



Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Supporting police professionals through innovative and inclusive police leadership to advance the safety and security of all Canadians.

May 27, 2022

CACP Statement: Supreme Court of Canada decision to strike down life without parole for mass murderers

Today's decision is a disappointing outcome, but the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACAP) fully respects the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Court makes it clear that it did not consider this appeal to be about “the value of each human life”, but rather about the sentence of life without a realistic possibility of parole being cruel and unusual punishment regardless of the circumstances.

The CACP continues to believe that the number of victims/lives taken must be a relevant factor in the sentencing of offenders who commit multiple murders. As matters of sentencing remain the purview of the Courts, and ultimately Parliament, the value of each human life in the case of multiple murders still needs to be addressed.

This ruling is limited to the application of section 745.51CC of the *Criminal Code* as it relates to the imposition of combined periods of 50 or more years of parole ineligibility. It does not purport to bind Parliament to a “25-year cap” in crafting sentencing policy.

Parliament may wish to consider introducing a revised version of section 745.51 of the *Criminal Code* that allows a sentencing judge to exercise the discretion that the trial judge did when he sentenced Mr. Bissonnette to life without parole eligibility for 40 years. Parliament may also want to review the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* and consider statutory pre-conditions for granting parole to multiple murderers.

Our sympathies go out to the families and communities impacted by the mosque shooting and all other incidents involving multiple murders. The police community's interests and efforts will always be directed towards preventing these horrific incidents from occurring and, if they should occur, to do everything we can to ensure justice is served.