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Chair: Ms. Marilyn Gladu



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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)): I call the meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 34 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

This meeting is in hybrid format pursuant to the House order of January 2021.

We are studying sexual misconduct within the Canadian Armed Forces.

We will let our witnesses have their five minutes of opening comments.

If you need interpretation, look at the bottom of your screen and you can pick “English”, “French” or “floor”. When you’re speaking, please speak slowly and clearly for the interpreters. When you’re not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

We’re really pleased today to have Dr. Leah West, who is an assistant professor at Carleton University. We’ll begin with her five-minute remarks.

Go ahead, Dr. West.

Dr. Leah West (Assistant Professor, Carleton University, As an Individual): Thank you for having me.

With the brief time I have, I’ll try to do three things: first, introduce myself and how I found myself here today; second, identify what I believe to be the root cause of the CAF sexualized environment identified by Justice Deschamps in 2015; and third, discuss a way forward.

To begin, why am I here? I served in the CAF for 10 years as an armoured officer. I graduated at the top of my class from RMC in 2007 and immediately took command of an armoured recce troop. One Thursday night at the end of my first year with my unit, I was sexually assaulted by a superior at a house party that was well attended by other junior officers in my regiment.

At work the next day, I was ill and passed out on our squadron’s bathroom floor. An ambulance and MPs arrived and took me to a civilian hospital. I did not know exactly what had happened to me the night before or why I was so ill. Almost everything after the first drink was poured for me was black, but I did know where and how I woke up.

Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC): On a point of order, Madam Chair, there are issues. I can’t hear anything she’s saying. I’m sorry.

The Chair: I’m sorry. Is anyone else experiencing a problem with the translation? Yes. Okay. There are a couple of issues.

I’m sorry, Dr. West. We’ll just pause while we fix this technical issue.

We can restart.

Dr. Leah West: Would you like me to start from the beginning or from where I left off?

The Chair: From where you left off would be great.

Dr. Leah West: Great. Thank you.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Stephanie Bond): Could we just remain on suspension? I’m actually losing the full feed, so perhaps we could get some assistance from within the room. We’re losing the entire feed.

• (1100)

(Pause)

• (1105)

The Chair: We can start again, and I will leave it to you, Dr. West, as to where you want to start. I will be very generous with the amount of time, so don’t feel rushed in any way.

Dr. Leah West: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

As I was saying, I was assaulted at a house party. I don’t know exactly what happened to me because everything that evening went black, but I do know where I woke up and the state I was in when I woke up. Standing over my gurney when I was taken to the emergency room were two male MPs who convinced me to have a rape kit done. I agreed, and it revealed intercourse but no evidence of drugs. I never saw or heard from the MPs again.

The following Monday, my commanding officer called me into his office, somewhere I’d been probably only twice in my life prior to that. The MPs had informed him of what happened and he looked at me and asked, “How do you want me to handle this?” I didn’t hesitate. I knew what I was expected to say, and I said it, “Nothing, sir.” I told him that because I couldn’t remember the exact details of the assault, I would modify my behaviour and who I could trust—

• (1110)

Ms. Jag Sahota: Madam Chair, on a point of order, I can't hear her. I'm sorry.

I'm sorry, Dr. West.

The Chair: I'm so sorry, Dr. West.

Clerk, I'm looking to you, if you want to suspend and take care of the technical things, and perhaps you can call me.

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Madam Chair, can you ask other members? I'm hearing everything clearly.

The Chair: Yes, I'm hearing everything as well.

Mr. Marc Serré: Can you ask other members?

The Clerk: I believe it may be a connection issue. I am hearing a little bit of reduction in sound. That's why I am not suspending. I don't want to interrupt Dr. West any further. However, if someone does lose connection or lose interpretation, if you could just raise your hand and we will suspend at that point, but at this point I'm hearing no stop.

Ms. Mathysen, do you hear a break in interpretation?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Yes, and the echo is so bad that I can barely hear what Dr. West is saying. I think my situation is the same as Ms. Sahota's.

The Clerk: Can I ask you if you are on the floor or the English interpretation?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I'm on the English interpretation. I can switch.

The Clerk: Can we go to the floor? Let's all use the floor at this time and see if we can proceed. Please let me know just by raising your hand.

Again, my apologies to Dr. West.

The Chair: Mr. Serré, do you have something to say?

Mr. Marc Serré: I just want to mention, Madam Chair, that the floor works well. I'm on the floor. We had the same issue in the natural resources committee. Anybody who was in English or French had problems, but the floor was working beautifully. We had that issue on Monday. I think there are other issues with other committees, that if you're on the floor it works well, but if you're on English or French, there are problems.

The Chair: Okay.

The Clerk: Ms. Vandenberg, do you have any issues hearing on the floor?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): No, on the floor I have no issues. However, I wonder if we could ask the witness if she's okay to proceed at this point, because it can be very difficult to start and stop such difficult testimony.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Members, if we do proceed again, let's not have another interruption, please. This is a very sensitive subject, and it is very difficult for the witness.

Dr. West, do you feel that you can continue?

Dr. Leah West: Yes, I'm fine. Thank you for your concern.

The Chair: Very good. Go ahead.

Dr. Leah West: I told him not to do anything, because I couldn't remember the precise details of the assault. I said that I would modify my behaviour and who I could trust, as though I had been raped by a superior officer in my unit. He accepted my answer and we never spoke of it again.

Four years later, while deployed in Afghanistan, I was investigated without my knowledge by military police and my chain of command for having a consensual sexual relationship with a U.S. officer who was not in my unit but of the same rank. The relationship was discovered when a male officer on my team accessed my email without my permission, found a deleted flirtatious email between me and the American and took it to my superior. They didn't need to investigate me. The day I found out what was going on, I admitted to my boss what I had done.

My relationship violated regulations against fraternization in theatre. I was charged and pleaded guilty, and I was fined, repatriated from theatre and posted out of my unit. All of this I could accept. I had knowingly violated orders, and my repatriation impacted the operational effectiveness of my unit. However, what I no longer accept is that I was also called demeaning names, told I wasn't worthy of leading soldiers, even threatened with violence by my commanding officer and repeatedly chastised by other senior officers.

For several months I worked alone in an office with four workstations managing a single Excel spreadsheet. The message was clear: My career in the regular forces was over. Eventually, when I was released, the position I had been offered with a reserve unit was revoked. The new commanding officer told me that I wasn't the type of leader he wanted in his unit. My experience is an extreme example of the double standard women in uniform face every day.

My biggest failure in life, actions for which I was pushed out of the armoured corps and for which I continue to carry immense shame, is, however, allegedly precisely the type of leadership displayed by the man who ultimately served as this country's longest-serving chief of the defence staff. Yet, for me as a female army captain, there was no hesitation to act on an email and remove me from my position, and that was the right call. We cannot turn a blind eye when military leaders put themselves and their interests before the mission. This ethical obligation is the foundation upon which any professional military operates: serve Canada before self.

This brings me to my second point. Where does this double standard come from? Why is sexual misconduct so prolific and even condoned in the CAF when the victims are women but not the wrongdoers?

In my opinion, the sexualized environment identified in the Deschamps report is a symptom of two more fundamental issues at the core of the CAF's culture. First, women and men and their contributions to the CAF are not valued and respected equally. Second, the CAF continues to perpetuate deeply flawed and antiquated expectations about who women and men in the armed forces are supposed to be and, correspondingly, how they ought to behave.

How do we fix it? Given the time, I'll simply identify three recommendations. I'm happy to explain them further in my responses to questions.

First, as we all know, we need an independent reporting mechanism. The government, I believe, should make interim policy and legislative changes to expand the mandate of the sexual misconduct response centre to include independent investigations. This can happen concurrently with the review by Justice Arbour.

Second, we must improve leadership training and officer cadet mentorship at the Royal Military College. The RMC is the training ground of our future leaders, but it is also where these outdated and degrading perceptions of men and women in the forces take root.

