



## Tbilisi Georgia May 26 2011 After Action Review

Commissioned by the US Department of State  
Completed by the Densus Group Review Team  
(During in-country visit July 26-31, 2011)  
Report dated August 2, 2011

### Terms Of Reference

- US Embassy request for Densus to conduct an 'After Action Report' into the Police handling of the events of May 25/26 2011 in Tbilisi
- Densus Review Team
  - Adam Leggat- Densus Director Security Sector Reform
  - Malcolm McFarland – Densus Consultant
  - Colin Burrows – International Policing Adviser

# Methodology

- Review and analysis of:
  - ‘Open source’ media reports, photographs and video (before and during visit)
  - Material and additional video footage and media reports supplied by Ministry of Interior during visit
- Review Team led ‘Structured Debrief Process’
  - Senior Ministry Planning Staff
  - Field Commanders
  - Unit Commanders
- Review Team employed the PEACE Model approach at each stage of the process
  - Planning and Preparation for each debrief session
  - Engagement and Explanation of purpose
  - Provision of Account by participants
  - Clarification, Challenge and Closure of account
  - Evaluation by Review Team of Information and accounts provided

*Process provided details of the policing operation and key aspects relevant to units involved and what actually happened; identified organizational vulnerabilities and training needs. It also facilitated the completion of the ‘After Action Report’ and should contribute to organizational learning and future improvements.*

## INCIDENT OVERVIEW

From May 21<sup>st</sup> until May 25<sup>th</sup>, anti-government protests were held in Tbilisi, Georgia. Initially centered near the grounds of the national television station, the protests drew participants from various opposition groups. On May 26<sup>th</sup> the Government of Georgia had previously scheduled an Independence Day Parade along Rustaveli Avenue many blocks away from the initial site of the opposition protests. This is an annually scheduled parade that attracts thousands of spectators and is an important event in the Georgian calendar.

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, the opposition group moved their protest from the television station grounds to Rustaveli Avenue in front of the reviewing stands for the next morning's parade. The government issued a permit to protest at the Parliament despite the fact that the protestors had not requested one; however, the permit expired at midnight on May 25<sup>th</sup> to allow the government time to prepare for the next morning's parade.

During the day of May 25<sup>th</sup> the opposition group vowed to disrupt the Independence Day Parade. Consequently, the government decided on a two prong approach to the protests. The first was to offer the opposition group an alternative protest site that would not interfere with the scheduled parade. The second option, planned as a contingency in the event of the unwillingness of the opposition group to relocate, was the use of police crowd management units to disperse the protest.

This plan envisioned in the second option was that the main group of crowd management units, moving from north to south along Rustaveli Avenue, would be responsible for moving the crowd toward the three streets east of the Parliament that were designated as egress routes for the crowd. To the west, both streets that bordered the Parliament building would be manned by blocking forces that would also push, if necessary, the crowd toward the eastern "escape" routes. To the south another unit responsible for detention and arrest would be staged near Freedom Square to move north as necessary. Inside the Parliament building more crowd management officers would be assigned to protect the Parliament building from intrusion by the crowd. Finally, a reserve force would be staged west of Freedom Square in the parking lot between the Parliament building and the back of the Marriott Courtyard.

The police would be augmented by the use of various less than lethal weapons to include water cannon, long range acoustic devices, a variety of direct impact weapons and CS smoke. All officers would be uniformed in crowd management protective equipment to include protective helmets, body and limb protection, shields and side handled batons. In the event not all officers were dressed in full protective equipment, including a number not wearing helmets and therefore not wearing their identification numbers. Finally, units participating in this event would be drawn from the Patrol Police, Criminal Police, Special Tasks Division and Constitutional Security Division.

From intelligence sources the government were particularly aware of protestor plans to take over the Tbilisi City Hall off Freedom Square as part of their activities, while also offering violence to resist being dispersed. The government also had information that Molotov Cocktails would be used against them and that protestor's signs were actually makeshift shields and striking sticks. There was also intelligence indicating that some on the crowd were carrying legally held firearms.

Early in the evening of May 25<sup>th</sup>, the opposition groups occupied the roadway in front of the Parliament and then barricaded the road at both ends of the building by linking cables through metal crowd control barriers that had previously blocked the sidewalk for the intended parade. Approaching midnight, representatives of the police spoke with the opposition leaders several times attempting to negotiate the relocation of the protest, while warning that failure to disperse would require the police to disperse the protest.

After the final order to disperse shortly before midnight, the operation began approximately 10 minutes later. The clearing operation began with a small force of police moving up the street to the south and west of the Parliament with the objective of cutting the cable that held the crowd management barriers together to allow the crowd unfettered movement towards the "escape" routes. This unit's movement was accompanied by a feint by the larger force to the north intended to draw the crowd's attention; however, a small group within the protestors noticed the police and began throwing items at them.

Once the barricade was dismantled, the small police unit withdrew down the first western street and staged there. Immediately the main force began moving south, cutting through the barricades under the cover of both less than lethal munitions and water cannon. This police movement was violently resisted by approximately 200 of the estimated 1,000 members of the crowd using makeshift shields and sticks.

CS smoke was launched at the south end of the Parliament building while individual police/protestor clashes occurred, despite the fact that the use of CS smoke had not been authorized at this stage by the operational commander. As the group of protestors were moved from the north end of the Parliament building the officers assigned to protect the building exited from the north, deployed on the Avenue and engaged protestors using less than lethal munitions and batons.

