

Canadian Politics EXCLUSIVE Freedom Convoy Law Enforcement

RCMP officers uncomfortable with political pressure, Emergencies Act during Freedom Convoy: internal report

By Cosmin Dzsurdza, True North Wire - May 13, 2024

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An RCMP review of the federal police response to the 2022 Freedom Convoy reveals that officers were uncomfortable with the unprecedented invocation of the Emergencies Act and felt immense pressure from government officials.

The report titled, "National After-Action Review into the RCMP's response to the 2022 Freedom Convoy," was made public last week.

One of the key concerns raised by officers involved in the response was that they were uncomfortable in exercising the additional powers granted to police by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's invocation of the Emergencies Act.

"Respondents felt it was unclear what impact the invocation of the Emergencies Act had on the police response and police authorities. Furthermore, some respondents expressed they felt uncomfortable applying the peace officer authorities granted once the Emergencies Act was invoked as they did not feel that they had a clear understanding of those authorities," wrote the RCMP.

"Some respondents who were deployed in the National Capital Region also indicated they felt uncomfortable enforcing certain legislation because the

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police of jurisdiction did not appear to be taking enforcement action.”

Although the Liberal government maintained that the police were independent and at arm’s length from government officials, officers responding to the protest reported that the need to provide hourly intelligence updates for ministers and the government’s politicization of policing harmed their efforts.

“Interviewees also indicated that there were issues with information and intelligence that was disseminated to external Government of Canada agencies. Specifically, some Government of Canada partners would misrepresent the information or misattribute third-party information as RCMP information,” the report reads.



As noted by the report, federal ministers often requested intelligence from the police and misinterpreted the data for their own ends.

“Interviewees often noted that various Government of Canada partners would reach in directly to specific intelligence teams and or individuals for information which did not respect the RCMP chain of command or established protocols for requesting information from the RCMP,” it continued.

At the height of the Liberal government’s response to the Freedom Convoy, then public safety minister Marco Mendicino claimed the police faced no pressure from the government and were entirely independent.

“The community expects the law to be obeyed and public safety to be upheld. The federal government has been there from day one to support the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Police Service, and the RCMP has provided officers and other additional resources. It is important to note that operational decisions are made by the police, independent from the government,” Mendicino assured the House of Commons on Feb. 7, 2022.

Except respondent RCMP officers expressed in post-response interviews that they felt the pressure from the Liberals was “high” and their role was becoming “highly politicized.”

“The pressures from government and the public to resolve the blockades were high during the convoy,” the report reads.

“Interviewees and survey respondents felt that the police response to the convoy events were highly politicized. This was particularly the case with respect to the convoy events in the National Capital Region, where various elected officials and senior Government of Canada officials were of the view that it was the RCMP’s responsibility to resolve the blockades in Ottawa.”



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Additionally, RCMP respondents said that the intelligence provided to their respective task force was of dubious quality and had an overreliance on legacy media reports.

“According to survey results, intelligence dissemination was not always timely or accessible. Specifically, respondents noted that they would receive information about various threats through media reporting and various social media pages rather than directly from the RCMP,” the report reads.

At the time the legacy media frequently cited partisan groups like the Canadian Anti-Hate Network whose director was found to have spread a false narrative that an antisemitic flyer was present at the protest. In reality, the photograph was from an unrelated protest in Miami.

Media also reported a false claim that protesters involved with the Freedom Convoy were responsible for an attempted arson of a downtown Ottawa apartment building. Later investigation showed it had nothing to do with the protest.

Media reporting that relied on misinformation was even criticized by the final report produced by Public Order Emergency Commissioner Paul Rouleau.

“I am also satisfied that there was misinformation about the Freedom Convoy, which was used as a basis to unfairly discredit all protesters,” wrote Rouleau.

“Where there was misinformation and disinformation about the protests, it was prone to amplification in news media.”



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