Finally, I believe the notion of zero tolerance for all forms of misconduct is unrealistic and unhelpful. Culture change in the CAF is a massive undertaking. Good people trying to do better will make mistakes. The cost of making those mistakes cannot be so severe that victims and observers hesitate to speak up and take action.

Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to your questions.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you so much for your testimony.

We are pleased to have Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan with us.

Thank you so much for your perseverance with our technical issues today. You'll have five minutes for your opening remarks, and you may begin.

[Translation]

Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan (Chief, Professional Conduct and Culture, Department of National Defence): Good morning, Madam Chair.

Good morning, honourable members.

I am pleased to appear before the committee today with Ms. West.

I am Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan, recently appointed chief of professional conduct and culture. I am honoured by the trust placed in me by my appointment to this mandate, which, to say the least, will be complex and challenging. While our responsibilities encompass the entire defence team, my comments today will focus on the Canadian Armed Forces.

For this change in culture to succeed, we will need to challenge our basic assumptions and guiding principles in building the professional soldier we need now and in the future.

[English]

Before this committee, I spoke last month about our military culture. There are many positive aspects to our culture. It allows women and men to develop the strength and the courage to put themselves into harm's way to defend Canada.

However, some aspects of our culture command change, and we are at an inflection point. There is a gap between our existing culture and our professed culture. Moreover, for a mission-oriented culture such as ours, there is a belief that tasks are to be done at all costs, that people's well-being and operational effectiveness is a zero-sum game. This premise is false. When applied indiscriminately, it contributes to toxicity within our units. Treating people with dignity is not a trade-off for operational effectiveness. In fact, dignity is at the foundation of trust, and we must have trust in one another to succeed in the challenging circumstances we so often face together.

[Translation]

The scope of this new organization's mandate is broad, and we need to make sure we build it on a solid foundation. Our first actions in this new organization will be to formalize the mandate and responsibilities, put the structure in place to carry out that mandate, undertake consultations with respect to professional conduct and culture, conduct a review of complaint processes and structures, and develop recommendations and implement them.

This culture change requires a sustained effort on the part of every CAF member to ensure that our behaviours, attitudes and beliefs are aligned with our values. That is why we are committed to building a CAF that reflects and celebrates the uniqueness and strength of all Canadians.

I feel encouraged and buoyed by the winds of change within National Defence as well as the many expressions of support I have received over the past two weeks from various individuals and groups within and outside Defence. We have a duty to do this properly, once and for all.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

• (1120)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

Now we will start with Ms. Sahota for six minutes.

Ms. Jag Sahota: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Dr. West, my sincere apologies for the interruption. My question is for you.

In the report entitled “A Force for Change: Creating a Culture of Equality for Women in the Canadian Armed Forces”, tabled in June 2019, the status of women committee recommended that the Government of Canada provide mandatory, comprehensive sexual harassment training for all Canadian Armed Forces members and recruits, with training follow-ups on a regular basis.

What training, if any, is offered within the Canadian Armed Forces on the topic of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault and sexual harassment?

Dr. Leah West: Thank you for your question. Unfortunately, I'm not well placed to answer it. I retired from the forces in 2012.

I believe General Carignan would be better placed to answer that question. I can speak only to the training that I received during my time, which is now quite outdated.

LGen Jennie Carignan: I can answer this question.

The education on CAF values and ethos starts at the recruit schools. All recruits, both officers and non-commissioned members, receive training on the profession of arms, the Canadian military ethos and diversity. On top of this, they all receive training on preventing sexual misconduct in the workplace. As an example, there's approximately three hours of training and evaluation through both written exam and observation of the recruit's performance during their training. This is kind of the package that is put together at the beginning when recruits join the military.

Ms. Jag Sahota: As a follow-up question to that, how does the Canadian Armed Forces ensure that all members receive training about expected behaviours and the consequences of sexual misconduct?

LGen Jennie Carignan: There is mandated training that happens after recruit training is over via the various units throughout the Canadian Armed Forces. What we are observing, however, is that the training is not actually achieving the aim of reducing misconduct in any type of way, so we will have to revisit this training and we will have to focus at the leadership level on providing tools for leaders to set an inclusive climate. This is what we will put the emphasis on.

Ms. Jag Sahota: Once again, to follow up on that, you said that the training that's being provided is not effective. Can you list some of the improvements other than working from the top down, starting from the leaders and going right to the bottom? Can you tell me how that would happen and what steps are being taken?

LGen Jennie Carignan: We will review the training. This review is currently going on. We are taking a survey of the various training packages that are delivered currently throughout the Canadian Armed Forces.

What we are noticing is that we have been telling people what not to do. We want to reverse that and put the emphasis on the behaviours that we are looking for. The training is not going to be an Ottawa thing. The training is going to be delivered throughout the Canadian Armed Forces, but also amongst our defence employees as well. We want this to be focused on inclusivity, expectations for fostering an environment in which people feel safe to provide ideas

and offer different views and perspectives and establish trust between the team and the leaders themselves. We are getting ready to issue guidance on the expected behaviours from inclusive leaders, and we are going to issue that in the next few weeks as a first initiative to kick-start the culture change momentum.

• (1125)

Ms. Jag Sahota: How long has it been known that the training that has been provided to date has not been working? Were there steps being taken, other than now, to improve the training?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Improving the training has always been a part of the lessons learned throughout this process. As we deliver a training package, there's also an assessment on the receptivity and on whether the training actually achieves the objectives we're looking for. This is fed back into the loop so that we modify training as we go. We have certain training packages that have had a lot of success and a lot of impact on the members who have taken the training, and we've adjusted those as we have gone along. It's a normal learning process through which we modify training as we field these various training packages amongst the force.

The Chair: That's very good.

Ms. Jag Sahota: Could we get a copy of the guidelines, please?

The Chair: Yes.

Now we will go to Ms. Sidhu for six minutes.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

I believe that our study needs to be focused on the survivor's perspective, so, Dr. West, thank you for your sensitive testimony.

My question is for Dr. West.

What gaps presently exist throughout the reporting process, and what do you think could be done better to close them?

Dr. Leah West: Again, I will take it from my perspective. I have been out of the forces since Operation Honour was put into place.

My understanding is that all sexual assault is currently dealt with outside of the chain of command by MPs, so looking back on my circumstances, what happened shouldn't have happened if it had happened three years later. Ultimately, I believe that how everything shook out would still be the same with the current process that's in place.

Had I been first approached by military police and they believed they couldn't pursue criminal charges, my expectation was that with an outside reporting process, my complaint would have been directed that way rather than to my chain of command. Then, in having discussions about how to proceed, the question would have been conducted in a neutral environment where I could have been presented, hopefully, with all of the information to make an informed choice, not have to make that choice and have the person investigating the activity be someone who wrote my personnel evaluations, or who decided if I got a career course or what job I had next.

To have that investigation take place outside of the chain of command is incredibly important. It's also important, I think, for trust in the confidentiality of the process, which I don't think people trust will happen when it's the people you see every day and the army can sometimes be a gossipy place.

I really do think it's necessary to have a neutral and partial independent body who can talk to survivors about their choice and then investigate this, so that when making the decision they don't feel like an investigation is going to impact every element of their current and future career—and also for the accused person's career. The accused person also deserves to have an investigation done, not by their chain of command and to have the full benefit of confidentiality.

Currently, I think the system is quite flat in that regard. I practise criminal law. The system simply cannot continue to be one that is decided by the same people who have extreme control over the future of your life. That's the biggest gap that I see. Currently the process, the sexual misconduct reporting centre, doesn't really change that.

• (1130)

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Thank you, Dr. West. Your input is very valuable to us.

The next question is for General Carignan.

What is your vision for your new role as the chief of professional conduct and culture?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Madam Chair, the approach we want to take with this new organization is, while we are listening and learning, we want to start working on the problem at the same time.