The justification for this level of force in front of the Parliament against a relatively low apparent threat is unknown. There is clear video evidence, however, that aggressive and unwarranted force was used by individual officers on some protestors as the crowd moved away from Parliament.

Soon after the first CS smoke canisters landed in front of Parliament, several cars containing the protest organizers and their bodyguards left the front of the Parliament building. This convoy of vehicles encountered the arrest teams moving forward from Freedom Square in response to calls for assistance from the small group of police who had cut the chain. The convoy of vehicles failed to comply with police instructions to stop and drove through the police cordon line, escaping the police but resulting in five police injuries, one police fatality and one citizen fatality.

Additional units moved forward from Freedom Square to support the unit with the casualties. The response from this direction was generally disorganized as a result of miscommunication and a general failure of the communications system. Unusually strong rain caused radios to fail, and cell phones were used for operational command and control.

The operation to clear the avenue of protestors lasted approximately forty minutes. There were 90 arrests effected, 40 protestors injured with non-life threatening wounds and 27 police injured. Following the event, an after action review resulted in four (4) police officers dismissed, one (1) reduced in rank and nine (9) reprimanded. Details have not been released as to which units these disciplined officers belonged to or what offenses/policy violations formed the basis for the disciplinary action.

# AFTER ACTION REPORT

In response to

Georgia Police Crowd Management Operation in TBILISI on May 25/26 2011

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Commissioned by	US State Department via US Embassy at Tbilisi, Georgia
Completed by:	Densus Review Team Adam Leggat, Densus Director Security Sector Reform Malcolm McFarland, Densus Consultant, Colin Burrows, International Police Advisor
Date report completed:	August 2011
Email address:	adam.leggat@densusgroup.com
Dates and Duration of Event:	May 25 /26 2011, 2300-0130 approx, Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi  After Action Review process completed in Tbilisi with Georgian Police personnel July 26 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> , 2011
Reviewed Incident	Police operation to disperse anti Government protestors from outside the Georgian Parliament building, Rustaveli Ave. Tbilisi on the night of May 25/26 <sup>th</sup> , 2011.
Appendices	Appendix 1 List of reference material Appendix 2 Scene of dispersal operation Appendix 3 List of recommendations arising from review
Terms of Reference for Review	To conduct an After Action Review of the police operation to disperse protest at the Georgian State Parliament on the night of May 25/26 2011. As an internal police enquiry has already been made, this review will focus on police organizational issues, not individual actions, and make such recommendations as seen proper to enable the Georgia Police to develop and improve their crowd management procedures.

## Summary of Incident

From May 21-26<sup>th</sup> 2011, Georgian authorities facilitated an anti Government Protest in Tbilisi. Initially the protests were concentrated on national TV studios in the capital however on May 25 the protest moved to Rustaveli Avenue outside the State Parliament, blocking the roadway. Police facilitated this protest in line with earlier strategy. The protestors used metal crowd control barriers to block the Avenue to the north and south of the Parliament building, reinforcing the barrier by linking them with metal cables anchored to street furniture. This action can be interpreted as direct provocation to force police into direct action, as Rustaveli Avenue was to host the Independence Day Parade due the next day, May 26<sup>th</sup>.

A permit was issued for the protest. The permit expired at midnight on May 25<sup>th</sup>. On the evening of May 25<sup>th</sup>, police began planning for a dispersal operation to move the protestors from outside the parliament. The purpose of the dispersal was to clear the area of Rustaveli Avenue outside the State Parliament to ensure that the National Independence Day parade along the Avenue that next morning could take place without interference.

Police Units deployed on crowd management duty were;

- Patrol Police
- Criminal Police
- Special Task Division
- Constitutional Security Division

All police were dressed in Crowd Management clothing, issued with a common radio system. Selected officers were issued with, and deployed with, less lethal weapons including direct impact weapons of various types, Water Cannon, Long Range Acoustic Device and Tear Smoke weapons. Officers were equipped with protective equipment, including, protective helmets, limb upper body and lower limb protection, shields and side handled batons.

The policing objective was to move the protest from the Avenue as soon as reasonable to allow final preparations for the Independence Parade to be made. It was eventually completed within 40 minutes of initial deployment, from approx 0010-0050 on May 26. Previously, police had offered the protestors alternative protest venues in the capital as an alternative to Rustaveli Avenue. This is seen as demonstrating the police commitment to maintaining the rights of the protestors, commensurate with other obligations. Before the actual dispersal, police also gave specific legal notice of intention to disperse and had given additional verbal warnings to protestors to that effect.

The operation commenced by police cutting the southern barrier and removing the crowd barriers to allow controlled egress from the protest site. (See scene of operation at Appendix 2). This unit then withdrew into a side street to await orders. This being completed, the main police effort from the north moved forward in a disciplined manner using water cannon and less lethal impact rounds to enable them to cut and remove the northern barrier. This was initially resisted by some determined protestors, approx 200 out of approx 1000 others present, who offered violent resistance, being armed with sticks and improvised shields. There is also evidence of other missiles and Molotov cocktail missiles being available to the protestors and intelligence that there were some in the crowd carrying legally held firearms. At this stage Police also

discharged tear smoke. Individual police/protestor clashes took place and involved use of batons by police. At one point, officers from inside the Parliament building, equipped with special munitions, deployed on the Avenue and engaged as yet unidentified persons using these munitions and batons. The justification for using this level of force against a relatively low apparent threat is unknown, as is the authorization for their deployment outside the Parliament building. There is clear evidence from video footage of aggressive and unnecessary force being used on some protestors, by a number of officers as the dispersal moved southwards away from parliament.

