



# EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE



## REPORT TO THE EDMONTON POLICE COMMISSION

DATE: 2006 Feb 09

SUBJECT: 'GANG-RELATED' DEATHS

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### RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That this report be received for information.

### INTRODUCTION

At the Commission's Meeting of December 21, 2005 Commissioner Seiben requested a report from the Service regarding 'gang violence deaths' and what the Service is doing to reduce these incidents (Item # 10(f) of the public meeting).

This Report will first discuss current statistics surrounding 'gang-related' homicides in Edmonton, and highlight the manner in which the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) defines these incidents. It will be shown that the EPS has undertaken a number of collaborative approaches designed to address 'gang-related' crime and at the same time attempt to reduce public concern. This report will clearly illustrate how the EPS not only manages, but also coordinates its resources in order to address 'gang-related' crime within the Edmonton area.

Although 'gang-related' homicides in Canada should not be minimized, the 'risk' should be kept in perspective. In fact, research has shown that there are six times more suicide deaths and five times more deaths from motor vehicle accidents than from homicides (Stats Canada, 2003). Adding to this, homicides accounted for less than one percent of all violent crime in 2004 (Stats Canada, 2005). Despite this, it is recognized that 'gang-related' homicide is a significant concern to the citizens of Edmonton.

### BACKGROUND:

According to Edmonton Police Service (EPS) statistics, in both 2004 and 2005, 39 per cent of homicides were 'gang-related' (eleven of twenty-eight in 2004 and fifteen of thirty-eight in 2005).

It is important to note that the definition of 'gang-related' homicide differs from one police agency to another. Other agencies often define 'gang-related' homicide as "gang members vs. gang members" motivated by something that will benefit the gang as a whole. The EPS definition however is oftentimes wider and more encompassing than other law enforcement agencies within Canada. The EPS defines 'gang-related' as one in which "the victim, known offender, strong suspect or motive have a known gang association".

The EPS has been working with the above-noted definition since 2004, and our definition falls within the parameters of the Statistics Canada definition. At this time, all 'gang-related' homicide data is provided to Statistics Canada from the EPS through the 'Homicide Survey Incident Questionnaire'. The results of this survey are then published in an annual Juristat report.

Research completed by Statistics Canada (2005) suggests that 'gang-related' homicides have, for the most part, increased in Canada since 1993. However, attention should be drawn to the fact that it was not until 1991 that the accumulation of 'gang-related' data was standardized on the 'Homicide Survey Incident Questionnaire'.

Recent EPS Homicide Section statistics from 2003 to 2005 reveal that 'gang-related' homicides increased from 10 in 2003, to 11 in 2004 and then to 15 in 2005.

The EPS has developed a comprehensive, organizational response towards 'gang-related' crime. More specifically, this response includes education, collaboration, prevention and enforcement /suppression.

It should be noted however, that although the term 'gang' is used colloquially by the EPS, operationally the EPS refers to this phenomena as 'Criminal Networks'. To better facilitate organizational understanding, 'Criminal Networks' have been categorized into four levels (**see Attachment I**). These levels take the form of a hierarchy and are based on specific threat criteria developed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Directorate.

## **COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:**

### **Education**

The Gang Unit members work closely with our school resource officers and have collectively given hundreds of lectures and presentations to schools and community groups. The Gang Unit alone gave 49 formal lectures. The message is always the same. Any choice to become involved in a gang lifestyle is a 'dead-end' decision. Our intelligence analysts examined mortality rates for males between the ages of 15 to 29 and compared them with Edmonton based male gang members within that same age group. The conclusion; Edmonton based male gang members in this age group were forty (40) times more likely to die than their non-gang member counterparts (Intelligence Analysis Unit, 2004).

## **Collaboration**

The EPS has taken a lead role in partnering with a number of different agencies to form the Community Solutions to Gang Violence. The Community Solutions to Gang Violence is a collaboration involving forty (40) organizations with a variety of mandates and the members of the Working Groups are, for the most part, staff of these organizations. They are addressing issues of gang violence from many fronts including community awareness, early intervention, youth, government involvement and policy development.

## **Prevention**

With the aim of preventing violence (including murder) two projects were undertaken in 2005. The first was a proactive approach targeting long-term ongoing violence between two groups primarily based in the Millwoods area. This project was primarily a collaborative approach between South Division and the Gang Unit, but also included Specialized Support Services Section, Surveillance Unit and Tactical Section.

The investigation spanned a period of seven months costing approximately \$520,000.00. A total of 126 charges were laid against 26 individuals, including conspiracy to commit murder against four (4) persons. At least one murder was prevented and numerous weapons were taken off of the street. More importantly, the investigation addressed what appeared to be developing into an almost "generational" cycle of violence and sent a very strong message to the community. Since the conclusion of the project, there has been a significant decrease in violent incidents between these groups.