A priority of mine will be to conduct a review of the complaints system.

As Dr. West has been explaining, it is not efficient. It's very complex. We have many, many different tools that are resting in many different places within DND, and what we want to do is integrate and centralize this so that we have visibility and a better complaints system.

We're also going to be working with Madam Arbour very, very closely on this, in reacting as fast as possible to the recommendations she will make along the way, so that we don't wait for many months for a report to come and then start working on the problems.

This is the approach we are going to take with this.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: To follow up, General Carignan, what are the immediate and long-term steps that you will be taking to ensure meaningful and long-lasting culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Long term, we're going to realign our policies and programs that address all kinds of misconduct within DND and the CAF. Again, we want to improve the ways that systemic misconduct is reported. I also want to be in the space of prevention. We want to make sure that we create an environment that reduces the opportunities for this misconduct to happen, which is lacking currently. We also want to give greater agency and support

to those who have experienced misconduct, and see it from the eyes of the survivors.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thank both witnesses, Ms. West for her testimony, which unfortunately put into words a very real situation experienced by victims in the Canadian Armed Forces, and Ms. Carignan, the new chief of professional conduct and culture.

Congratulations on your new title, Ms. Carignan. You have risen through the ranks in the military and it is to your credit.

I would like to hear more about your new role first, because it is indeed a new role.

You've talked about revisiting training in your current mandate. You just talked about reviewing the complaint process and working more closely with Ms. Arbour.

I'd like you to talk more specifically about the flexibility you have in your new role to be able to work on sexual misconduct cases in the military.

• (1135)

LGen Jennie Carignan: Thank you for your question.

The leeway we will have will be confirmed and determined in detail over the next two months. We just made the announcement. So we need to get organized and make sure we are clear on our mandate.

I intend to have the mandate approved by the end of May and then develop a proposal that will specify the structure and powers that will accompany it. All of this is linked. We need a mandate to build the structure that will support it with the necessary authorities.

The important thing is that these powers currently exist for a variety of positions in the Canadian Armed Forces and departments, so it is important that we do our work well to identify and develop them over the next few weeks.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: While waiting to clarify your role and determine the scope of your work, what can you do in the shorter term?

You talked about rigorously following Ms. Arbour's recommendations, but we are all familiar with the recommendations made in 2015, in the Deschamps Report.

Will you be able to look at those recommendations or build on what has already been done in the Deschamps report to put measures in place as quickly as possible?

What can you do in the interim to clarify your role and work with Ms. Arbour?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Indeed, it doesn't stop us from taking action and taking steps on changes that we know we need to take.

The priority is to review the mechanisms and structure for handling complaints, which is, in my opinion, the priority and the one referred to in the survivors' testimonies. That is why we are tackling it first. I have the leeway to do this study and propose solutions.

In the immediate future, we are working to develop clear instructions and expectations about what an inclusive leader is. We want to influence behaviours so that our teams are able to get the tools they need to lead inclusive teams.

Those are the two very short-term priorities that we are going to focus on.

I would like to make it clear that we are not only working on the structure and everything we need to do our job well, but also that we are currently in a position to act on some initiatives.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: I see.

You also mentioned, Ms. Carignan, as did Ms. West, the issue of the independent body [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] of taking these investigations out of the military, having an outside body to do them.

Ms. West, you said you would like to go back to your three recommendations. I am using my time to give you a chance now to talk more about that and to outline those recommendations that you made in your opening remarks.

[*English*]

Dr. Leah West: Thank you very much.

I'll speak first to the idea of training leaders. We've heard already from General Carignan how we start by training recruits how to behave.

RMC is a breeding ground, unfortunately, I would say, based on my experiences, of the toxic culture that permeates the forces. It is where the majority of our officers are indoctrinated into the military. When officer cadets move into a training environment with other officers, they are the dominant group. They are the alphas in a training environment and force others to look to their behaviour to conform.

However, the problem at RMC is that training is done mostly by senior officer cadets. Those cadets have very little experience in the actual military. Their understanding of military leaders is often from basic training and the training they get from other cadets and from movies and television. In other words, it's fantasy and is based on stereotypes.

I really believe that the officer-to-NCM ratio at RMC needs to increase, and that those serving members need to be far more involved in the development of officer cadets at RMC. They can't simply file paperwork and do drill clinics on Wednesday mornings. The people chosen to do the mentorship and leadership training of officer cadets need to reflect the diversity and qualities that the CAF wants. They need to have a record of leadership development and represent diversity, not only in terms of ethnicity and gender but also in leadership styles, and they need to be far more present in the lives of officer cadets.

• (1140)

The Chair: Very good.

Now we'll go to Ms. Mathysen for six minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

I want to expand on what Madam Larouche was speaking about.

I know these are early days, Lieutenant-General Carignan, but you've been given this huge role. Have you been given any idea in terms of what resources you will be provided, and whether they will be unlimited? Are you aware yet of what supports you'll have from the federal government?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Madam Chair, it's a very important question, because we will need to be resourced to do our work properly.

I can assure you that I have received a lot of support from my colleagues and from the DM and the CDS, and we are determined to push this change forward.

As we speak, I am taking people away from various other organizations so they can start this very important work that we need to do. Everybody is fully on board and setting their own priorities aside so that this can be moved forward. There is incredible support from across DND and the CAF to push our change agenda forward.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Again, it's early days, but in terms of the composition of your team, do you have specific examples of the types of professionals and the exact roles that they'll play? Have those been narrowed down yet, or do you have a vision of what that will look like? Will there be different groups working on different things all at the same time? Can you give us an idea?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Certainly. This is all linked to confirming the mandate, but the way I see it, some of the various groups that perform duties across DND, for example, on human rights and ethics, do all belong to different organizations within DND.

The integrated centres of complaints and plans and policies, which now rest with different organizations, are being integrated into one centre of plans and policies on professional conduct. This will lead to our building an organization using the many tools that are already available across the board to perform our duties. It's going to be clearer as I get the authorization and the approval to move forward, but I've been socializing a lot of these concepts and ideas right now, and we're moving in a very good way towards being able to put this into place in the next six months.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: We've heard a great deal about the Deschamps report. There were clear recommendations, and Dr. West mentioned them and the independence. However, a lot could be implemented immediately.

Have you had the ability to speak to those in government, within DND, on the immediate implementation of some of the Deschamps report recommendations?

• (1145)

LGen Jennie Carignan: We're going to be building on a lot of work that has been done in actioning the 10 recommendations from the Deschamps report, so I'm not going to start from scratch. A lot of initiatives and recommendations have been launched, and we will continue that work. I'll mention recommendation number two, for example, which is to establish a change of culture strategy to address sexual misconduct.

"The Path to Dignity and Respect", which is the strategy, was published last fall, so I'm going to pursue this strategy now and apply it, and then move it forward for application. We're going to build on the work that has already been done in many of the areas of the 10 recommendations in the Deschamps report.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: In terms of the immediacy, you talked about moving very quickly and talked about moving on the review process of Madam Justice Arbour. We haven't been given a timeline, so how quickly do you think a lot of this will take place?

We certainly heard other witnesses say they already believe that all of the recommendations of the Deschamps report have been implemented, but they have not, according to Justice Deschamps. How soon do you expect or hope to see a lot of these recommendations in place directly, actively?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Again, a lot of these recommendations have been actioned and moved forward. However, there is still a lot of work to be done, so I'm going to be moving on it.

Also, we need to put a plan together to phase this work and move it along. Right now, what I need to do is make that plan for DND. We'll need a bit of time to do this, but we will address each one with the time it needs to get done.

The Chair: Excellent.

Now we'll go to Ms. Alleslev for five minutes.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Thank you very much.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

General Carignan, could you tell me when you were made aware that this position was being created and that you were to fill it?

