

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 29 March 2017

Statement from Eli El-Chantiry, Chair of the Ottawa Police Services Board, regarding wristbands supporting officer recently charged by the Special Investigations Unit (SIU)

This is a difficult time for the community and the police service.

The Board understands the police membership wanting to show support for one another. However, the wristbands, even if well-meaning, have unintended consequences and are divisive. We need to take a step back and reflect on the bigger picture in this case.

As a community, we need to move away from an 'us' versus 'them' mentality and remind ourselves of one of Sir Robert Peel's most important principles of law enforcement, "The police are the public and the public are the police."

The police service has done, and continues to do, a lot of great work to build relationships and trust with the community. However, those relationships and that trust is very fragile. The Board feels the wristbands may undermine all the great efforts of the police service. In addition, we support the Chief's directive that wristbands do not form part of the uniform, and therefore, are not to be worn while on duty.

As for the judicial process that is currently underway, we must all remain objective and not interfere.

We should instead focus on understanding and respecting each other. This will ensure our city remains united and resilient – solving community issues with community solutions.

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