The second project was initiated after a series of violent events, including several assaults, shootings and an attempted murder that occurred primarily in the Downtown area. These incidents were found to be linked to a dispute between two Street Gangs over the distribution of drugs. The project was a collaboration between Downtown Division, Gang Unit, Drug Section, Surveillance Unit, Specialized Support Services Section and Tactical Section. At the conclusion of the project, a total of 129 charges were laid against twelve (12) individuals, with most of those being held in custody pending their trials. Since the conclusion of this project, there has been a significant decrease in the number of violent incidents between these two groups.

## **Enforcement/Suppression**

The Gang Unit also took a more traditional approach and employed a number of different strategies to deter Gang membership and the resultant violence. These included, but were not limited to the following:

- High visibility of Gang Unit in known gang environments.
- Strong Criminal Code enforcement and charges.

- Zero tolerance for targeted gang members. An advisory that they are on the Zero Tolerance List. This list was shared with all EPS members.
- Dissemination of Gang Intelligence at regular Gang Task Force meetings. Members of this task force include both federal and provincial corrections, Internal Prevention and Security Officers IPSO's from area prisons, Parole and Probation, Court and Prisoner Services, Remand Center staff and Intelligence Officers, University of Alberta Security, various RCMP Detachments, as well as EPS divisional personnel.
- Strong traffic and other provincial enforcement and charges.
- Routine enforcement of Court related orders; recognizances, bail conditions, parole violations.
- More comprehensive bail packages (with the intent to have 'gang members' held in custody).
- Source development to interdict gang activities

During the course of the year, these strategies led to the arrest of 157 Gang Members and the laying of 390 Criminal or Drug charges. In total, 278 arrest warrants were executed, and 30 guns, 25 other weapons, 16 pounds of Cocaine, 30 pounds of Marihuana and \$133,975.00 cash were seized, all from Gang members. This is over and above the two noted projects identified in the "prevention" category.

In September of 2005, the Gang Unit was expanded by six (6) constable positions thanks to provincial funding for battling organized crime. In a further effort to provide a more coordinated approach to gangs and gang violence in the greater Edmonton area, the EPS and the Provincial Capital District RCMP have reached an agreement wherein the RCMP provided an additional three (3) constable positions. This integration has now given the Gang Unit the capacity and jurisdiction to attack gang members living outside of the City of Edmonton boundaries but still conducting their crime and disorder within the city proper.

### **CONCLUSION:**

During 2006, the Edmonton Police Service will commit resources and improve practices in the education, collaboration, prevention and enforcement/suppression efforts to reduce gang violence. As we move forward, our success in providing heightened community safety will require a continued focus on a problem solving approach that is community-based, multi-faceted and holistic.

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(f.s.)  
(MCFARLANE)

## **Attachment 1 Introduction**

Attachment 1 illustrates the manner in which the EPS manages and coordinates its resources to dismantle criminal networks within the Edmonton area. Drawing from Attachment 1, it is clear that the manner in which the EPS responds to criminal networks must be multi leveled, intelligence driven, and utilize both intra and inter agency partnerships.

For example, in relation to LEVEL ONE, the EPS serves as an intelligence liaison for national security agencies. In LEVEL TWO the EPS works in conjunction with a number of other governmental agencies, which has resulted in the formation of various interagency initiatives. As for LEVEL THREE, organizational responses include the development and use of specialized units such as the Gang and Drug Unit. Lastly, in LEVEL FOUR the EPS responses are typically at a Divisional level. However, these responses can range from problem solving approaches initiated by individual patrol members to more collaborative approaches involving Divisional Project Teams, Intelligence Officers and Analysts.

Drawing from Attachment 1, it is evident that information and/or intelligence gathering occurs within each LEVEL, and that operational approaches will vary depending largely on the sophistication and jurisdictional range of the group in question. Nonetheless, the overall organizational response towards criminal networks can best be understood as 'flowing' within and between LEVELS.

**PREAMBLE / DEFINITION:**

Groups operating within more than one level are counted only once in the following table; at their dominant level within our operational mandate. Attachment II lists criteria and definitions.

CRIMINAL NETWORKS	DEFINITIONS	OPERATIONAL MANDATE	EPS PARTICIPATION
<p>Level 1  <b>Terrorist</b>                      Terrorist groups:                      Are not within the specific mandate of the EPS. Therefore, the EPS does not have relevant data available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A group which acts against the national interest in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSIS</li> <li>• NSIS (National Security &amp; Investigation Section), RCMP</li> <li>• Alberta – Security and Information Mgt Unit (SIM is an informational not operational agency)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruption of Terrorist groups lies within the CSIS and NSIS mandates and not within the Edmonton Police Service mandate. The EPS provides information to CSIS and RCMP. This is coordinated primarily through the Organizational Security Section in compliance with strict disclosure policies of all agencies.</li> <li>• The EPS Threat Assessment Officer shares information with SIM regarding threats to Edmonton judiciary and government representatives.</li> <li>• There is an EPS operational tie-in to extremist activity when Hate and Bias crimes occur within Edmonton. These are investigated at the Patrol level using a Hate and Bias Crime Coordinator as a resource, or investigated directly by the Hate and Bias Crime Coordinator. Information is shared with NSIS, CSIS and Border Patrol. (Hate and Bias crimes can include incidents of hate propaganda.)</li> </ul>