Several cars containing protest organizers and their bodyguards were driven away as this developed and met a unit of Arrest Team officers moving north along Rustaveli Ave from Freedom Square towards parliament to arrest offenders and ringleaders identified in the protest. The cars failed to stop and drove through police to make their escape. This resulted in five police officers being injured and one officer and a protestor being killed. At about the same time a call for assistance was received from the cinema on Rustaveli Ave, which was allegedly being attacked by dispersing protestors. Additional police units were dispatched northwards from Freedom Square. A disorganized fracas ensued for several minutes however the Avenue was cleared of protestors and prisoners transported to detention facilities by 0150 on May 26.

Approximately 90 arrests were made in this arrest phase of the operation. Some 40 protestors were hospitalized, none with life threatening injuries. In addition, 27 police officers sustained injuries. Following an internal police investigation into the unauthorized discharge of tear smoke grenades and improper use of batons/special munitions, a total of 4 police officers were dismissed, 1 reduced in rank and 9 reprimanded. It is yet unclear which units these officers belonged to.

The inappropriate use of batons/special munitions by some officers has gained international interest and condemnation and has resulted in international calls for an inquiry by the Georgia government.

**EVALUATION BY POLICING FUNCTION**

**MANAGEMENT (Public Information, Safety, Liaison, etc.)**

	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Overall Assessment of Function		X
If "needs improvement" please briefly describe improvements needed:		
Planning	<p>There is considerable opportunity to further develop and build on public confidence by engaging in a process of public information and advice around crowd management events. The publication via the media of safety, legal and public services amenities advice would increase the police profile and evidence that the planning process is considering wider public and stakeholder interests.</p> <p>Guidance on the use of force including the use of less lethal weapons is covered across a range of publications, including those that are specific to a single weapon system. There is no single over arching document to provide guidance to planners, commanders and officers on the ground on the use of force.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That the Georgia Police build and develop a public information strategy for Mass Demonstration management</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That a single, over arching and comprehensive policy document be prepared to provide guidance on human rights, use of force, less lethal weapons and firearms.</p>	
Training	<p>We are not able at this time to ascertain the training available to Command Centre staff in preparing, running and recording of events at command venues. Such training is recommended to maximize the command effectiveness during the operation and to fully support After Action Review or indeed any subsequent investigation or enquiry.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Command Centre staff receive appropriate training for their role</p>	
Personnel	Not Applicable	



<p><b>Equipment</b></p>	<p>Communications with Field Command would be improved by introducing the ability to link radio and cell phone conversations.</p> <p>There is currently a wide array of less lethal weapon systems in service. It would appear that many of these systems fulfill the same role and do not provide additional tactical options. Multiple systems can create significant issues with training, authorization and accounting procedures as well as potentially incurring unnecessary costs.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> To install appropriate technical asset to link radio and cell phone conversations</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> A review should be conducted of current less lethal weapon holdings to include recommendations for any rationalization required.</p>
<p><b>Facilities</b></p>	<p>The Command Centre is host to a large number of agencies and staff during Mass Demonstration Events. The structure of and equipment in the Command Room can lead to noise and movement interference during demonstration management.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> To assess the suitability of the current Command centre to identify additional structural, equipment and technical improvements required to maximize command efficiency</p>

**FIELD COMMAND (Mass Demonstration Field Command Management)**

	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Overall Assessment of Function		X

If "needs improvement" please briefly describe improvements needed:	
Planning	Not applicable
Training	<p>To date, only a portion of the potential middle and senior Field Commanders have been trained in the Crowd Management command skills appropriate to their rank/role. This training needs to be expanded to the remainder in order to ensure a management capability that can be embedded throughout police service.</p> <p>To date, due to the time available, exercising and practicing of these skills has been minimal. In order to achieve personal operational competency all potential middle and senior Field Commanders should receive an agreed level of exercising in demonstration management and use of force skills to prepare them for operational competency.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Remaining potential middle and senior command ranks should be trained to a common skills level.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> All potential middle and senior command ranks to receive situational and experiential training to practice core skills in demonstration management and operational Use of Force skills.</p>
Personnel	Not applicable
Equipment	<p>Forward Field Command at present has minimal technical or personnel support to facilitate the command function.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Forward Command should have a suitably equipped Command Vehicle and trained staff to assist in management of the operation and the effective deployment of field units.</p>
Facilities	Not Applicable

**OPERATIONS (Mass Demonstration Management)**

	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Overall Assessment of Function		X

If "needs improvement" please briefly describe improvements needed:	
Planning	The Tactical plan for this event was thorough and briefed to Field and Unit Commanders.
Training	<p>To date not all Patrol Police have been trained by the qualified crowd management instructors. It is also not clear that officers receive regular training updates or exercising to maintain skills. This training gap is a significant organizational risk that must be resolved as a priority if operational competency is to be achieved.</p> <p>Specific concerns were raised by officers about the ability to make arrests from a crowd and the skills required for handling prisoners. Several of the incidents of poor use of force were attributed to this skill gap by commanders.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That all operational Patrol Police and Special Task officers are trained to a common skills level as a matter of priority</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> that an analysis of current training program is made to develop a single training curriculum for all police officers on use of force and mass demonstration skills.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> All Patrol Police and Special Tasks officers to receive situational and experiential training to practice core Use of Force skills.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Specific training to be provided on arrest procedures in a mass demonstration context and the skills required to effectively deal with arrested persons.</p>
Personnel	<p>Field personnel were deployed in protective equipment appropriate to the role they were to play and the risk anticipated. Due to the number of resources deployed and the unexpected developments in the operation a number of issues are raised on the issue of identification;</p> <p>Some officers are seen wearing possibly non-regulation uniform, e.g. face masks without helmets, non-standard footwear and, from our assessment, semi civilian dress. This only serves to confuse the public and cause concern, anxiety and panic as the identity of those officers is uncertain and leads to the conclusion that irregular forces, or indeed proactive sinister persons, are intent on causing injury or death by their actions.</p>

