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Senior police officer accused of coverup

OPP investigating claims of assault against a prisoner

Jennifer Pagliaro Toronto Star

A senior Toronto police officer is being accused of covering up an alleged assault on a prisoner, amid other complaints, the Star has learned.

In a letter dated Feb. 14 to the service's professional standards unit, obtained by the Star, a lawyer for the Toronto Police Association (TPA), representing several unnamed officers, asks that the allegations against 55 Division's Supt. Kim O'Toole be investigated by an outside police service and moved from the Coxwell Avenue station, pending any outcome.

This week, the association as well as the Senior Officers Organization (SOO), which represents higher-ranking members, including O'Toole, both confirmed to the Star that an investigation is underway by Ontario Provincial Police.

"We are confident that the investigators will conduct a thorough investigation and report on their findings. It is the process we have to deal with such matters and it is being adhered to," Supt. Domenic Sinopoli wrote in a statement as president of the SOO.

None of the allegations have been

proven.

In a statement, TPA president Clayton Campbell said the association is aware of "several incidents" involving O'Toole "which have been reported by named and unnamed sources to the Toronto Police Service."

The letter, authored by lawyer Sandip Khehra outlines four alleged incidents on behalf of unnamed officers whom he said feared being identified.

The most serious of those allegations is that an officer said to be personal friends with O'Toole assaulted a prisoner and was transferred to another division to allegedly "conceal the pending investigation."

According to the letter, the alleged assault was captured on video that shows another officer intervening.

"Multiple officers who were disturbed" and those who witnessed the alleged assault notified another supervisor at the division, the letter says, "as they had a duty to report."

Officers were told the matter had been investigated "and were offered no conclusion" before the officer in question

Toronto police Supt. Kim O'Toole in a photo from 2019. A complaint from lawyer Sandip Khehra outlines four alleged incidents against O'Toole on behalf of several unnamed officers. The most serious allegation is that an officer said to be personal friends with O'Toole assaulted a prisoner and was transferred to another division to "conceal the pending investigation."

was transferred, the letter alleges.

The transfer, the letter claims, "was initiated by Supt. O'Toole as a clear effort to stop the investigation dead in its tracks."

A separate complaint in the letter alleges O'Toole "condones drinking alcohol in her office amongst her inner circle" and it is known amongst her colleagues that she keeps "a stash" in her desk and purse.

"Many members have experienced being offered a drink of alcohol while in O'Toole's office; often asked what is their drink of choice," the letter claims.

"Multiple officers have noted a smell of alcohol emanating from the Superintendent's breath while at work."

The letter also alleges "tyrannical" behaviour by O'Toole targeting officers

she dislikes for discipline and protecting those she likes, and refers to a "high volume" of transfers from the division.

Another complaint alleges O'Toole "orchestrated and approved" fraudulent injury claims on behalf of other officers.

Khehra concluded the letter by saying other members approached him with complaints but that it was impossible for them to come forward without being identified.

"They fear reprisal at the hands of Supt. O'Toole and those that support her," the letter says.

It also asks that O'Toole be removed from duties at 55 Division pending the investigation.

In his statement, TPA president Campbell said they expect allegations involving senior officers to be investigated "as thoroughly as any other member, given the rank and responsibility a senior officer holds in the organization."

In an emailed statement, Stephanie Sayer, a spokesperson for Toronto Police, said they are aware of the complaint sent to professional standards but "do not discuss internal HR matters publicly."