LGen Jennie Carignan: I started to be informed at the end of March that we were thinking of creating this organization, when I was coming back from leave after my Iraq deployment. We had discussions.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: It was at the end of March.

LGen Jennie Carignan: Yes, and—

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you.

Do you have a job description and performance metrics? If so, could you table those for us?

LGen Jennie Carignan: No, this is not done yet. This is what I want to get approval for at the end of the month so that we can confirm the mandate and then move into the structure that will support this mandate.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: That's perfect. Would you be able to table that with this committee when you have it finalized?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Yes, of course. No problem.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much.

We heard very discouraging testimony from Dr. West today. In her testimony she talked about the double standard, and that when she was posted outside of the country and fraternized with the U.S. military as a junior officer, she was fined, charged and repatriated. She was drummed out of the Canadian Forces essentially through a constructive dismissal.

We know that Lieutenant-General Coates was posted as the deputy commander of NORAD, which is one of the most significant positions for Canada's defence, and that he was guilty of a very similar offence. However, the media and the military have stated repeatedly that no rules were broken.

Could you help us understand which it is? Is it that no rules are broken when you're on deployment and fraternizing with another person, or they are, and a general was not charged, was not fined, was not repatriated and is still serving in the Canadian Forces?

• (1150)

LGen Jennie Carignan: Madam Chair, I cannot speak to the particulars and the facts of the cases, but what I can say is that we have to make sure that the same rules apply to everybody. This is part of the work that we will be doing: to clarify these rules and policies for everybody. This is the testimony that we have heard from many survivors, and I'll tell you that it is—

Ms. Leona Alleslev: General, we have Dr. West on the call, and she has a record for being charged for what appears and has been in the public to be exactly the same thing, probably of a significantly lower level of severity because she was a junior officer, not a three-star general.

I think, if you could, we would like you to get back to the committee and give us some clarity on whether or not, in fact, no rules were broken in the case of Dr. West or in the case of a still serving lieutenant-general.

LGen Jennie Carignan: Madam Chair, I can tell you that I have been very touched and affected by both Dr. West's experience and the many other experiences we have heard. I am not taking this lightly. I want to drive the appropriate change that will allow us to not have these cases in the future. We are determined to make this happen.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: General Carignan, we know of generals who are complicit, either through their silence or their actions. What authority do you have to hold them accountable, to ensure that their conduct is beyond reproach, if they are holding such important positions?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Madam Chair, that's exactly what I meant in my opening statement about the gap between the reality and the values that we are espousing and want to see happening. We definitely have a lot of work to do in that sense. This is exactly what I mean by bridging that gap and ensuring that people are held accountable.

The Chair: Very good.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Now we'll go to Ms. Zahid for five minutes.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks to both witnesses

I say a special thanks to you, Ms. West, for your powerful testimony. I know that you need a lot of courage to come out, so really, thank you on behalf of all the members.

My first question is for you, Ms. West.

Do you think the military is capable of a transformational culture change? If so, what recommendations do you have that will help to ensure success for current and future members of the Canadian Armed Forces?

Dr. Leah West: Yes, I do. I powerfully believe in the CAF's capacity to change, because I know that so many of the strong leaders who are still there take this issue extremely seriously, not just women and men, but my peer group, which is now at the commanding officer and subunit level of command, and they are fiercely determined to bring about change now.

The response to these allegations and to testimony like my own has gotten far different responses from men and women in uniform than the Deschamps report in 2015. I believe that CAF has now accepted.... At least the senior leadership has accepted the issue as a legitimate issue and is putting forward real steps to make change in a way that I do not believe was the case even three months ago, the appointment of General Carignan being one of the steps.

The thing I would say most immediately is that General Carignan talks about all of the necessary institutional changes that need to happen, which do take time. I believe that my friends, the subunit commanders, the commanding officers, need to be empowered to organically take steps to improve the culture within their own units and subunits, and they need to feel empowered to do so by the chain of command.

The CAF is going to change itself. It won't be an external report that changes the CAF, and it needs to happen not just from the top down, but from the bottom up. It's a lot easier to happen from the bottom up in a hierarchical organization when you have leadership that empowers you and makes the mission clear.

• (1155)

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Thank you for your answer, Ms. West.

How can we encourage more survivors to come forward? Do you have any recommendations of any changes that need to be made so we can encourage more survivors to come forward?

Dr. Leah West: I do believe the class action process is one way that survivors may take the opportunity to come forward through that reconciliation process.

I hope that process is spurred by the momentum we're seeing now. I also believe that survivors in uniform will come forward if they believe they are going to be supported, that their chain of command will have their backs and that they will not face repudiation for coming forward now.

I also truly believe that we're not going to get out of this by punishing every man in the CAF who has misbehaved in the past 30 years. The Canadian Armed Forces needs to move forward by ac-

cepting its failures. Obviously, there are those egregious abuses of power that need to be dealt with, but there needs to be acknowledgement, reconciliation, a chance to share, be sad about the culture, and then move forward all together on a new path.

Taking down every single senior officer who has misbehaved in the past is not the way forward, I don't think.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Thank you, Ms. West.

Madam Chair, how much time do I have?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: I'll take this opportunity to thank both the witnesses for appearing before the committee.

The Chair: Very good.

We'll go to Madam Larouche.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Ms. West, I would like to go back to your testimony. You were indeed, in a way, a victim, but you were asked to remain silent about this culture of omertà surrounding sexual assault. You talked about the importance of keeping the identity of victims private. How does that discretion allow you to go further?

I would especially like to return to the fact that you were kept silent following your assault.

[*English*]

Dr. Leah West: It's hard to speak out in a culture where you feel like an experiment. As a woman in the Canadian Armed Forces, especially in the combat arm, where I was one of very few—I went through all of my training. I was the only woman. I felt constantly that I needed to prove I needed to be there, that I was an experiment and that I was to conform and behave as I was expected to; otherwise, I would have been proven to not belong and to have failed the experiment for others.

When you feel like that, when something happens to you that doesn't happen to anyone else, and you're going to potentially rock the boat, take somebody down who's highly beloved, someone I felt love towards as a big brother, it's incredibly hard to speak out.

This is why I go back to the point about fundamentally it's about women and men not feeling equal. If you're constantly trying to conform to this toxic masculine behaviour, it's incredibly challenging to stand up for yourself. You have the idea that you have to be like them, and if you're not, you're wrong; you don't belong, and it will just prove you don't belong, so you stay silent. I think this is not just about sexual assault. It's also about the jokes, the showing of pornography, the ridiculous comments, the unwanted touching. It's all of it. Women and men need to be treated equally for that to stop, and that, I think, is the root problem that General Carignan has before her.

• (1200)

The Chair: Very good.

Now we'll go to Ms. Mathysen for the last two and half minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: We've seen a lot of reports and reviews. It's not just the Deschamps report. There's also the Auditor General's report and the report from this committee in 2019.

Lieutenant-General Carignan, I don't want this future review, this report, our report coming out of all of this now, any of that to be lost again. It needs to be acted upon.

How can this committee, in your opinion, ensure that happens. This may be beyond my purview and we may have to do it in a different way, but I would like to ensure that you come back to this committee to report on your progress potentially after you've had a bit more time to solidify your mandate and all of those things.

Can you provide a recommendation on what this committee used to ensure this isn't just another lost report?

LGen Jennie Carignan: Madam Chair, we will take on the recommendations. We will build mechanisms to measure what we are doing, as well, which was another weakness of the implementation of Op Honour. We will have mechanisms in place to measure the effects of what we are doing so that we can monitor progress.

This is, from my part, what I can tell you that we will be doing.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

That's all I have for today.

The Chair: Very good.

I want to thank our witnesses. I want to thank you for your testimony, for your service to the country and for helping to effect change on this very important topic.

We are going to suspend briefly while we do sound checks for the next panel.

• (1200)

(Pause)

• (1205)

The Chair: I'll call this meeting back to order.