	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> That all police officers engaged and deployed on crowd management duties are properly and entirely equipped and dressed as specified in the Tactical Plan.</p> <p>Within the units deployed on the operation we recognize that a significant effort has been made to ensure that all officers have identification numbers on their helmets. This is a positive and progressive development which allows public confidence that police officers will be accountable and identifiable for their actions.</p> <p>During this operation we noted that several officers, particularly those deploying specialist weapons systems were not readily identifiable. This clearly leads to anonymity and unaccountability and makes it impossible for the public, or police command to readily identify individual officers. We recognize that it is common and internationally accepted procedure for officers to have specifically allocated identification numbers placed on the front of their helmets (to be visible visor up or down) to be easily visible from the front, i.e. from the public view.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That all officers engaged in crowd management duties are issued with person specific identification letters/ numbers to be worn on the front of the helmet to be visible whether the visor is raised or down.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That such officers are issued with identification letters/ numbers to be visibly worn on external uniform to allow ease of identification.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That internal police service instructions are prepared to support this identification process to ensure that a process is in place for supervisors to ensure that officers deployed are displaying the proper identification symbols at all times.</p>
Equipment	<p>The deployment of specialist weapons systems and chemical agents such as CS is a highly emotive and sensitive issue. These systems lie at the top of the use of force continuum, just short of Lethal Force. The deployment and use of such weapons must be strictly controlled if public alarm and injury is to be avoided. Those officers deploying with same must be trained and exercised to an agreed high standard in order to maintain discipline and operational integrity. The haphazard or uncontrolled deployment in situations which do not require the application of such a degree of force must be avoided at all costs if public, and police, safety is to be protected to the highest degree. Where such deployment and/or use is authorized at command level it must be based on a unique Risk Assessment in the planning stage and/or an On-Scene risk assessment by the Field Commander prior to deployment and use and the decision process clearly outlined and recorded for after action review. Theoretical evaluation of use of force is already part of the Command training package but should be advanced by exercise and practice.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Command ranks be exercised and practiced in situational assessment, decision making and recording for Use of Force deployments.</p>

Facilities	Not Applicable
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**PLANNING/INTELLIGENCE (Situation analysis, documentation)**

	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Overall Assessment of Function		X

If "needs improvement" please briefly describe improvements needed:

Planning	<p>A number of contingencies were planned for and a well-defined de-escalation procedure was in place. The available intelligence was properly briefed to commanders and units and formed a significant part of the tactical decision making. The <i>initial</i> deployments of resources, including less lethal and specialist munitions was almost entirely appropriate to the anticipated threat.</p> <p>The only exception identified was the lack of a contingency plan for the identified presence of firearms within the protest. The weapons were identified as a threat as one unit was supplied with ballistic body armor but no clear plan to manage that threat was put in place.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Training should be provided on managing incidents involving firearms and other potentially lethal situations in crowd management situations.</p>
Training	<p>Not all of the Centralized Planning Team members have received the appropriate 'Event Planning' training. This leaves a skills gap that needs to be resolved to ensure a common skills level. All team members could expand their skills by further event specific planning and exercising modules, e.g. soccer matches and environmental protests for example.</p> <p>The Tactical Plan for this event under review has been properly and effectively briefed to Field Commanders and Field Units. The process can be improved by developing an After Action Review process to capture learning and develop training excellence</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Non trained Event Planning Team members to receive training to ensure skills parity</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Event Planning Team members to receive event specific training as identified</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That an After Action Review process is introduced across all command levels to identify learning and update training curriculum</p>
Personnel	Not Applicable

Equipment	Not Applicable
Facilities	Not Applicable

**FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION (Purchasing, cost unit, etc.)**

	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Overall Assessment of Function	X	

If "needs improvement" please briefly describe improvements needed:	
Planning	Not Applicable
Training	Not Applicable
Personnel	Not Applicable
Equipment	Not Applicable
Facilities	Not Applicable

## SUMMARY

The Tactical Plan and the Intelligence analysis were sound and correctly and properly briefed to officers in advance of the dispersal operation. The specialist tactic of cutting and removing the Southern barrier to allow controlled egress was appropriate and successful. The arrest strategy was also well prepared.

The operation was frustrated by:

- The early movement northwards from Freedom Square by officers responding to a call for assistance at the cinema and with Arrest Team casualties. This led to the arrest phase being much closer to the Parliament than intended and became interspersed with the end of the initial dispersal from the Parliament area
- The fatalities caused by the fleeing vehicles introduced an unexpected crisis at an already busy period of the operation
- The unauthorized use of CS into the protest after the southern barrier was removed served to cause some of the protestors to move *north* rather than south or east, away from the CS smoke
- The communications failure and unreliable cell-phone back-up left Forward Field Command and Unit Commanders without clear direction or ability to fully control the further deployments and to manage the use of force issues which arose

There is clear video evidence of excessive use of force by a very small number of officers, and there is considerable concern as to the deployment and aggressive use of special munitions and CS agents in circumstances which, from the reference material provided, did not justify or necessitate such action.

