



## Serious Incident Response Team

Civilian Director's Report  
SIRT-NL File No. 2025-0036

Stephen Ring  
Director  
June 15, 2026



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## Introduction

On October 10, 2025, the Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT-NL) received notification from a member of the public’s legal counsel advising that their client was injured by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) during his apprehension under the **Mental Health Care and Treatment Act** (MHCTA) on June 1, 2021.

## Mandate

SIRT-NL is a civilian led oversight agency that conducts its own investigations into serious incidents. Serious incidents within this context are those involving serious injury, death, sexual offence, domestic violence, or any matter of significant public interest arising from the actions of a police officer in Newfoundland and Labrador. Because this matter involved an allegation of serious injury being caused by police officers, it fell within SIRT-NL mandate. I directed an investigation into this matter on November 10, 2025.

The strategy for the investigation was a traditional one focusing on interviewing witnesses and obtaining any corroborating and/or refuting evidence that was available.

## Terminology

I have made the following substitutions to protect the privacy of those involved:

- “Affected person” or “AP” for the individual who alleged he was assaulted;
- “Subject Officer” or “SO” for the police officer who is the subject of this investigation;
- “Witness officer #” or “WO#” for any police officer who provided relevant information; and
- “Witness #” or “W#” for any civilian who provided relevant information.

## Investigation

The SIRT-NL investigation began on November 10, 2025, and concluded on June 1, 2026.

During the investigation, SIRT-NL took the following steps:

- Collected and reviewed:
  - RCMP investigative file.
  - Statement of Claim filed at the Supreme Court of NL by AP’s legal counsel
  - Copy of a RCMP Public Complaint that was made by AP
  - AP’s medical records.
  - Photographs of AP’s injuries taken by AP.

- Two of the three Subject Officers' police notes and reports.
- Medical opinion of the Chief Medical Examiner.
  
- Obtained audio recorded statement from AP.
  
- Obtained audio recorded statements from WO1.
  
- Collected and reviewed audio recorded statements from:
  - W1, W2, and W3.

## Overview

This investigation was initiated following a referral from legal counsel acting on behalf of AP. It concerns an allegation of assault with a weapon and assault causing bodily harm by the RCMP while apprehending AP on June 1, 2021, in Happy Valley–Goose Bay. The incident arose after police attended AP's residence in response to concerns expressed by family members regarding his mental health and safety. During the interaction, AP was detained under the **Mental Health Care and Treatment Act** and transported to hospital for assessment.

The investigation examined the circumstances surrounding the use of force by the involved officers, including the use of a conducted energy weapon (CEW) and physical control techniques, and whether such force resulted in bodily harm. It further considered related medical information, witness accounts, and prior police review processes to determine whether the actions of the officers constituted a criminal offence under the **Criminal Code**.

## The Affected Person (AP)

On January 7, 2026, the SIRT-NL investigator obtained an audio recorded statement from AP. The following is a summary of AP's account of what happened:

AP described returning to Labrador after several years away and stated that, by June 2021, he was struggling with chronic pain, mental health issues, and what he later described as PTSD. He advised that on June 1, 2021, he was at his parents' residence packing his belongings when RCMP officers attended due to concerns raised by his family regarding his mental health. He stated that his initial interaction with one officer was calm and conversational; however, after officers spoke further with his family, he was informed that he would have to go to the hospital. The affected person reported that he wished to step outside for a cigarette and, as he attempted to leave the room, he was grabbed from behind and placed into what he described as a rear naked chokehold, dragged back into the room, and forced onto a couch or bed. He alleged that additional officers became involved, with one placing a knee or foot on his chest while another deployed a CEW multiple times. He stated that he had difficulty breathing, began to lose consciousness, and eventually blacked out. According to AP, he regained consciousness handcuffed in a police

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vehicle, was transported to hospital, received an assessment for physical injuries, and was later released.

AP stated that following the incident he experienced ongoing neck pain, breathing and swallowing difficulties, and psychological trauma, which he attributed to the police interaction. AP advised that he was later diagnosed with cricoarytenoid joint dysfunction by an ENT specialist and believes this condition resulted from being choked by RCMP officers. During his interview, when questioned about any prior neck pain, the affected person initially denied having any such issues; however, when advised that medical records indicated he had been assessed for neck pain in 2020, he acknowledged those prior attendances but stated he had forgotten about them and maintained that the police encounter in 2021 significantly worsened his condition. He further advised that he felt the hospital assessment focused primarily on physical injuries and that he did not receive meaningful mental health treatment at that time. The affected person expressed frustration with the police response, the subsequent complaint process, and the lack of accountability, and stated that he is seeking compensation for the impact the incident has had on his physical health, mental well-being, and personal relationships.

### **Witness Officer**

There was one witness officer interviewed by the SIRT-NL investigator.