We want to welcome our witnesses. From the Department of National Defence, we have Brigadier-General Simon Trudeau back again, Canadian Forces provost marshal and commander Canadian Forces military police group. We also have Major-General Guy Chapdelaine, the Canadian Armed Forces chaplain general.

Both of you will have five minutes for your opening remarks.

We will begin with Brigadier-General Trudeau.

[*Translation*]

Brigadier-General Simon Trudeau (Canadian Forces Provost Marshal and Commander Canadian Forces Military Police Group, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

Good afternoon. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to return here today to answer your questions and offer some reflections I have had and the action I have taken as the provost marshal since I last appeared.

The work of this committee has given a voice to people who want to be heard, and I appreciate that this will foster positive changes. I want all members to know that I've been watching and listening to the testimony from these hearings. Like so many other people, I've been deeply affected and impacted by what I've heard from witnesses and from people who have come forward.

It is clear from some of the testimonies that we can improve our interactions with victims. While we have taken measures in the past, from training to launching the sexual assault review program in 2018, I think we can do better in supporting victims who entrust us with their desire to pursue criminal investigations in preparing them for this process.

As I explained during my last appearance, my role as provost marshal is to ensure an effective police force and that there is trust in the system: trust that we will listen; trust that we will thoroughly investigate, independently from the military chain of command; and trust that we will act when necessary. This is a serious moment for the Canadian Armed Forces, for the military police and for the military justice system. Trust needs to be rebuilt.

This moment requires immediate action. I would like to tell you about some of the principal initiatives I have taken in response to what I've heard at this committee. I welcome your thoughts and views on these actions.

The first is training. To build on the valuable trauma-informed approach training adopted by the Canadian Forces national investigation service sexual offence response teams, I have directed my team to take the necessary measures to incorporate this training into our foundational police forces at the Canadian Forces Military Police Academy and to develop an action plan to provide this training to all MP personnel as soon as possible. This will ensure that all front-line MPs recognize the importance of their role and the potential impact they can have when interacting with a victim of sexual trauma.

The second is on a victim-centric approach. Victim support is at the forefront of what we do as a police service. To that end, and with a focus on learning and improving, I have sought the assistance and advice from Dr. Denise Preston, the executive director of the sexual misconduct response centre, on two issues.

First, we are working towards the professionalization of our victim services through the hiring of civilian personnel with relevant credentials and experience. We are doing this with the assistance of the SMRC, which will continue to work with us and the staff we hire to support consistent training and professional development.

Second, I'm very eager to personally engage with and listen to victims of sexual misconduct and other crimes. In this way, as provost marshal, I can better understand the challenges that individuals face during the entire investigative process and how we can improve the human side of interacting with victims. Dr. Preston has kindly offered her expertise, and we are exploring consultation options and related considerations as we speak.

I will also be consulting and collaborating with Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan in her new role as chief, professional conduct and culture, to help ensure that we are actively engaging outside experts to provide feedback on our operations.

I welcome all of your thoughts and views on these actions and any questions you may have today.

[Translation]

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We now turn to Major-General Chapdelaine.

You have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Major-General Guy Chapdelaine (Canadian Armed Forces Chaplain General, Department of National Defence): Good day, Madam Chair.

I am Major-General Guy Chapdelaine. Since 2015, I have served as the Canadian Armed Forces chaplain general.

The mission of the Royal Canadian chaplain service is to develop and offer spiritual and religious care and support in order to ensure the spiritual well-being and resilience of all members of the defence community and Canadian Armed Forces families while respecting the freedom of conscience and religion of each person.

My role as the Canadian Armed Forces chaplain general is to oversee chaplain recruiting and training and to set direction and guidance for the provision of religious and spiritual care in accordance with Canada's defence strategy and the initiatives of the Canadian Armed Forces total health and wellness strategy. In addition to leading the chaplaincy, I advise the chief of the defence staff on religious, spiritual and moral issues affecting defence team members and Canadian Armed Forces members' families.

Chaplains have privileged access to Canadian Armed Forces members of all ranks, having no command authority while ensuring that privacy and confidentiality are respected. Chaplains provide an active and supportive presence and offer spiritual and personal

growth counselling, a variety of programs, and special events throughout the year across Canada and the globe.

• (1210)

[Translation]

The Royal Canadian Chaplain Service has undergone many important changes in recent years, notably to ensure and promote diversity among its ranks, including representation of women and a variety of spiritual beliefs.

The Royal Canadian Chaplain Service is comprised of 261 Regular Force chaplains, and 125 Primary Reserve chaplains. Chaplains serve in all elements of the Canadian Armed Forces both domestically and abroad. Eighteen per cent of regular force chaplains are women, and 16% of Primary Reserve chaplains are women. Currently, within our subsidized education program, which is part of chaplain recruiting, 30% of candidates are women.

[English]

Until 1995, there were two chaplaincy services: one Protestant and one Roman Catholic. In 2003 we welcomed our first Muslim chaplain. Today we are a multi-faith chaplaincy, representing many different traditions: Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist, and soon, Humanist. We understand that we must continue to build upon this progress, creating a safe work environment for female chaplains, as well as ensuring that the CAF members we serve receive tailored support.

I am pleased to be in your midst to answer your questions.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

We'll begin our questions with Ms. Sahota for six minutes.

Ms. Jag Sahota: Thank you, Madam Chair.

General, the last time you were here, you said the following:

It was clear in 2011, when the CDS amended the command and control structure of the military police and adjusted the authorities, responsibilities and accountabilities of the provost marshal. They were pretty explicit in regard to the CFPM having full command over all MPs involved in policing duties and functions. Also, as the head of the military police, the position of CFPM is independent of the chain of command.

Do you still stand by that statement?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Thank you for the question, Madam Chair.

Yes, I do.

Ms. Jag Sahota: You also touched on how you've been watching and listening to the witnesses coming forward and telling their stories. Recently we had a witness before this committee and she had asked if the CFNIS had the mandate to investigate and the powers to lay charges against the CDS. They had refused to answer, and the CDS at the time had said that he was untouchable because he owned the CFNIS.

Given your previous statement and your recent testimony, can you shed some light on why the CDS would believe that he could direct what the CFNIS could and couldn't investigate?

• (1215)

BGen Simon Trudeau: I can't speculate about what the CDS said, and it's also part of an ongoing investigation. However, what I can tell you is that functionally I am independent of the chain of command and have full command of the military police involved in policing. We will investigate any allegation regardless of rank or status. We'll analyze the facts, look at the evidence and lay charges as required.

Ms. Jag Sahota: I'm not asking you to speculate. The witness said the CDS said, at the time, that he was "untouchable" because he owned the CFNIS, and your statement and testimony are different from that.

Why would somebody believe that? Why would the CDS believe he was untouchable because he owned the CFNIS?

BGen Simon Trudeau: I can't speculate on his frame of mind when he said that, but what I can tell you is that for policing I'm independent from the chain of command.

Ms. Jag Sahota: In your last committee appearance, you gave the impression that there wasn't really a problem. However, just the other day, Global News reporters Mercedes Stephenson, Marc-André Cossette and Amanda Connolly published a rather disturbing article which said that the military police had a Facebook group where they were openly mocking a woman who appeared before this committee. They left statements such as "Giggity", a reference to a character in the adult show *Family Guy* who is a misogynist, and "Her story is about as clear as a PMQ orgy party on pay day." That witness expressed that she doesn't believe she will receive justice, and after reading the Facebook group comments, it is easy to see why one would believe that.

General, this occurred under your watch and reinforces the toxic masculinity within the military. It explains why women in general don't feel safe in coming forward, and plays a big role in the reason the military is struggling to meet its 25% women diversity quota.

Do you still believe there isn't a problem, yes or no?

BGen Simon Trudeau: With regard to the article about the private Facebook page, as the provost marshal, I was deeply disappointed when I became aware of that article and the comments. Certainly I expect every military police member to be professional at all times on and off duty and to respect the military police professional code of conduct.