We must also recognize that the vast majority of officers deployed on the night of May 25/26 were well disciplined and acted at all times within their orders and used a proportionate and necessary amount of force to achieve their objectives. This is clearly evidenced in the reference material and is a credit to the Georgia Police under testing and difficult circumstances.

In the spirit of this review, a number of learning, training and organizational recommendations are made to further develop and prepare the Georgia police in their preparations for future crowd management events. These are listed in Appendix 3 below. Those taking part in the review were fully co-operative and showed a determination to recognize shortcomings and to build on these to learn and develop for the future. This is an entirely commendable attitude and one that will be of immense value as the service progresses in the future.

END



## REFERENCE MATERIAL

**Written:**

- Order of the Minister of internal Affairs of Georgia No.618 relating to the preparation and aim of the policing operation

**Media:**

- CD of assorted TV video clips provided by the Ministry of the Interior
- CD of police / CCTV video of the area around Parliament during the dispersal operation

**Other:**

- Structured debrief notes and schematics from meetings on July 27-29 2011

SCENE OF DISPERSAL OPERATION



## Appendix 3

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Recommendation:** That the Georgia Police build and develop a public information strategy for Mass Demonstration management
2. **Recommendation:** Command Centre staff should receive appropriate training for their role
3. **Recommendation:** That a single, over arching and comprehensive policy document be prepared to provide guidance on human rights, use of force, less lethal weapons and firearms
4. **Recommendation:** To install appropriate technical asset to link radio and cell phone conversations
5. **Recommendation:** A review should be conducted of current less lethal weapon holdings to include recommendations for any rationalization required.
6. **Recommendation;** To assess the suitability of the current Command centre to identify additional structural, equipment and technical improvements required to maximize command efficiency
7. **Recommendation:** Remaining potential middle and senior command ranks should be trained to a common skills level
8. **Recommendation:** All potential middle and senior command ranks to receive situational and experiential training to practice core skills in demonstration management and operational Use of Force skills
9. **Recommendation:** Forward Command should have a suitably equipped Command Vehicle and trained staff to assist in management of the operation and the effective deployment of field units
10. **Recommendation:** That all operational Patrol Police and Special Task officers are trained to a common skills level as a matter of priority
11. **Recommendation:** That an analysis of current training program is made to develop a single training curriculum for all police officers on use of force / mass demonstration skill
12. **Recommendation:** All Patrol Police and Special Tasks officers to receive situational and experiential training to practice core Use of Force
13. **Recommendation:** Specific training to be provided on arrest procedures in a mass demonstration context and the skills required to effectively deal with arrested persons.

14. Recommendation: That all police officers engaged and deployed on crowd management duties are properly and entirely equipped and dressed as specified in the Tactical Plan
15. Recommendation: That all officers engaged in crowd management duties are issued with person specific identification letters/ numbers to be worn on the front of the helmet to be visible whether the visor is raised or down
16. Recommendation: That such officers are issued with identification letters / numbers to be visibly worn on external uniform to allow ease of identification
17. Recommendation: That internal police service instructions are prepared to support this identification process to ensure that a process is in place for supervisors to ensure that officers deployed are displaying the proper identification symbols at all times
18. Recommendation: Command ranks be exercised and practiced in situational assessment, decision making and recording for Use of Force deployments
19. Recommendation: Training should be provided on managing incidents involving firearms and other potentially lethal situations in crowd management situations
20. Recommendation: Non trained Event Planning Team members to receive training to ensure skills parity
21. Recommendation: Event Planning Team members to receive event specific training as identified
22. Recommendation: That an After Action Review process is introduced across all command levels to identify learning and update training curriculum

END

## Background to Events of May 26, 2011

- Prior to the Independence Day Parade scheduled for May 26 there were 5 days of anti-government protest
- May 25 - Protestors occupy main arterial road Rustaveli Avenue in front of Parliament
- Authorities issued a permit to make protest lawful, which expired at 0001 hours on May 26
- On evening of May 25 Police command directed that the Rustaveli Avenue protest be dispersed to facilitate the Independence Day Parade
- Protestors were informed - alternative sites were offered in the immediate area but off the parade route. Protestors were informed both in written form and verbally.
- Police operation commenced shortly after midnight to disperse the crowd in preparation for the May 26 parade

