



Canada Border Services Agency    Agence des services frontaliers du Canada

President    Président

Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0L8

**RECEIVED**

**JUN 22 2015**

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER

**JUN 12 2015**

Ms. Lisa Lapointe  
Chief Coroner  
Province of British Columbia  
Office of the Chief Coroner  
800 - Metrotower II  
4720 Kingsway  
Burnaby, British Columbia V5H 4N2

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

Thank you for your letter of May 4, 2015, regarding the verdict at inquest with respect to the death of Ms. Lucia Vega Jimenez. I appreciate the care taken by the British Columbia Coroners Service in preparing this report and am grateful for the opportunity to respond.

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is dedicated to ensuring that Canada's immigration laws are respected at all times. Detention is a necessary enforcement tool used by CBSA officers to support the removal of inadmissible persons from Canada. A death in custody, whatever the circumstances, is a profoundly regrettable event, and the Agency strives to prevent this outcome at every turn.

Those in custody at the CBSA's immigration holding centres or in provincial corrections facilities are provided with access to legal counsel, medical personnel, interpreters, and telephones. The Agency is responsible for ensuring that those persons who are detained are informed of their legal rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the reasons for their detention and their right to be represented by legal counsel, facilitated through an interpreter if required. In addition to these legal provisions, the CBSA is committed to ensuring the health and safety of those in its care, and the Agency therefore continuously and proactively reviews its internal detention operations.

The Agency participates in inquests as they provide an opportunity for a transparent review of the circumstances surrounding the loss of life. Such participation also enables the CBSA to identify any areas for program improvement.

**Canada** 

Immediately following the death of Ms. Vega Jimenez, the Agency undertook an internal review of detention operations. This led to several improvements to its detentions program and facilities. In response to this incident, the CBSA took the following actions at the British Columbia Immigration Holding Centre (BCIHC):

- It reviewed the existing contract with the private security company to confirm consistency with the CBSA's national detention program.
- It updated the BCIHC's standing orders (procedures) and established a process for annual review.
- It increased its oversight and monitoring procedures at the BCIHC.
- It modified physical infrastructure to reduce the risks for self-harm.
- It implemented a requirement that all contracted security guards assigned to the BCIHC receive enhanced suicide and self-injury prevention training.

This is not an exhaustive list of the changes that the CBSA has made, but it is an indication of the Agency's active response to this incident. As stated above, the CBSA continuously reviews and improves its detentions program.

In closing, I would like to assure you that the CBSA takes its responsibility for the health and safety of the immigration detainees in its care very seriously. The Agency endeavours to treat all people with the utmost respect and sensitivity, in keeping with the CBSA's core values.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the British Columbia Coroners Service on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luc Portelance', written in a cursive style.

Luc Portelance

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JUL 02 2015

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER



C509386  
49400-20/JIMENEZ

June 25, 2015

Lisa Lapointe  
Chief Coroner  
BC Coroners Service  
Metrotower II  
Suite 800 – 4720 Kingsway  
Burnaby BC V5H 4N2

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

Re: Coroner's inquest into the death of:  
VEGA JIMENEZ, Lucia Dominga  
BCCS Case File #2013-0380-0004

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I am responding to your May 4, 2015 letter in which you inquire as to action taken by the Corrections Branch regarding jury recommendations arising from the Verdict at Coroner's Inquest concerning the death of Lucia Dominga Vega Jimenez. Ms. Vega Jimenez died while in the custody of Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) following a term of detention at Alouette Correctional Centre for Women.

The two recommendations directed to the attention of the Corrections Branch have been addressed as follows and as detailed in the attached response table:

1. A one-time payment of \$15.00, as provided by CBSA, is deposited in each detainee's correctional centre trust account. This money can be used to purchase a telephone access card.

There is no Internet access for inmates or detainees in provincial correctional centres due to security concerns.

BC Corrections staff provide access to telephones for detainees in special circumstances.

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*Protect Communities, Reduce Reoffending*

**Ministry of Justice**

**Corrections Branch**  
Office of the  
Assistant Deputy Minister

Mailing Address:  
PO BOX 9278 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria BC V8W 9J7

Location Address:  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 1001 Douglas Street  
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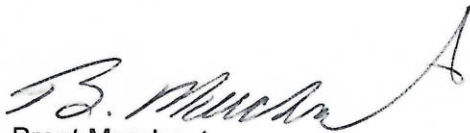
Lisa Lapointe  
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2. CBSA has been given read-only access to BC Corrections' CORNET system. This allows CBSA staff to view an immigration detainee's personal information while in detention with BC Corrections.

Upon transfer of a detainee from the correctional centre to CBSA detention, CBSA sends an e-mail to the BC Corrections PAC (inmate health information system) Help Desk to request the detainee's medical records. The records contain doctors' orders and recommendations for follow-up appointments or requirements to see specialists, etc. Provincial policy will be updated to reflect this practice.

The BC Corrections Branch strives to provide a safe and secure environment for detained individuals. When tragedies such as this occur, the branch endeavours to modify and improve procedures to prevent similar occurrences.

Yours sincerely,



Brent Merchant  
Assistant Deputy Minister

Attachment

pc: Ms. Margaret Janzen, Coroner (w/a)

**ALOUETTE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE FOR WOMEN  
IMMIGRATION DETAINEE – December 20, 2013**

QUESTION	RESPONSE			
	ACTION TAKEN	ACTION PLANNED	TIME FRAME	RESP.
<p>need to be given international such into of the country</p>	<p>A one-time payment of \$15.00, as provided by CBSA, is deposited in each detainee's correctional centre trust account. This money can be used to purchase a telephone access card.</p> <p>There is no Internet access for inmates or detainees in provincial correctional centres due to security concerns.</p> <p>B.C. Corrections staff provide access to telephones for detainees in special circumstances.</p>		<p><b>Completed</b></p>	
<p>to share access ing ules. A e to any thin Corrections tainee's</p>	<p>CBSA has been given read-only access to B.C. Corrections' CORNET system. This allows CBSA staff to view an immigration detainee's personal information while in detention with B.C. Corrections.</p> <p>Upon transfer of a detainee from the correctional centre to CBSA detention, CBSA sends an e-mail to the B.C. Corrections PAC (inmate health information system) Help Desk to request the detainee's medical records. The records contain doctors' orders and recommendations for follow-up appointments or requirements to see specialists, etc.</p>	<p>Corrections Branch Adult Custody Policy will be updated to reflect this practice.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p>	