I take these matters of conduct very seriously, and I've referred them to the professional standards section, which will keep serving MPs by looking into the article and will keep people accountable as required.

Ms. Jag Sahota: From what I hear, you're disturbed that this happened, but how are the steps you have taken going to make sure that this doesn't happen again? We're talking about bringing change to the culture that exists currently, and just being disappointed doesn't cut it anymore. Witnesses are coming forward and they're being put down, and it's public knowledge now.

What concrete steps are you going to take? This is happening under your watch.

BGen Simon Trudeau: Regarding a concrete action that I've taken, I've referred the matter for an investigation into the serving MPs who made comments on that private Facebook page. I have also reminded my commanders of the responsibilities that we have under the code of conduct. Any allegations of misconduct against MPs will be actioned with due process as part of the processes that I have at my disposal.

Ms. Jag Sahota: I'll let Leona ask the rest of the questions.

The Chair: Actually, you're out of time.

We're going to Ms. Dhillon for six minutes.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here this morning.

My questions will be for General Trudeau.

Thank you for coming again to committee. I've noticed that your tone, I have to say, is more forceful about addressing these issues. Thank you for that. I hear the passion in your voice, as much as a military person can display it.

Over the past few months, survivors have been coming forward—you've been watching their testimony and continue to do so—with their experiences of sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. These stories are heartbreaking and overwhelming, but they are crucial for our government to make the path forward and completely change the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces.

What steps have you taken to ensure that the military police are adapting and evolving to better meet the needs of survivors?

• (1220)

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, certainly, in watching and listening to the testimony—because we are listening and learning as a professional police service—I personally have been moved by the testimony, because in those cases, the victims.... We fell short of meeting their needs as victims. That also moved me to action. There are a number of actions, as I alluded to in my opening comments, such as making sure now that all MPs will receive the trauma-informed approach training. I've reached out to Dr. Preston to accelerate the professionalization of my victim services.

We absolutely have to meet the victim's needs. In the interaction with police, the first contact that a victim will have with the police will be very crucial in confidence in the process. I really want to focus my energy now on how we interact with victims, how we prepare victims for the investigative process and how we give victims a voice into options when they report, but I really want to make sure that it's seamless from the perspective of how we interact with victims and making them safe and secure.

It's the same at a tactical level, from a patrol officer to an investigator of the CFNIS, depending on where the victim reports the allegation, which is more often at the patrol level, where the first responder will arrive on the scene or the victim will report to a patrol office. I want to bridge the gap in training, skill sets and knowledge that has been gained by the NIS over the years. I want to do a transfer of that skill set knowledge and training to the patrol section to ensure a consistent approach to how we interact with victims.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Thank you so much, General Trudeau.

I think that's an amazing approach. You mentioned that the first place where a person decides to disclose is to the patrolling officer. This is most crucial, because it could encourage a person, or it could discourage somebody from speaking up, abandoning the process altogether. This is very important what you just said: that we have to first look at the patrolling officer, the very first place where disclosure will happen.

The last time you were at committee, you spoke of a threshold of investigation. Can you please clarify what you meant by the threshold of investigation? What examples can you give us that meet or do not meet the threshold?

Thank you.

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, I think that last time I was referring to the threshold of an investigation, either from the uniformed military police or the CFNIS. When we talk about sexual misconduct, any sexual criminal offence or Criminal Code of Canada offence must be referred to the CFNIS, which is mandated to do that. Actually, that change in policy was done I believe in 2015 as a result of Madam Deschamps' report. The CFNIS became the sole referral authority for sexual criminal offences.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: In your opinion, why is the use of a threshold necessary?

BGen Simon Trudeau: It's just to categorize the different types of investigations that will be referred to the CFNIS and those that will stay with the uniformed military police. It's a little bit like the civilian police, where some offences are referred to the major crimes unit and some stay at the patrol section.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Okay. Perfect. It's a sort of triage of the files.

[*Translation*]

BGen Simon Trudeau: That is right.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: All right.

[*English*]

When you spoke during your testimony, you used a word that I found very interesting and very crucial to this whole process. You spoke about the “human” aspect and how you're working also with your colleague, Lieutenant-General Carignan. Can you talk to us a bit about the human aspect and how you think that will make things a bit different or a lot more different when it comes to reporting and addressing sexual violence or harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces?

In case our time runs out, I want to say thank you very much for the work you're doing and your new innovative solutions. I encourage you to keep doing this.

• (1225)

The Chair: Unfortunately, your time did run out, so we won't get the response.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Okay.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Of course, I thank Mr. Simon Trudeau for being here today. This is the second time he has testified before the committee.

My first questions are for Mr. Guy Chapdelaine.

Mr. Chapdelaine, I would like you to speak more about your role as chaplain general of the Canadian Armed Forces. If I understand correctly, the chaplain is the first person to whom the military member who is experiencing a distressing situation will turn. Do I have this right?

MGen Guy Chapdelaine: Yes. My responsibility is more to provide leadership to chaplaincy services, but every chaplain, male or female, is invited to receive the person who calls on him or her with great compassion and humanity and to support them without judgment. Whether the person is a believer or not is not important. The chaplain welcomes a human being in crisis or simply affected by a situation. We must first welcome them, then direct them and help them while respecting confidentiality, because confidentiality is important in order to build a bond of trust with the person seeking help; it is needed to direct them to the right resources, or simply to help them denounce what they are experiencing.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Today we are at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women to specifically look at cases of sexual misconduct and assault. Given your position and experience and that of the chaplaincy team you lead, I imagine some of you have listened to people who lived through such situations.

MGen Guy Chapdelaine: Yes, you are quite correct, Madam.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: I'm going to let you speak some more, but what do you think is the level of distress for these people? There has been a lot of talk about an increase in sexual assault reporting. Are these cases increasing or decreasing? Do the victims who come to you feel heard by the Canadian Armed Forces?

MGen Guy Chapdelaine: It is very important for people to feel that they are not only listened to, but heard. I have been in uniform for 42 years. So in my long career, I've seen a lot of changes in the Canadian Armed Forces. However, I see that people need to speak up right now, and I hope that they feel more confident to speak up and express what they are experiencing. Things need to change.

Currently, the circumstances are right for there to be a profound change, one that ensures the dignity of all men and women, especially those who are vulnerable. It is important for us to be there to welcome them. The first thing we need to do is really put them at ease to help them report what they've experienced and go further in the process.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: You've talked a lot about the importance of maintaining anonymity in your role. For that matter, it must be a challenge. How do you transfer sexual misconduct cases to other resources while preserving anonymity, which is essential in such cases? How do you manage to do that?

• (1230)

MGen Guy Chapdelaine: We get there by walking with the person, creating that bond of trust with them and respecting their pace. We must not impose our pace, but follow the person's pace if we want to help them. You have to trust them and tell them that things can change. In my opinion, our role is very important. We have a frontline role, because we are everywhere. We have 261 chaplains in the Canadian Forces Regular Force. That allows us to have chaplains in every unit.

Because chaplains are not in the chain of command and, therefore, have no command authority, people sometimes have more confidence to come to us.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Because of the confidentiality that you can provide to people who come to you, how can you accompany them? You say that you accompany them in their process. What advice do you give them? What resources do you refer them to? You provide links, but how far do you go in accompanying victims to continue their process?

MGen Guy Chapdelaine: We do refer victims to resources, whether it's SMRC, the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre, or the police. We can even accompany them and offer the presence of a support person if they so desire. We also guide them to all the other resources that are available through the Canadian Forces. We make sure they are never alone.

In addition, we ensure that chaplains are available at all times and we work in collaboration with the SMRC. When centre staff re-

ceive calls, they can provide the phone numbers for chaplaincy services, which are available 24 hours a day. So we can be reached at any time. So we ourselves can provide support to people who come to us and want to report misconduct.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

Now we'll go to Lindsay Mathysen for six minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to address my questions to the provost marshal.