## Protest Overview

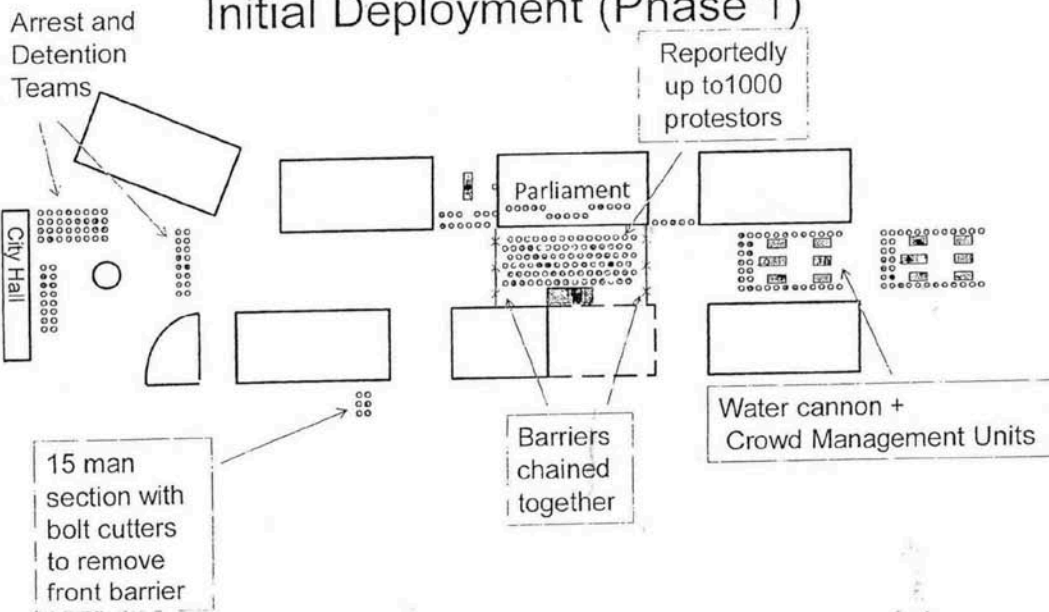
- Up to 1000 demonstrate outside Parliament
  - Many armed with sticks, blocked and secured road
  - Protestors linked pedestrian control barriers with chain to block road
  - Reports of intent to use Molotov Cocktails
  - Reports that some demonstrators may be in possession of firearms (primarily legally held weapons)
- Just after midnight Police Crowd Management Units (drawn from 4 agencies) supported by water cannon disperse the protestors
- Operation took approximately 40 minutes

# Police Deployments

- Units deployed
  - Special Task Department
  - Patrol Police
  - Criminal Police
  - Constitutional Security Department
- Nature of Deployment
  - Majority of units and officers are deployed wearing:
    - Protective equipment: helmets, upper body and limb protectors
  - Most have:
    - Batons and shields
  - Some units equipped with:
    - Chemical munitions (CS and OC)
    - Various weapon launched impact projectiles

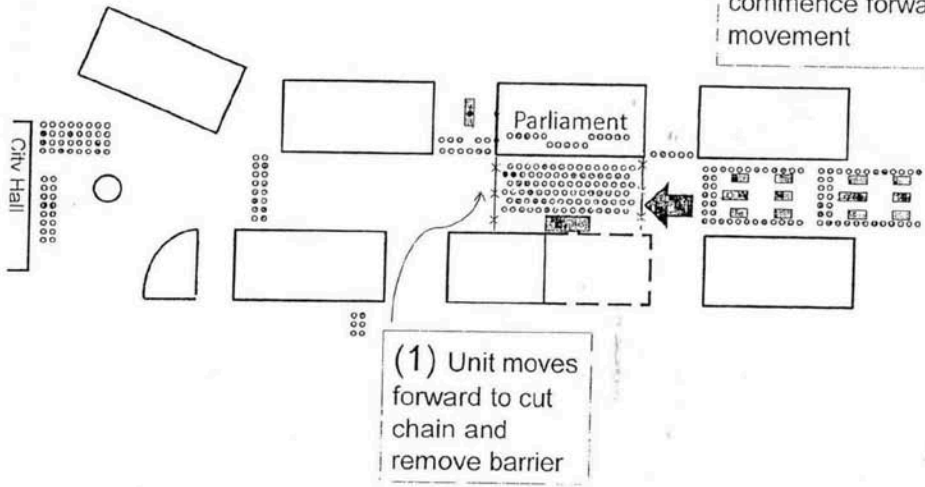
Main policing deployment involved controlled forward movement of officers in Crowd Management Formations

