

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017

Australian Federal Police

Question No. BE17-059

Senator McKim asked the following question on 25 May 2017:

Senator McKIM: Did you uncover any evidence that supported either of those claims during the course of those investigations?

Ms Close: The Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary itself has acknowledged human rights abuses by their police officers and the police commissioner in Papua New Guinea, Commissioner Barkey, declared 2017 'the year of discipline'. Part of the role of the Australian Federal Police in Papua New Guinea is in providing that advisory support for training, leadership, investigations management—including working with the RPNGC Internal Affairs Directorate.

Senator McKIM: The question was: the investigation that the commissioner has confirmed occurred, did that uncover any evidence that supported either of the two claims? What I am trying to differentiate between here is the commissioner has been very clear that, ultimately, he is satisfied that neither of the claims were able to be substantiated—please correct me if I am wrong, Commissioner; I am paraphrasing here and I accept that. What I am trying to discover is whether that was a matter of judgement by the investigators when weighing different evidence or whether there was simply no evidence there to weigh?

Mr Colvin: Let us take that on notice so we can be very clear and specific in our answer.

The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

The AFP's determination was that there was simply no evidence there to weigh.

The AFP received a large amount of material in 2015 relating to alleged human rights violations by the RPNGC. The AFP reviewed the material and did not identify any matters requiring further action by the AFP. In particular, the AFP assessed that the material was typical of the general operating environment in Papua New Guinea and that none of the material showed any obvious disclosures of human rights abuses, or misconduct by members of the RPNGC.