

Update on Ottawa Police Response to Recent Shootings

From: Steve Bell, Acting Chief of Police

Date: Sunday, Jan 21, 2018

I wanted to provide you with an update on some of the comments we are making to the community and media related to the recent shootings in Ottawa.

As we have discussed, we are actively investigating eleven shootings since January 1 which have resulted in 6 victims, 2 of which have died. The issue of gun violence is very concerning to us and we have members from across the service actively engaged on this issue.

We are confident in the investigations that are being conducted on these files and are following up on all investigative leads so that those responsible will be held accountable.

Our investigations are finding that the motives from these activities are consistent with the trend we have seen both here in Ottawa and other communities. The evidence so far links these shootings to a small number of criminals, often involved in drug trafficking and other serious criminal offences, who are using the weapons for protection, retribution and to intimidate their competitors.

We actively work with our partners in the Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit (PWEU) to curb the access of illegal guns on our streets. The guns that we finding are usually either imported from the United States or acquired through break and enters locally. We actively target both sources of guns. We are also working with other law enforcement partners, including the OPP, RCMP as well as the Canadian Border Services Agency on joint enforcement efforts and information sharing.

We believe the shootings have all been targeted and the intended targets are usually uncooperative with our investigators. While that hampers investigations, we have other investigative methods available to us. We continue to message in the public that it is important for witnesses to assist in our investigations, encouraging the community to take an active part in solving this issue. This messaging will need to be sustained as we move ahead, as the public play an important part in addressing this.

The police role on this issue is one of enforcement. We continue to make arrests, seize guns and carry out investigations targeted at these criminals as we saw during Project Sabotage where 14 people were arrested and 24 illegal guns were seized.

While these investigations and enforcement continue, we continue to work with partners like the John Howard Society, Crime Prevention Ottawa and our local School Boards on longer term solutions related to this type of criminal violence and early intervention with those who are engaged in it. Prevention and Intervention activities with our community partners is the longer term solution to this problem and one that will take work from many different groups.

We will continue to keep you updated on this issue. Know that this violence and the risk that it is putting to public safety is a key focus of our efforts today and every day.