulate them. I feel that across all party lines, we are all very glad that 58 new officers are coming forward, but I want to bring forward concerns that were brought to my attention about the minister failing to mention that, of the cohort of 58 new graduates, only 28 are going to be put towards the 1,000 promised by the Liberals.

It's now March 2026. After months, we are still waiting for the number of graduates to increase, which we, and all Canadians actually, want to see. Will future cohorts be larger, and when can Canadians expect to see meaningful increases in numbers?

Erin O'Gorman: To date, we've hired 50 CBSA officers. We currently have 90 in various cohorts actively at the college, and I hope that all of them graduate—it's a tough program—by June. Then, we will be having cohorts every five weeks after that.

We have to cover attrition. As I said previously, at its height, it was around 300. It's been lower in the past few years, and we have had various initiatives from which we have already graduated people.

We are laser-focused on the uniformed members who will form part of that, and we're looking at any opportunity we have to do it faster, but as I said, we have the capacity for about 750 officer trainees to go through Rigaud each year. Attrition has been half of what it's been lately, and I don't expect a spike, so there might even be an opportunity to go a bit faster than planned.

Sukhman Gill: Is there any way that you can provide a clear timeline within your capacity? When will these 1,000 officers be fully trained, deployed and operational? Is there any timeline you could give me?

Erin O'Gorman: We are doing that over the next three years, but we are looking for every opportunity to go faster. I'd be happy to report, at subsequent meetings, how we're doing on that.

Sukhman Gill: If the timeline you've placed in front of me of the next three years fails to be met, who will be held accountable?

Erin O'Gorman: I'll be held accountable.

Sukhman Gill: Would you also say the commitment of the minister has anything to do with it, as he has also made claims many times that this will be followed through on, as we know?

Erin O'Gorman: I feel my personal accountability here. I will leave it to the committee to talk about ministerial accountability. I have the people on the ground to put these individuals through.

We have about 300 pre-qualified people who have applied, and we have put them through the various paces to say that we would like to invite them to Rigaud. Then we map that against where we are going to send our officers. We're not going to flood one port of entry with all new people. It's about all of those puts and takes and how we put them out into our workforce in a way that maximizes their success.

Sukhman Gill: That gets right into my next question.

I talked about border vulnerability. My riding of Abbotsford—South Langley is a prime example of that. It's right next to a border crossing. I have a border crossing in Abbotsford. I have another border crossing within Aldergrove, and right next to my riding is Surrey, where there's another border crossing touching our Langley-Surrey border entry.

I've been talking to officers on the ground, and the Abbotsford Police Department specifically has mentioned to me the spike in the number of operations they've had to investigate, right next to the border, of people who are illegally crossing the border, and that they need to beef up security because our borders are vulnerable. That's what we are hearing from the Abbotsford Police Department and from the RCMP in Langley as well.

If and when these officers are actually deployed, how will they be distributed? When we look at Canada as a nation, our provinces, the province of British Columbia and my riding and community of Abbotsford—South Langley, what are the criteria you are using to decide which officers are sent where, and how are the Liberals choosing to prioritize officer deployment?

• (1715)

Erin O'Gorman: You mentioned ports of entry. I want to recognize that our officers who work in the Lower Mainland are doing an excellent job. Our seizure rate is up 60% for narcotics. Some of that is coming through, as I said, the Lower Mainland. This is just to say that they're doing an excellent job.

The deployment will be based on risk, largely. We see increased marine traffic. We see rail traffic increasing. We hope that as things evolve, more people will start crossing the border back and forth like they used to. We will go based on risk, volume and trade.

I briefly want to talk about the importance of our trade officers. It's one part of the mandate that sometimes gets missed. They are also important for the economic security of Canada.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Let's now turn to MP Powlowski for five minutes.

Marcus Powlowski: Commissioner Duheme, we've talked a lot today about the need for more RCMP officers. Can you tell me how many RCMP officers are currently on prolonged sick leave specifically related to stress, PTSD and that sort of thing?

Commr Michael Duheme: If it's related strictly to PTSD, I don't have that number with me, unfortunately. I'd be more than happy to come back to the committee with a number.

Marcus Powlowski: Could you do that? I'd also like the total figure related to stress leave. PTSD might just be one form of stress. I don't know if you know this, but my understanding is that the numbers have drastically increased in recent years. Is this true?

Commr Michael Duheme: Again, not knowing the numbers and what we saw...

Going out on a limb, I would dare to venture that it probably did increase because of the environment in which our men and women operate on a daily basis. Police work on the front line has changed drastically over the last five or 10 years. I wouldn't be surprised if we have seen an increase in that.

I would be more than happy to return with the right numbers.

Marcus Powlowski: You said that things have changed. You insinuated that things have gotten worse, but I think the minister said that crime in Canada has actually gone down. How has it been worse for police officers?

Commr Michael Duheme: What we're facing now is different from what we faced 10 years ago. When it comes to law enforcement, the respect no longer exists. Look at, for example, the theft of vehicles and how that is being done. It's something we've never seen before. The dynamic in our environment is challenging.

Sir, we respond to three million calls a year, and 99.9% of them are resolved by the officers' presence and just verbal communication. That 0.1% is where use of force at different levels is involved.

Marcus Powlowski: Are you saying that society has changed? Is there more criticism of police and more disrespecting of police, and has that made it harder to recruit and keep police officers?

Commr Michael Duheme: I would say that the pendulum is swinging back towards an interest.... If you look at last year, we had just above 20,000 people apply to the organization. Right now, we figure we're going to close the year off at roughly the same number—around the 20,000 mark—which signals to me that there's a strong appetite to join a great organization and do police work.

Marcus Powlowski: We also talked a fair bit about the IRGC. A colleague from my own party here knows more about this, perhaps,

than any of you. My understanding is that military service is mandatory in Iran. You don't have a choice, when you're drafted into the military, as to where you go, so some people may have ended up in the IRGC despite the fact that they don't believe in the methods, philosophy or actions of the IRGC.

We've heard a lot about throwing them out. Are there any provisions that account for the fact that some people may not have been voluntary members?

• (1720)

The Chair: I let the question go on, but as you may have noticed, the votes have been called. According to our regulations, we should adjourn, unless there is unanimous consent to continue.

Do you want to hear the answer?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Let's hear the answer, and then we'll go.

Erin O'Gorman: That is such an important question.

CBSA doesn't just declare people members of the regime or members of the IRGC. We have to prove it. Designating the regime renders everybody in the top half, the executive, inadmissible. The IRGC, by nature of its organization, renders everybody who has served in it inadmissible.

To your point, CBSA has to prove this before the IRB in order for the individual to be declared formally inadmissible and be removed. Consideration about coercion to serve is material in those cases.

CBSA deploys its resources to those at the upper echelons, we'll say. I don't want to say we won't have more junior people. We really try to focus the cases we make and the research we're doing, having regard for the mandatory military service you talked about. The regime is not entirely nuanced if you're a member, but it's at the IRB where those issues can be brought forward.

When you look at the priorities of the CBSA, junior members who served a minimum amount of time may find themselves less of a priority for CBSA officers than somebody who is senior in the regime.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Very good.

I sincerely thank all the senior officials who were with us today.

For the MPs, the committee meeting on March 26 will focus on the study of port clearance practices. We will then return on April 14 for the next meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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