

York police union upset that Wiche's SIU suit dismissed

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer

The head of York Region's police union calls the dismissal of a lawsuit against Ontario's special investigations unit a sad day for police.

And Dave Kingston is upset over comments made by Andre Marin, former head of the SIU.

"I was very disappointed reading Marin's comments about the decision being a great day for democracy," said Kingston, president of the York Region Police Association.

"We launched this suit to wake up the province about problems with the SIU. There was a shortage of funds, a need

for more investigators. They have since received more funds so there's some positive things that have come out of this."

York Regional Police Det. Robert Wiche was seeking \$30 million in the suit against the SIU, Marin and the provincial government.

The claim was filed in 1998, after Wiche was cleared in the 1996 shooting death of Markham teenager Faraz Suleman. The suit claimed the SIU probe was incompetent, malicious and politically motivated.

In a 55-page verdict released recently, Mr. Justice John Ground of Ontario's Superior Court of Justice said he could find no evidence Marin was motivated by

anything other than an honest determination based on the evidence before him.

Marin, now Canadian Forces ombudsman, told The Toronto Star the decision marks "a great day for democracy in Ontario".

But Kingston said "it's a very bad day for police right across Ontario" and indicated Wiche and the association may appeal the decision.

"Our lawyers are looking it over to see if there are grounds for appeal. At 55 pages, there's a lot of reviewing to be done. It's been a terrible tragedy for Bob and his family, a very stressful thing."

—with files from TorStar

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