## Police Dispersal Plan Initial Deployment (Phase 1)

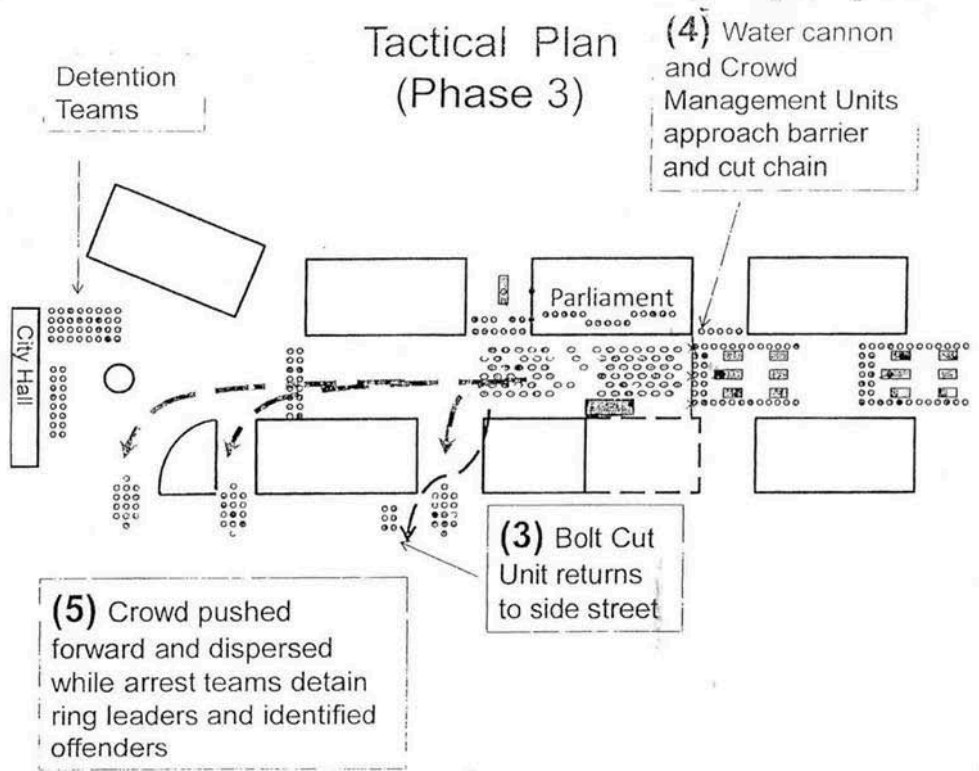


# Tactical Plan (Phase 2)

(2) Water cannon and Crowd Management Units commence forward movement



# Tactical Plan (Phase 3)

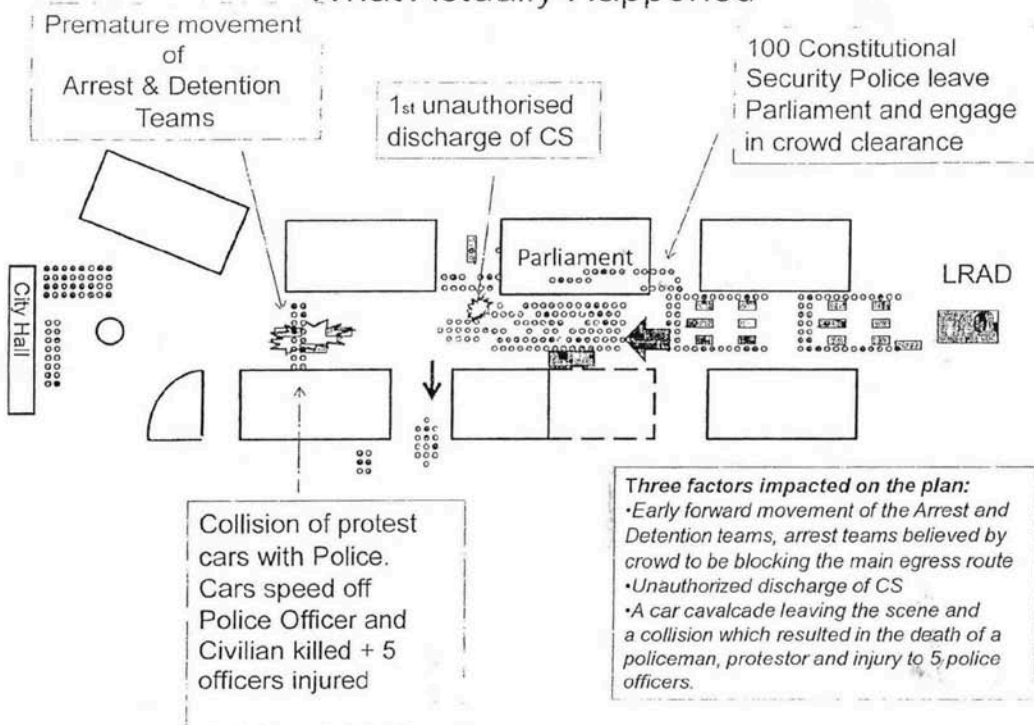




# Post Deployment Outcome

- Police Officer and civilian killed + 5 officers injured by a car convoy containing protest organizers leaving the protest area
- Reported 90 arrests
- 40 protestors hospitalized (no life threatening or serious injuries)
- Minor injuries to Police Officers (27 officers)
- International media and human rights organization allegation of excessive and disproportionate use of Force in relation to *'tear gas', 'rubber bullets' and use of batons*

## What Actually Happened



## The 'Explained' Policing Strategy

- Disperse protestors from Rustaveli Avenue
- Secure front of Parliament and City Hall
- Cut chain and remove barrier on the Southern side of Parliament, creating a controlled egress route for the crowd
- Crowd Management formations supported by water cannon, push demonstrators away from Parliament, disperse crowd while arrest teams make targeted arrests
- Secure route for Independence Day Parade

## Tactical Support Weapons and Equipment Deployed

- 3 Water Cannons
- LRAD (Long Range Acoustic Device)
- Batons and Shields
- Less Lethal Weapons (LLW) deployed included:
  - CS munitions
  - Single Shot Baton Round/CS Launcher
  - Multi Shot Baton Round/CS Launcher
  - Shotgun launched 'less lethal' devices (type unknown)
  - OC Aerosol Extinguisher Canister (identified)
  - Pepper ball gun 'type' unspecified

*It has not been possible to determine the nature of munitions used from each of the weapons. Operational guidance or rules of engagement for each weapon system were confirmed to exist but were not seen by the review team.*

## Tactical Support Weapons and Equipment Issues

- Less Lethal Munitions fired were accounted for by quantity only
- While no serious injuries appear to have occurred the Densus Review Team has significant concerns as to the apparent indiscriminate, uncoordinated use of some of these weapons and the way they were deployed in a crowd management situation
- Guidance and Rules of Engagement for LLW are spread across a large number of publications
- It appears there is reliance on the initial training provided when the weapon systems were supplied

## Structured Debrief

### *Observations By Georgian Police*

- The actual 'Plan' was sound
- All personnel understood the plan
- Operation was well resourced
- Water cannon and accompanying Crowd Managements Units performed well
- Command and Tactical Training provided by Densus was built into and evident in planning and disposition of the majority of Crowd Management Units

## Structured Debrief

### *Observations By Georgian Police*

- Issues which frustrated plan
  - Early move forward of officers from Freedom Square to assist people in cinema and assist with arrest team casualties
  - The car collision resulting in death and injury
  - Unauthorized discharge of CS into protest when first barrier had been removed
  - Communications failure due to a technical fault/weather and back-up cell phones also unreliable