Under the questioning with Ms. Sahota, we went over again the last time you were here, and you stuck pretty firmly to that idea that your office is entirely independent from the chain of command. You talked about being functionally independent. Could you expand on that, please?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, what I mean by "functionally" is that my authorities, accountabilities and responsibilities in my terms of reference clearly state that as the head of the military police, I'm independent from the chain of command, and I have full command of all MPs performing policing duties and functions. Those were the terms of reference given to me in 2011 when the chief of the defence staff put all MPs under the command of the provost marshal.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: There could be a difference between functional independence and the perception of independence. Certainly we heard witnesses—you heard them as well—bring testimony to this committee that they were still impacted by the chain of command, that there were influences on your officers. Is that more accurate? Is that what we could take from that?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Could you please repeat the question? I couldn't understand the last part.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Ultimately, the difference, as you describe it, of being functionally independent and having what's written down versus what's thought of, the experiences that a lot of victims have seen, there's a difference there.

• (1235)

BGen Simon Trudeau: Thank you for the question, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

In fact,

[English]

as we say in French, when I say “functionally”, I act as an independent actor from the chain of command. I make decisions independently from the chain of command. I recognize and acknowledge that there is a perception out there of the independence, and that can be problematic as a barrier to reporting to the military police. If it's a barrier, that, for me, is a problem.

I've had the opportunity to give my thoughts on the matter of enhancing independence to Justice Fish, who has done his review of the National Defence Act, and one portion of it is on military police. I'll be looking forward to his recommendations and deliberations on avenues to enhance military police independence.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Right, because of course, and this plays into perceptions too, I'd like you to go back to when Ms. Saha brought up the idea of this, or the fact that the Facebook group exists. There's certainly potentially the actions that will occur because of their actions within that Facebook group and your actions in response to it. Could you outline specifically how you will ensure that the members of this group receive different sorts of education to help them learn why what they did was wrong and how you can alter the perception when people are coming to them for help?

We heard from Dr. West that the armed forces can be a gossipy place, so a lot of people know what's going on. Even if it is a private group, people know. How will you ensure that those people in positions of power under your command will provide supports and help to people looking for supports and help?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, it is certainly a challenge in spades for me. Part of that group are retired military police personnel and those comments are certainly not helpful for the military police at large. However, from a perspective of oversight or responsibility, I have that on the serving members, and I take the conduct of serving members very, very seriously.

I have multiple tools under the military police code of conduct to take steps to address conduct issues, such as inappropriate comments or disparaging comments that would have been made on that Facebook page.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Could you be specific?

What kind of follow-up will occur to ensure that these active officers are provided with the ability to learn and actively correct their behaviour, but also to ensure that with people going to them for assistance or help, they can be seen as people within that command, within that support structure, who can be trusted?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, from a perspective of investigating, the results of investigations are sent through the chain of command with some recommended avenues to address any misconduct, depending on what it is, but there is due process, as with any administrative process, to investigate and then inform the chain of command of what transpired. Then the chain of command has a number of tools to address the situation, but—

The Chair: That's the end of your time.

We are going now to Ms. Alleslev for five minutes.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you again to the witnesses.

General Trudeau, I'd like to follow that line of questioning.

The last time you were here, certainly you left me with the impression that everything is pretty much operating effectively and perfectly, with no challenges in the CFNIS and the entire military police community, and that there really wasn't much that needed to be done differently by you and your organization.

We then saw the Facebook post. We've had media articles that say testimony sometimes gets lost, that people perhaps don't get charged, or that different charges are laid in different situations.

I am having some trouble understanding how people would have trust in the system if in fact that were true.

Do you believe there are some challenges you need to address, or is everything pretty much operationally effective and nothing needs to change?

• (1240)

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, as I stated in my opening comments and in some of the testimony I gave, I think there are things that we need to improve internally in the military police, for the interaction with victims, for some training that we give our police officers, so that with the human, personal aspect of when the victim comes in, they feel safe and secure. From the patrol officer to the CFNIS, it's that the person throughout the process feels safe and supported and listened to.

One thing we are focusing on, and I've had numerous discussions with the CFNIS on this, is in what we call the preparation phase of the victim. A victim comes in to the police to talk about what's next in the process, to talk about options. It's to encourage the victim to ask questions, because we could be in a situation where a victim reports—

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Thank you, General.

What about the actual investigation process? Are you confident that every investigation is meeting the rigorous standards that you've set? Do you have an internal audit ability to verify and double-check that the attitudes, behaviours and structural process are being met by all of your military police, regardless of what rank or authority they might be investigating?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, yes, I'm confident that the investigations are professionally and thoroughly conducted. Facts are gathered, evidence is analyzed and charges are laid as required. Every investigation is different, and they are treated as that, but I'm confident in our ability to fully investigate allegations reported to the CFNIS and the military police.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: But how do you know? What oversight mechanisms do you have in place? What internal audit? In the case of the Facebook post, how would you have found out that these were the attitudes and behaviours of your military police had there not been a newspaper article?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, certainly, for quality control or quality assurance, we have a program within the CFNIS to continuously do quality assurance of our files to be aligned with policies and SOPs in the conduct of files.

From an oversight perspective, there's also the Military Police Complaints Commission, which is charged as an oversight body of our policing duty and functions.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Earlier we heard testimony from Dr. West. She was charged, fined and repatriated because of a fraternization situation. We also know that Lieutenant-General Coates, the deputy commander of NORAD, was guilty of a similar offence, yet was not charged, fined or repatriated.

Could you shed some light on whether no rules were broken and on whether, in one case, the individual, Dr. West, was wrongly charged and fined, or whether Lieutenant-General Coates was wrongly not held accountable for breaking the rules?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, I cannot comment on those investigations. I have no specifics on that—

Ms. Leona Alleslev: No, but in general, would you be looking—
[Translation]

The Chair: Your time is up, Ms. Alleslev.
[English]

Ms. Leona Alleslev: —to see if they were broadly looked at across the board?

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Serré, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Chair, I will yield my time to Ms. Vandenberg.

• (1245)

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Vandenberg.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Thank you.

Thank you to both of our witnesses for being here today.

General Trudeau, thank you for being here once again.

I would note that in your opening remarks you mentioned the current circumstances, of course, and the things you're learning from much of the testimony that we have heard in this committee and elsewhere. You also mentioned that you are looking at things like professionalization and bringing in outside experts. Why is it important to have outside expertise in order to improve the processes we have right now?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, it is important because we get different perspectives on how to improve our processes and how we can better meet the needs of the victim.

We used that process very effectively in 2018 in the sexual assault review program, when we instituted an external review team that came in and looked at some of our files. Moving forward, I'm giving some thought to maybe calling in the ERT to review some of the processes that are more related to how we interact with victims.

I'm in discussion with Dr. Preston on how I can improve, and I'm looking forward to having opportunities to engage with victims to learn more about their experiences and how we can improve our processes and our programs overall. We hear things like “duty to report” and “duty to respond”, but I think that for us, as a police service, we have a duty to protect the victims and make them safe. That's the message I'm keeping with me moving forward and in taking actions in that regard.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Thank you.

You've mentioned that you are working closely with Dr. Preston and the SMRC, the sexual misconduct response centre, and also with Lieutenant-General Carignan, who we just had as a witness.

I noted also that you have provided some recommendations to Justice Fish in his review of the justice system. Madam Arbour, in her terms of reference, also includes a review of the justice system.

Could you talk a bit about the work you are doing in conjunction with the SMRC and others and talk about how you're working together to make sure that we improve the process as a whole?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, with the SMRC, to improve the process, it's really to get expertise on the victim services and how we can get better. As mentioned in my previous appearance, we have an NIS member as a liaison officer embedded with SMRC. For victims who want to stay anonymous and understand the process, they can tap into those resources, who will explain the process. If victims are willing to come forward, he will facilitate the transfer of the files.

