

## The buck stops here, Chief Blair says

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Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair during a break from meetings at a conference he's attending at the Empress hotel in Victoria, BC.

DIANA NETHERCOTT FOR THE TORONTO STAR

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### **Toronto G20 Summit»**

In the face of growing criticisms of his handling of the G20 and its aftermath, Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair says he will not resign.

"I have a legislative responsibility to do my job and I'm doing it the best I can. To the best of my ability," said Blair, speaking by phone from his hotel in Victoria, B.C. this morning.

"I'm quite prepared, and I think it's going to be demonstrated, to hold my people responsible for their conduct."

In response to [the Star's front page story today](#), which clearly shows the face of a Toronto police officer who assaulted G20 protester Adam Nobody, the chief said investigators are using all the images available to identify officers present at the time.

“As soon as we’re able to do that we’ll be able to share that information with the SIU,” said Blair, referring to the police watchdog.

He added that the evidence provided by the *Star* was “exceptionally helpful” and said he would welcome any additional evidence the newspaper has.

Speaking at a news conference in Victoria on Wednesday, Blair said investigators had identified five of the officers from the *Star*’s video and pictures.

It’s unclear at this time whether the officer shown hitting Nobody with a baton is one of those five.

“The SIU gets first crack,” Blair said of where those names will go.

Blair said he is doing “everything he can” to co-operate with three independent investigations of police conduct during the G20 currently underway.

The three are: The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) which determines whether a criminal offence has occurred. A review from the civilian governed police services board, which has decided to examine various aspects of the G20. And third, the office of the independent police review director (OIPRD), which deals with civilian complaints.

“All of those things are happening,” said Blair, adding. “People want independent investigations and they’re getting just that.”

The chief assured the *Star* that, essentially, the buck stops with him.

That is why he has tasked his professional standards unit to not just deal with public complaints but to look at the conduct of all officers, he said, reiterating.

“It is the responsibility of the chief of police for the discipline and conduct of officers.”

Blair added, “I think it’s important that the public be assured that we’re all taking this very seriously.”

One criticism lobbed at Blair in recent weeks is that the investigations into police misconduct appear to be lagging so far behind that of black clad vandals. In those cases, police appealed to the public for help, releasing a swarm of pictures. In a more recent development, police announced suspects will be extradited from the U.S.

“I understand that may be the perception,” said Blair, adding that he has asked the public for any evidence, photographic or otherwise.

He went on to say that his own officers have and will be investigated with the same techniques and the same rigor as anyone else. And that every police officer is required to report misconduct.

“That’s a standing order,” he said.

In response to Ontario Ombudsman [Andre Marin’s biting criticism of Blair yesterday](#). Blair said:

“Mr. Marin’s mandate was to look at the process by which the government passed the regulation and communicated that regulation. . . There are a number of different reviews taking place all looking at the various aspects of the G20 and we’re cooperating fully with all of those.”

Essentially, Blair explained that Marin’s mandate was to only look at how the legislation was passed and communicated by Queen’s Park. The aforementioned bodies are dealing with police conduct.

The chief did admit he has two regrets in his handling of the G20 and its aftermath. Taking at face value the interpretation of the “five metre law” and, then, not clearing up any confusion about what it meant. And, his comments on CBC radio last week, when he lashed out at the Special Investigations Unit, saying a Youtube video the police watchdog had consulted was “tampered with.”

“I overspoke. I apologized to the person who I spoke about and I think that’s also my responsibility. And I think that’s what the people of Toronto expect of me.”

Blair added he was prepared to be judged by the citizens of this city, but hopes that they will wait for the facts, which, he believes have yet to come out in their entirety.

“I’m hoping that people will let us conclude our investigations. Let us do this work.”

*With files from Sean Holman in Victoria*