

No police charged for civilian G20 injuries: SIU

6 men lodged complaints

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The SIU says it has been unable to identify police officers it says used excessive force when arresting two men at a G20 protest on June 26 at Queen's Park in Toronto. (Canadian Press)

An Ontario police watchdog is not holding any officers accountable for separate incidents in which it says excessive force was likely used against two civilians at a G20 protest in Toronto.

The province's Special Investigations Unit, which probes police operations where civilians are hurt or killed, on Thursday released the results of its investigation into six complaints of police brutality during last June's G20 summit.

The six men in question all complained that they were injured when law enforcement officers used excessive force against them at various locations across Toronto's downtown on June 26. One man had his arm broken in an interaction with an officer, while another two suffered facial fractures.

The SIU concluded that officers were not at fault for four of the incidents, citing either a lack of evidence to support the theory that excessive force was used, or an inability to determine how exactly the complainants sustained their injuries.

"It's been my experience here ... that the SIU does a thorough, complete and impartial investigation," Frank Phillips, a spokesman for the SIU, told CBC News.

"If the evidence isn't there, the charge is not going to be laid."

But the agency concluded that it is probable excessive force was used in the case of two men who suffered facial fractures at a protest at Queen's Park.

Subject officers decline interview

Adam Nobody, 27, was running from officers in riot gear who were advancing upon him at the Queen's Park protest, the SIU said.

He was tackled by the officers and arrested in an incident that demonstrates "probable excessive use of force by an unidentified police officer," Ian Scott, the director of the agency, said in a statement.

"The arm of one of the officers can be seen moving very quickly two or three times in a striking motion toward the complainant with a closed fist in the upper area of either his body or head. If one or more of those blows landed in the complainant's facial area, it would be consistent with the injury he received," he said.

Identification controversy

SIU spokesman Frank Phillips said he couldn't say whether any of the officers involved in any of the six complaints were wearing identification.

About 90 Toronto police officers face [disciplinary action](#) for not wearing ID badges during the G20 summit.

"It is unknown whether any of the involved officers in these cases were wearing their name tags, nor is it clear on the evidence whether if they were wearing their name tags, it would have made any difference on the question of investigation given the volatility and the dynamics of the situation," Phillips said.

The SIU said it designated two officers as the subject of its investigation. Both declined to be interviewed in the investigation, as they are legally entitled to do. In total, the SIU interviewed eight officers and one civilian witness in its investigation.

The arrest is also captured in a YouTube video. But Scott said "it is impossible from the video to identify the officer who delivered these blows. They are all wearing largely identical clothing with helmets, and the video is taken from too great a distance to be of any assistance."

As the SIU was unable to determine exactly which officer used excessive force, it is not proceeding with a criminal investigation.

Arrested while helping fallen woman

Brendan Latimer, 19, was also at the Queen's Park protest and, like Nobody, suffered a facial fracture in the melee.

Latimer was knocked to the ground while helping a young woman who had fallen, according to the SIU. Demonstrators were fleeing the area after police started advancing on them, the SIU said.

Latimer was trampled by some of the protesters, and was on the ground for 25 to 30 seconds before officers moved in to arrest him. He alleges one officer struck him in the face, causing a fracture.

After interviewing nine witness officers and one civilian witness, the SIU concluded "there are reasonable grounds to believe an officer used excessive force leading to injuries to the complainant," Scott said.

"However, given the fact that no subject officer can be named after a thorough investigation, I cannot form reasonable grounds that any identified officer committed a criminal offence in the circumstances of this case."

The SIU said it is not looking into any other cases of alleged assault by law enforcement officers during the G20. It is unclear whether the officers involved in any of the six incidents were members of the Toronto Police Service, or whether they were from one of the myriad other forces responsible for policing the summit.

Mark Pugash, a spokesman for Toronto police, said he was concerned that the SIU news release did "a very poor job of hiding their disappointment at failing to be able to charge any of the police officers."

"The SIU had a very simple job: Their mandate required them to look at six cases — and they looked at those six cases, and they investigated, and in not one of those six cases was there any reason for them to take the case further forward," he said.

Pugash said it is not the SIU's job "to express approval or disapproval. Their job, very simply, is to say, 'Is there evidence to lay a criminal charge?' And in not one of those case was there evidence to lay criminal charges."

Around 1,100 people were arrested over the course of the G20 weekend on June 26 and 27, but most of those detained were not charged. Around 140 people are facing charges and six people have been convicted.

Another provincial body, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, is investigating around 275 complaints about police conduct during the G20. That watchdog has not said when they expect their review to be completed.

At least three G20-related lawsuits, with claims totalling \$161 million, have also been launched against the Toronto police and other officials.