#### **Witness Officer 1 (WO1)**

On March 4, 2026, the SIRT-NL investigator obtained an audio recorded statement from WO1. The following is a summary of WO1's interview:

WO1 advised that he conducted a use-of-force review in July 2021 in his role as an Operational Skills Maintenance Instructor with the RCMP. His review was limited to a Subject Behaviour/Occurrence Report related to the deployment of a conducted energy weapon during the incident. He indicated that his assessment focused on whether the reporting officers' actions were consistent with RCMP policy and the Incident Management Intervention Model, considering factors such as subject behaviour, risk assessment, and the presence of potential threats, including information suggesting possible access to a firearm. WO1 concluded that the use of the conducted energy weapon was justified, proportionate, and consistent with policy, and that the level of force applied was appropriate in the circumstances. He noted that his review was confined to the use of the conducted energy weapon and did not involve a comprehensive reinvestigation of the incident or assessment of other force options.

### **Civilian Witnesses**

#### **Witness 1 (W1)**

On January 14, 2026, the SIRT-NL investigator obtained an audio recorded statement from W1. The following is a summary of W1's interview:

In an audio recorded interview conducted on January 14, 2026, W1 advised that she was in a relationship with the affected person at the time of the incident and was approximately eight months pregnant. She described AP as experiencing significant mental-health difficulties in the period leading up to police attendance, including emotional withdrawal, heavy cannabis use, and statements indicating suicidal thoughts. On June 1, 2021, AP received a phone call from AP's mother indicating that "things were not good" at home. Upon arriving, she learned that AP had become upset after water was spilled on him, leading to a destructive outburst and a broken window. AP's parents wanted him brought to hospital, but W1 advised that he wouldn't cooperate voluntarily. She suggested that RCMP intervention might be the only option, and the parents agreed.

W1 advised that when RCMP first attended the residence, AP spoke with the officers and told them that everything was fine and that there were no concerns. W1 then separately informed the officers of the affected person's prior statements about suicide, references to a suicide note, and an incident involving access to a firearm. She stated that the officers appeared surprised by this information and returned to speak with the affected person again. W1 did not witness the subsequent interaction between police and the affected person but reported hearing raised voices and what she perceived as a physical struggle from another area of the residence. Afterward, the affected person told her that he had been tased and choked by police; however, she advised that she could not confirm this account as she did not observe the interaction. W1 further stated that following the incident, the affected person directed anger toward her and his parents, and their relationship subsequently ended.

#### **Witness 2 (W2)**

On January 11, 2026, the SIRT-NL investigator obtained an audio recorded statement from W2. The following is a summary of W2's interview:

W2, AP's father, advised that his son was experiencing worsening mental-health issues in the period leading up to June 1, 2021, including withdrawal, anger, and erratic behaviour, and that he and his wife felt police assistance was necessary to have their son taken to hospital for help. He stated that RCMP officers attended the residence and were provided with information about the affected person's condition. W2 did not witness any physical interaction between police and his son, as he and his wife remained largely outside the residence. He reported hearing raised voices and what he described as a brief "scuffle," which sounded like a physical struggle, but he could not see what occurred. He advised that the affected person was eventually removed from the residence by police and transported to hospital. After returning home, the affected person was angry with his parents and later complained of neck and back pain, which he attributed to police actions. W2 also advised that he had previously removed a firearm from the home due to concerns about his son's mental state and the potential for self-harm. When discussing pre-existing injuries, W2 stated that AP had previous sport related concussions but otherwise no significant prior neck or back issues.

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### **Witness 3 (W3)**

On January 11, 2026, the SIRT-NL investigator obtained an audio recorded statement from W3. The following is a summary of W3's interview:

W3, AP's mother, advised that her son had been exhibiting symptoms of significant mental distress prior to police attendance, including depression, withdrawal, changes in sleep, and refusal to seek medical care. She stated that the family believed police involvement might be the only way to ensure he was taken to hospital for assessment. W3 reported that several RCMP officers attended the residence and spoke with family members before interacting with the affected person in another room. She did not witness the interaction between police and her son, as she left the immediate area due to household distractions. She reported hearing raised voices but no specific details of what occurred. After the incident, the affected person told her that he had been tased and placed in a neck hold, and she later observed that he was angry and upset about the police involvement. W3 confirmed that a firearm had been removed from the home due to concerns regarding the affected person's safety. W3 also stated that within days or about a week, AP returned to hospital due to neck pain<sup>1</sup>.

### **Subject Officers**

The subject officers declined to participate in an interview.

### **Medical Records**

On November 4, 2025, AP's legal counsel provided medical records for the period of 2016 to June 2024.