# Structured Debrief

## *Observations By Georgian Police*

- Accountability issues (as stated by Georgians)
  - Officer Identification
    - Officers were issued with helmets which were visibly numbered\*
  - Accounting for use of force
    - At end of the operation officers would report if they used batons
    - Not possible for officers to fire Less Lethal Weapons (LLWs) and at same time report use
    - Accountability for LLW based only on number of munitions issued and number returned

*\* Examination of videos show that not all helmets were numbered*

## Structured Debrief

### *Observations By Georgian Police*

- Training Needs
  - Command training for untrained commanders
  - ‘Train the Trainer’ for some Crowd Management units
  - Arrest and Restraint training for units
  - Prisoner transport and recording training
  - Joint scenario based training for units who are likely to be deployed together
  - Working with the media
  - Training for Georgian media

## Structured Debrief

### *Observations By Georgian Police*

- Issues of concern expressed by Georgian Officers:
  - Radio communication
  - Press identification and reporting
  - Excessive use of batons by a ‘minority of officers’ during clear up phase
  - Uncoordinated Less Lethal Weapon Use
  - Unauthorised use of CS
  - Coordination and control of deployed units at ‘ground level’

## Observations by Review Team

- Issues which went particularly well:
  - 5 day 'facilitated protest' May 21-25
    - Issuing of retrospective protest permit and offering alternative venues
    - Attempts at maintaining dialogue with protestors
  - Sound Tactical Plan for May 25/26, officers properly briefed
  - Plan well resourced and units well equipped
  - Majority of units/personnel worked in disciplined formation in accordance with instruction and training
  - Sound tactical use of bolt cutting teams and water cannon
  - Main dispersal by Special Tasks Department units and water cannon

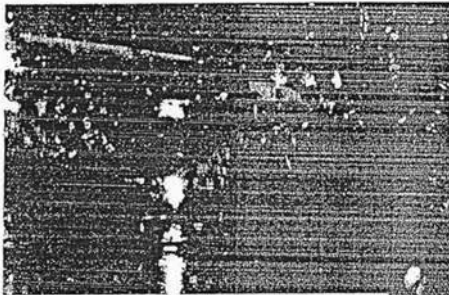
## Observations by Review Team

### Issues of significant concern

- Absence of effective 'control' systems at command and unit level to manage use of force delivery
- Inappropriate use of batons and disproportionate violence by a significant minority of officers, which appear to be mainly from one unit
- Baton use to enforce compliance during arrest, no other methods trained
- Uncoordinated, unnecessary and unjustified use of CS and multiple types of Less Lethal (LL) Munitions
- Firing of LL munitions by officers who are moving
- Use of non color coded shotguns to fire LL munitions
- Inability for field and unit commanders to communicate 'up and across' the network
- Not all officers wearing identification or helmets

## Evidence Based Comments in Respect of the Operation

Appropriate and disciplined controlled dispersion by Crowd Management units



Appropriate baton strike techniques in evidence

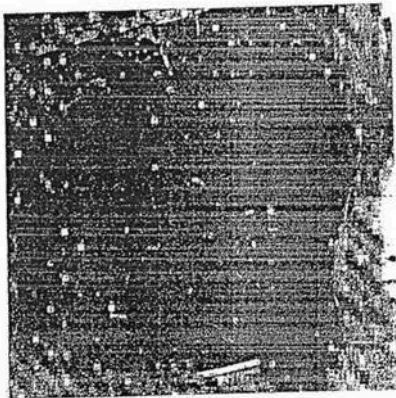


Appropriate arrest & restraint techniques in evidence



## Evidence Based Comments in Respect of the Operation

Differing levels of protective equipment, some with no numeric identification



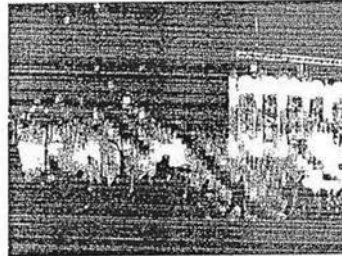


## Evidence Based Comments in Respect of the Operation

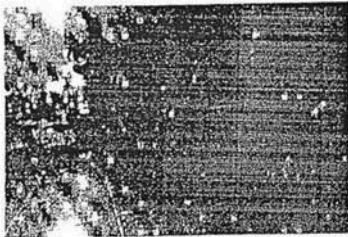
### LLW Deployment



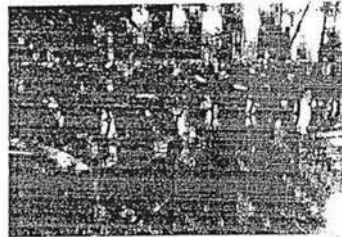
- Some officers wearing balaclavas
- LL Shotguns not colour coded
- Officers firing weapons while moving



### Prisoner Management Practice



- Variation in the standard of prisoner handling and management



## Organisational Vulnerabilities and Training Needs

### Vulnerabilities

- Accountability Issues
  - Lack of a single, over-arching and comprehensive policy document on human rights, use of force, less lethal weapons and firearms
  - Use of Force Reporting System, by who, when and where
  - Weapon and Munitions Audit process
- Officers' Identification
- Deployment of some units that do not have aptitude and training for 'controlled and restrained use of force' in crowd management situations

### Training Needs

- Command Room 'Critical Incident' Management
- Joint 'Agency' Scenario based Training
- Less Lethal Weapon (review) and training
- Managing Incidents involving firearms and 'potentially lethal threats' in crowd management situations
- Arrest and Restraint Training
- Prisoner handling and processing