We've been working closely with the SMRC since its creation. We're going to continue our collaboration to improve my process, because there's a lot of expertise in SMRC, and they can help us get better at meeting the victims' needs. I think that's important.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: I very much appreciate your recognition that the victims, the survivors, those impacted, that their needs are not always met in reality and your efforts to try to make sure that we improve those processes.

You used the term “victim-centric”, which, of course, is also a big part of Bill C-77, the declaration of victims rights. Can you talk a little bit more about how you are modifying and adapting the way in which you do investigations based on the survivor testimony, based on looking at it so that your focus really is victim-centric?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, as I alluded to in my opening remarks, the first action that is taken is to make sure that all MPs get the trauma-informed approach. I will take the training myself. All my senior officers will take the training. Every MP in the Canadian Armed Forces will have to take that training. That is how seriously we see this.

Then we'll adjust the training with regard to the focus and even the quality assurance. I've talked to some of my senior MP commanders to tell them that when they do quality assurance on a file, they need to pay particular focus on interviews with victims. They need to make observations on empathy, listening skills, and then the feedback from the chain of command locally to the investigators. We're looking at professional development sessions to really improve our service to, again, as much as possible, meet the needs of the victims.

• (1250)

The Chair: Very good.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Larouche, you now have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank Mr. Guy Chapdelaine, the chaplain general of the Canadian Armed Forces, for his testimony.

My question is for Brigadier-General Trudeau.

As Provost Marshal of the Canadian Armed Forces and Commander of the Canadian Forces Military Police Group, you have spoken about the issue of independence.

We also talked about the importance of anonymity for victims in the complaint process. It was emphasized how reporting an assault can have consequences for multiple victims.

If an investigative process for General Vance is undertaken, at what point will he know and how will he know? I am asking this question so that I know how independent you are.

BGen Simon Trudeau: Thank you for your question.

You ask me when he will know, yet this is information that is already public.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Actually, I'm asking how it happened when he found out. Obviously, I'm going backwards in terms of the investigation.

BGen Simon Trudeau: Generally, when the police department receives the complaint, an investigation is initiated. A process must be followed.

At some point, the person being investigated is interviewed, and that point depends on the nature of the investigation. Every investigation is different, and the timing and circumstances under which the person under investigation is informed are influenced by several factors, including the integrity of the investigation.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Is the person informed of all the details of the ongoing investigation?

Some victims talked about how Mr. Vance felt he was untouchable. They also spoke of the consequences they had suffered.

I would like to return to the importance of this independence and the anonymity of the victims, who felt unprotected far too often.

You say you will make recommendations based on the testimony of victims who have appeared before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

I would like you to talk more about anonymity, which is an important issue to better protect victims, restore their confidence, and encourage them to report.

The Chair: I'm sorry, but your time is up.

[*English*]

Ms. Mathysen, you have two and a half minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Mr. Trudeau, you spoke about the training and your commitment to that training. Do you see this as something that would be yearly or a few times per year? What plans do you have in place?

BGen Simon Trudeau: Madam Chair, I think this is an important question.

It can't be one-time training. It has to be ongoing and enduring.

I've been reflecting a lot in the last few weeks and I'm starting to have a strategy in my head. I think we're going to need to develop a victim support strategy that will have a number of building blocks in it, including leadership, the ongoing commitment of MPs' senior leadership into the importance of victim support. We're going to have to have a building block that is an internal-external partnership with stakeholders to help us improve training and continuously meet the needs of the victims.

We're going to need training at all levels of the military police at different stages of their careers: annual refreshers, foundational courses, and also, most importantly, performance monitoring on how we do to inform and how we can do well. There are so many things that we do, but I think an enduring strategy would help us better meet the victims' needs and make sure that training is enduring within the military police and stays as a priority.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Thank you.

General Chapdelaine, we talked a lot today about broken trust. You talked a lot about how incredibly important that relationship of trust is with the people you speak with. Going forward, do you believe the armed forces are moving in the right way to regain that trust? What positive steps, what recommendations do you have on that alone?

• (1255)

MGen Guy Chapdelaine: Madam Chair, on the importance of trust, we have to regain trust. I think we have lost some trust right now in the Canadian Armed Forces. It's like a storm. We are passing through a storm. We need to regain this trust. Starting from the soldier to the general, nobody should be above. There should be the same standards for everybody.

This trust, as I mentioned, is very important. We are dealing with a very difficult situation right now with the duty to report. I would like to see a duty to respond, which will be much more appropriate, especially for us, for chaplains and health care providers also. We cannot have this duty to report and not respect the confidentiality, because we retraumatize the victims. I think it's important that we are faithful to this trust we have with the person coming forward. It's very difficult for this person to come forward, and it's important to respect this confidentiality.

The Chair: I think we have time for a brief question each. Ms. Shin, we'll start with you, and then I think it will be Ms. Vandenberg, but you can correct me if I'm wrong.

Oh, Monsieur Serré, okay.

Let's go to Ms. Shin first.

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

In our first panel, Lieutenant-General Carignan stated that training is not achieving the aim of reducing misconduct in any way. This is a serious assertion, and we should all be alarmed. Dr. West expressed that RMC is a breeding ground, unfortunately, of toxic culture that permeates the forces. It is where the majority of our officers are indoctrinated into the military.

Throughout the committee meetings, I can't help but conclude the reality is it doesn't matter what institutional changes happen or what systems are set in place, if the change doesn't happen internally within the individuals' minds and hearts, change is superficial and only an optic to satisfy a regulatory mandate, so there must be personal accountability.

Major-General Chapdelaine, your chaplaincy permits you to help members probe the deepest parts of their heart. Based on your experience or the experience of other chaplains, of the members who come for care, without breaching confidentiality, have men who have committed sexual assault or misconduct ever come to you for help? If so, what kind of help were they looking for? What personal counselling is available for men in the CAF? Is the support used? Are the men who receive allegations or complaints recommended to receive counselling services?

MGen Guy Chapdelaine: Madam Chair, that's a good question. It's important because as chaplains, we welcome any person. It could be the victim, but it could also be the perpetrator. They can come forward and ask for help; it's possible. That's why it is so important to be.... Of course, the same person cannot do both sides, but we can provide support to any people who come forward.

We are not alone. We are working together. We are working with the police and with the SMRC. Dr. Preston and I have bilateral

meetings regularly that look into the training of the chaplains, because it's important. We cannot say that the chaplains are trained and it's over. We need to make sure they have the trauma training and that they are up to date so they know of all the supports and can provide support to the perpetrators of the difficult situation.

The Chair: For the final question, we have Mr. Serré.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Brigadier-General Trudeau, what additional factors do you think need to be considered with respect to members of the Canadian Armed Forces serving abroad?

Also, what changes do you think would be necessary to encourage even more victims and survivors to share their experiences?

• (1300)

BGen Simon Trudeau: Thank you for the questions.

I think we need to publicize what we're doing in the military police, the changes we're putting in place in training, and what we're doing to better accommodate victims so they have confidence in the system and the police service. I don't think there's a police service out there that wouldn't love to have the trust of the public that they serve to get their job done.

Our job is to serve the public, and I think it's important to take the right steps, to figure out what can be changed, but also to communicate the changes that are being made, so that the Department of Defence community has greater confidence in their police service.

[*English*]

The Chair: Excellent. We're going to end it there.

I want to thank both of our witnesses for their testimony today. I know we will make a difference when we submit our report and see the changes that are coming.

Committee members, we will for sure see you on Thursday. We're going to commence and hopefully finish our report on unpaid work.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adjourn?

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Madam Chair, I want to make sure the request for the tabling of General Carignan's mandate performance objectives is put on the record and followed up with.

The Chair: I see the clerk nodding.

We'll see you on Thursday.

The meeting is adjourned.

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