

Shooting of 17-year-old was 'tragic event,' says Chief

Ontario's Special Investigations Unit has formally taken over an investigation into what led Police to fire on 17-year-old Mikail Rashid following calls for a break-and-enter.

On Wednesday, October 30, at around 7.45 p.m., York Regional Police were called to reports of a Break and Enter in progress on Downey Circle, in the northwest quadrant of Bayview Avenue and St. John's Sideroad.

'The SIU (Special Investigations Unit) is investigating the circumstances surrounding the police-involved shooting last night of a 17-year-old male in Aurora,' said SIU Spokesperson Monica Hudon on Thursday morning.

'The preliminary investigation suggests that around 7.45 p.m., an individual contacted police to report a break-and-enter in progress at a residence on Downey Circle. Soon after officers arrived at the scene from York Regional Police, there was an exchange of gunfire between a 17-year-old male and four police officers. The male was struck multiple times and pronounced deceased at the scene. One Officer suffered minor injuries and was taken to hospital for treatment.

'At this time, the SIU has five investigators and three forensic investigators assigned to the case. We're asking for anyone with any information to contact the Unit at 1-800-787-8529 or to share any information you might have ' something you saw, something you heard, any video you might have ' to share that with us on our website at www.siu.on.ca.

'At this time, we have four subject officers designated, those are the officers who discharged their firearms, and in addition we have five witness officers designated.'

Speculation on the particulars of the case has been rife in the community since the incident took place.

'One set of gunshots and a break and then another set of gunshots and a break ' and then another set of gunshots and a break,' described one nearby resident of what they heard on October 30, asking not to be identified. 'All of a sudden, police sirens. We were watching TV, oddly enough, we thought it was on TV? we turned it off, went out on the back deck, and then the next two sets we could hear clearly ' it wasn't on the TV.'

Shortly after the incident, Ontario's Special Investigations Unit, which examines incidents of injury and death where police are involved, invoked its mandate.

A further statement was issued Friday by York Regional Police Chief Jim MacSween.

'This was a tragic event and one more example of the challenges our officers face each and every day,' he said. 'As I reported a few months ago, York Region has been experiencing an overall increase in violent crime in 2024. With these increases and more guns on the streets, our residents are feeling increasingly vulnerable to becoming a victim of crime. On a daily basis, I am speaking to people who are expressing to me that they are not feeling safe. This is concerning to me and simply unacceptable. I want to ensure our residents that the number one priority for York Regional Police is public safety. We remain steadfast in that commitment. Every day, York Regional Police officers are working tirelessly to ensure the safety and well-being of our community. They are responding to hundreds of calls and consistently demonstrating professionalism, support and courtesy for the public.

'However, the environment for our officers has changed and has become increasingly dangerous. In the past five years there have been 952 incidents where officers were the victim of an assault. This year alone, 116 officers have been attacked and assaulted. Thirteen of these incidents involved a weapon. I call on all stakeholders in the justice sector to do their part to ensure our communities and our officers are protected and remain safe. Everyone has a role to play.

'The October 30 shooting brings to the forefront the increasing levels of violence experienced by our frontline members while they

work diligently to maintain order and public safety. Protecting our communities and our officers is a responsibility I take very seriously. I stand with our members and will do everything I can to ensure they are supported throughout these events.?

The Aurora Black Community Association in the meantime encouraged the public to ?approach the situation with empathy, keeping comments focused on expression of condolence for the young person who lost their life and on wishes for a speedy recovery for our injured officer.?

?We hold great respect and appreciation for our police, especially our York Regional Police, who work tirelessly to keep our community safe,? said ABC founder Phiona Durrant. ?This moment is not about assigning blame but rather about examining our collective responsibility. Too often, we stay silent about the everyday struggles and challenges our community members face, only speaking out when a tragedy occurs. When we ignore the small issues, they can build up and eventually lead to bigger problems that impact our entire community. Imagine the positive change we could create if we addressed issues as they arise and supported one another consistently. By encouraging dialogue, acknowledging issues, and taking action, we can work toward a safer, more harmonious community.

?As parents and community members, we recognize the pain of this loss and stand in solidarity with those affected. This tragedy serves as a powerful reminder that we rarely know the full story behind any single moment in someone's life. Without context, both victims and public servants, like police officers, risk being seen only through a limited and often inaccurate lens. By understanding the full picture, we can move beyond labels and assumptions, allowing us to respond with greater empathy and compassion.

?As we reflect on this heartbreaking event, let us ask ourselves: What can we learn? How can we strengthen our support for our youth, our police, and each other to prevent future tragedies? Together, with a spirit of unity and compassion, we can do more to create a community where every individual feels seen, supported, and valued.?

By Brock Weir