A review of AP's medical records indicates a documented history of mental health concerns, including anxiety, depression, and episodes of suicidal ideation, dating back to at least 2020. The records also reflect that AP presented for treatment relating to neck pain and associated symptoms in July 2020, approximately one year prior to the incident in question. On June 1, 2021, the date of his apprehension, he was assessed at hospital for mental health concerns and was noted to be experiencing active suicidal thoughts; however, the medical records do not document any complaints of assault or the presence of physical injuries at that time. In the years following the incident, the affected person continued to report symptoms of psychological distress, including features consistent with post-traumatic stress, and attributed both physical and psychological concerns to his interaction with police. In December 2024, he was diagnosed with cricoarytenoid joint dysfunction, a condition affecting the neck and larynx, which he associates with the 2021 incident.

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<sup>1</sup> There is no medical record of any such visit by AP.

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## Review by Chief Medical Examiner (CME)

The CME reviewed the affected person's medical records to assess whether the diagnosis of cricoarytenoid joint dysfunction could be attributed to the interaction with RCMP officers on June 1, 2021. The CME noted that there was no contemporaneous medical documentation recording neck injury, assault, or symptoms consistent with acute neck trauma following the police encounter. The CME further observed that the affected person had documented complaints of neck pain and swallowing difficulties approximately one year prior to the incident. While acknowledging that a chokehold can, in some circumstances, cause injury to structures of the neck, the CME advised that such an injury would typically be associated with immediate and recognizable symptoms, which were not documented at the time. Based on the available medical evidence, the CME concluded that the affected person's symptoms in 2024 may have predated the police interaction or arisen from non-traumatic causes, and that a causal connection to the alleged police conduct could not be medically established.

## Photographs

The photographic evidence provided by the affected person consisted of four images purporting to depict marks from the deployment of a CEW. No visible injuries or notable marks were observed in the images.

## Issue and Conclusion

The affected person alleges that RCMP officers unlawfully assaulted him by placing him in a chokehold, applying body weight to his chest, and deploying a Conducted Energy Weapon (CEW), resulting in bodily harm—specifically cricoarytenoid joint dysfunction. I have determined there is insufficient evidence to conclude that there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that Subject Officers (SOs) assaulted AP. I base my belief on the following.

In an audio-recorded interview conducted on January 7, 2026, AP described returning to Labrador after several years away and stated that, by June 2021, he was struggling with chronic pain, mental-health issues, and what he later described as PTSD. He advised that on June 1, 2021, he was at his parents' residence packing his belongings when RCMP officers attended following concerns raised by his family regarding his mental health. He stated that his initial interaction with one officer was calm and conversational; however, after officers spoke further with his family, he was informed that he would have to go to the hospital. The affected person reported that he wished to step outside for a cigarette and, as he attempted to leave the room, he was grabbed from behind and placed into what he described as a rear naked chokehold, dragged back into the room, and forced onto a couch or bed. He alleged that additional officers became involved, with one placing a knee or foot on his chest while another deployed a CEW multiple times. He stated that he had difficulty breathing, began to lose consciousness, and eventually blacked out. According to AP, he

regained consciousness handcuffed in a police vehicle, was transported to hospital, received an assessment for physical injuries<sup>2</sup>, and was later released.

AP stated that following the incident he experienced ongoing neck pain, breathing and swallowing difficulties, and psychological trauma, which he attributed to the police interaction. AP advised that he was later diagnosed with cricoarytenoid joint dysfunction by an ENT specialist and believes this condition resulted from being choked by RCMP officers. During his interview, when questioned about any prior neck pain, the affected person initially denied having any such issues; however, when advised that medical records indicated he had been assessed for neck pain in 2020, he acknowledged those prior attendances but stated he had forgotten about them and maintained that the police encounter in 2021 significantly worsened his condition. He further advised that he felt the hospital assessment focused primarily on physical injuries and that he did not receive meaningful mental-health treatment at that time. The affected person expressed frustration with the police response, the subsequent complaint process, and the lack of accountability, and stated that he is seeking compensation for the impact the incident has had on his physical health, mental well-being, and personal relationships.

The civilian witness evidence reflects that none of the witnesses directly observed the use of force, but each provided context regarding the events leading to police involvement and the aftermath. The affected person's former fiancée, W1, described significant concerns about his mental health, including suicidal ideation and prior access to a firearm, which were communicated to police and contributed to their decision to re-engage AP after the initial consultation with him. W1 heard raised voices and what she interpreted as a physical struggle but did not witness the interaction, and her knowledge of the alleged use of force was based on what the affected person later told her. The affected person's parents similarly did not observe the physical interaction with police. They reported hearing raised voices and indication of a struggle inside the residence and confirmed that police ultimately transported their son to hospital. Both parents described ongoing concerns about his mental health prior to the incident and later recalled that he complained of being restrained and experiencing pain, including to his neck, following his release.