CRIMINAL NETWORKS	DEFINITIONS	OPERATIONAL MANDATE	EPS PARTICIPATION
<p>Level 2</p> <p><b>Organized Crime</b></p> <p>Seven (7) Level 2 Organized Crime Groups in Edmonton</p> <p>Crime types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs; including importation, production, exportation and distribution.</li> <li>• Trading in firearms.</li> <li>• Re-vinning vehicles and chop shops.</li> <li>• Violence within and between other groups and intimidation.</li> <li>• Laundering of illegal proceeds of crimes.</li> <li>• Frauds</li> </ul>	<p>Criminal groups of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High threat level.</li> <li>• Proven longevity and structure.</li> <li>• Inter-jurisdictional influence.</li> <li>• An ability to infiltrate, corrupt or intimidate groups/persons of influence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IROC (Integrated Response to Organized Crime group)</li> <li>• IPOC (Integrated Proceeds of Crime)</li> <li>• EIUU</li> <li>Edmonton Integrated Intelligence Unit)</li> <li>• EPS</li> <li>• RCMP</li> <li>• Other Municipal Police Agencies such as Lethbridge and Medicine Hat</li> <li>• CISA (as a liaison, not operational agency) (Criminal Intelligence Service Alberta)</li> </ul>	<p>The EPS contribution includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitting collection plans to CISA to be ranked with other Alberta agency contributions.</li> <li>• EPS investigators are the frontline collection point of intelligence on groups within Edmonton.</li> <li>• EPS investigators are involved in joint forces projects.</li> <li>• EPS Homicide Section investigates all Edmonton gang-related killings.</li> <li>• The EPS will be the sole investigating agency in Edmonton prior to a group being ranked as a Level 2 group.</li> <li>• The EPS Threat Assessment Officer may be called upon to evaluate threats to judiciary, government representatives and EPS members.</li> <li>• Relevant to Level 2 and 3, the EPS hosts a bi-weekly Gang meeting to share information with interested agencies.</li> </ul>

Criminal Networks in Edmonton

CRIMINAL NETWORKS	DEFINITIONS	OPERATIONAL MANDATE	EPS PARTICIPATION
<p>Level 3  <b>Criminal Enterprises</b>                      Fifteen (15) Level 3 Criminal Enterprise Groups in Edmonton</p> <p>Crime types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs</li> <li>• Re-winning vehicles and chop shops.</li> <li>• Violence to other groups.</li> <li>• Dial-a-doper.</li> <li>• Known to have some involvement in prostitution.</li> <li>• Organized property crimes.</li> </ul>	<p>Criminal groups of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A medium threat level.</li> <li>• Proven longevity and a varying degree of structure, including groups operating within and beyond Edmonton.</li> <li>• These groups will typically have criminal contacts beyond Edmonton.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Forces Operations outside of EIUU and IROC.</li> <li>• EPS Gang and Drug Units.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects at the Gang Unit and Drug Unit level; may utilize Patrol, Tactical and Surveillance Units and the Undercover Coordinator.</li> <li>• Intelligence is shared between EPS operational units and to other interested agencies.</li> <li>• Internal and federal (CPIC) identification of subject, vehicle and location targets to elicit intelligence from our patrol and other agencies.</li> <li>• There may also be joint forces operations and intelligence sharing between agencies.</li> </ul> <p>Specific tools include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CISA collection plans where applicable (at this level, groups are being monitored for potential movement to Level 2).</li> <li>• EPS Internal Threat Assessments</li> <li>• EPS Gang Unit weekly objectives; target information is shared with Divisions.</li> <li>• EPS Gang Unit also provides speakers to educate interested groups about gangs (for example, local high schools).</li> </ul>

CRIMINAL NETWORKS	DEFINITIONS	OPERATIONAL MANDATE	EPS PARTICIPATION
<p>Level 4  <b>Street Gangs</b>                      Six (6) level 4 Street Gangs in Edmonton.                      Crime types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street fights</li> <li>• Vandalism</li> <li>• Property crimes</li> <li>• Violent crimes which sometimes include institutional robberies and personal robberies.</li> <li>• Drug activity at the street level.</li> </ul>	<p>Criminal Groups of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low threat level.</li> <li>• Local interest, with little or no influence beyond Edmonton.</li> <li>• Few to no criminal interactions beyond Edmonton.</li> <li>• Typically highly visible but poorly organized and often transient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal</li> <li>• EPS Gang and Drug Units</li> <li>• Joint Forces Operations</li> <li>• Divisional Project Teams</li> <li>• Patrol Problem Solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPS utilizes a problem solving approach at the community level, typically initiated by the Neighborhood Beat and/or Divisional Patrol members, and executed in cooperation with Divisional Intelligence Officers and Analysts. Operational units such as Robbery, Economic Crimes and Gang Unit will be involved as required.</li> </ul>

Notes:

EPS investigators (including patrol) collect and provide intelligence on all identified targets whenever they have interaction with them, regardless of what Level the group operates within.