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Police leaders offer condolences and call for support after tragic murder of fifth Canadian officer

OTTAWA – The Presidents of the Canadian Police Association (CPA), the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP), and the Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG) offered their condolences to the family and colleagues of RCMP Burnaby Detachment Constable Shaelyn Yang, who was killed in the line of duty on October 18 after responding to a call for assistance from Burnaby city parks employees.

“It is difficult to express how heartbreaking this news is for civilian and sworn law enforcement personnel across Canada, to lose a close friend and colleague in such a violent fashion,” said CPA President Tom Stamatakis. “Our thoughts are with Constable Yang’s family during this difficult time, as they mourn the loss of a wife, sister, and daughter, whose kindness and compassion led her to a career of service to her community,” said CACCP President Chief Danny Smyth. “On behalf of all members of the CAPG, I extend my deepest sympathies to all of the families, friends, and co-workers of each of the police officers who lost their lives while doing their jobs in the last weeks,” added CAPG President Andrew Minor.

The murder of Constable Shaelyn Yang happened just days before police personnel from across Canada were preparing to gather for the funerals of South Simcoe Police Service Constable Morgan Russell and Constable Devon Northrup, who were killed in the line of duty on October 11, and only one month since the murders of Toronto Police Service Constable Andrew Hong, and York Regional Police Service Constable Travis Gillespie.

“Each of these tragedies has had a profound impact on the policing community, and our members are hurting right now. These officers that we’ve lost have been young and old, men and women, and serving in small towns and big cities. Every police officer can see themselves in these circumstances,” said Mr. Stamatakis.

“As the national police governance association representing police boards and commissions across Canada and who are the employers of the police, ensuring the safety and security of officers while fulfilling their duties to keep communities safe is our priority,” stated CAPG President Andrew Minor. “Police officers work each day to keep everyone safe and they put their own lives at risk at the same time. The recent tragedies remind us of the courage, selflessness, and bravery that our officers bring to the job each day and we need to remind ourselves of this.”

“I truly hope these terrible events will lead to a period of reflection regarding the sometimes-inflammatory rhetoric that can be directed towards policing. Where police deserve criticism, it should be delivered fairly, but it also shouldn’t take the loss of an officer for our community leaders to show their support for those who are often blamed for issues well beyond their control,” said Chief Smyth.

“Our communities can and should be proud of the work done by civilian and sworn members of our police services every single day. Our officers’ hard work and dedication is evident, but the events of the past month have obviously put a strain on their well-being,” expressed Mr. Stamatakis.

Chief Smyth added that “It’s time for our communities to come together, for all levels of government, media, and community leaders to pause and consider how to support those who are committed to the safety and well-being of our towns and cities”.

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The Canadian Police Association (CPA) is the largest law enforcement advocacy organization in Canada and is the national voice for almost 60,000 front-line police personnel. Membership includes police personnel serving in 160 police services across Canada, from Canada's smallest towns and villages as well as those working in our largest municipal and provincial police services, and members of the railway police, and first nations' police personnel.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police was established in 1905 and represents approximately 1,300 police leaders from federal, First Nations, provincial, regional, municipal, transportation and military police services across Canada. The Association is dedicated to supporting police professionals through innovative and inclusive police leadership to advance the safety and security of all Canadians.

Formed in 1989, the Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG) represents the collective voice of police boards and commissions across the country including Self-Administered First Nations Police Services. Our members provide governance and oversight to more than 80% of municipal police in Canada. The effective governance and oversight of policing is an important means by which to ensure that Canada's police services are fully accountable, transparent and that they maintain public confidence as they work to uphold public safety. It is one of the foundations of our democracy.