WO1 advised that he conducted a use-of-force review in July 2021 in his role as an Operational Skills Maintenance Instructor with the RCMP. His review was limited to a Subject Behaviour/Occurrence Report related to the deployment of a conducted energy weapon during the incident. He indicated that his assessment focused on whether the reporting officer's actions were consistent with RCMP policy and the Incident Management Intervention Model, considering factors such as subject behaviour, risk assessment, and the presence of potential threats, including information suggesting possible access to a firearm. WO1 concluded that the use of the conducted energy weapon was justified, proportionate, and consistent with policy, and that the level of force applied was appropriate in the circumstances. He noted that his review was confined to the use of

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<sup>2</sup> AP advised that a mental health assessment was not conducted at that time.

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the conducted energy weapon and did not involve a comprehensive reinvestigation of the incident or assessment of other force options.

The affected person's medical records from 2016 to June 2024 document a history of mental-health concerns, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, with intermittent engagement in treatment. The records show that in July 2020, approximately one year prior to the police interaction, the affected person sought medical treatment on two occasions due to neck pain, difficulty swallowing, and breathing discomfort. Following his apprehension by police on June 1, 2021, he was assessed at hospital for mental-health concerns; the records from that attendance do not document any complaints of assault or choking, nor do they record observable physical injuries. Subsequent medical records from 2023 and 2024 include repeated self-reports by the affected person attributing physical and psychological symptoms to the 2021 police interaction. In December 2024, following an ENT assessment, the affected person was diagnosed with cricoarytenoid joint dysfunction.

The Chief Medical Examiner reviewed the affected person's medical records and noted that there was no contemporaneous medical documentation recording neck injury, assault, or symptoms consistent with acute neck trauma following the police encounter. The CME further observed that the affected person had documented complaints of neck pain and swallowing difficulties approximately one year prior to the incident. While acknowledging that a chokehold can, in some circumstances, cause injury to structures of the neck, the CME advised that such an injury would typically be associated with immediate and recognizable symptoms, which were not documented at the time. Based on the available medical evidence, the CME concluded that the affected person's symptoms in 2024 may have predated the police interaction or arisen from non-traumatic causes, and that a causal connection to the alleged police conduct could not be medically established.

Based on a review of all available evidence, there are no reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a criminal offence was committed by any of the subject officers in relation to the June 1, 2021, incident. While AP has consistently alleged that excessive force was used, including the application of a chokehold resulting in injury, those allegations are not supported by independent, reliable, or contemporaneous evidence sufficient to meet the criminal threshold of reasonable and probable grounds.

Significant concern arises with respect to the reliability and credibility of key aspects of the affected person's account. Civilian witnesses did not observe the interaction between police and the affected person, and their evidence instead establishes a context of escalating mental-health concerns, expressed suicidal ideation, and apprehension by family members that the affected person may harm himself. This context supports the existence of grounds for police intervention under the **Mental Health Care and Treatment Act**. The affected person also provided inconsistent information regarding his medical history, initially denying any prior neck issues and only acknowledging documented treatment for neck pain in 2020 after being confronted with medical records by the SIRT-NL investigator.

The affected person further asserted that he did not receive a mental-health assessment following his apprehension; however, contemporaneous hospital records clearly document that he was assessed for suicidal ideation and emotional distress on June 1, 2021. In addition, those records do not document any complaint of assault, choking, or neck injury, nor do they record observable physical findings consistent with neck trauma. Given the seriousness of the injury later alleged, it would be reasonable to expect that such an injury would be documented at or near the time of the incident, particularly considering the Chief Medical Examiner's opinion that neck injuries caused by choking would typically present immediate and identifiable symptoms.

The medical opinion obtained during the investigation further undermines a causal connection between the alleged police conduct and the affected person's later diagnosis. The Chief Medical Examiner noted both the absence of contemporaneous injury documentation following the police interaction and the presence of similar neck-related symptoms prior to June 2021, concluding that a causal relationship could not be medically established.

Additionally, a RCMP review of the CEW deployment concluded that there were grounds for the use of force and identified no policy or training concerns. While this internal review is not determinative of criminal liability, it provides relevant contextual information regarding the reasonableness of the officers' actions.

Section 25(1) of the **Criminal Code** allows a peace officer to use as much force as necessary for the enforcement of the law, provided they act on reasonable grounds. Considering the totality of the evidence, including credibility concerns, lack of corroboration, apparent lawful authority for police intervention, and the absence of reliable medical evidence establishing causation, the evidentiary standard required to support criminal charges has not been met.

SIRT-NL will now conclude this file.

**Final Report prepared by:**

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Serious Incident Response Team - Newfoundland and Labrador  
June 15, 2026  
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