



# EMPOWER

*A publication of the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime*

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Please share our **free** newsletter with your colleagues and friends or sign up to receive it directly by clicking [here](#).

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In joining the Canada and worldwide effort to fight COVID-19, the CRCVC staff is working remotely.

However, we are still fully functioning remotely and ready to support victims of crime and their families.

### **Chat & Text Support**

CRCVC's chat and text support for victims of crime who wish to access information as well as emotional support.

**Text:** Our number is 613-208-0747

**Chat:** Please access through our [website](#).

For hours of operation and other info, please click [here](#).

*Hoping to connect with you soon!*

### **Why Do Crime Victims Need Your Support?**

In the September 18th edition of the Ottawa Citizen, [there's an article](#) about a man accused of attacking his ex-

girlfriend's boyfriend with a knife.

The story focuses on the attacker, you can change the focus by [making a donation today](#). Your gift of \$25, \$50, \$100 or \$1000 ensures we are there for all crime victims, whether their attacker is charged or not. We are there when the case goes to court. We are there for victims when their attacker goes to jail. We are there when their sentence ends.

The story details how the attacker attended his first trial alongside his lawyer in September 2018, 16 months after his arrest.

His trial was postponed because two judges who were regularly at the courthouse were away attending a conference.

To the offender's credit, he showed up the next day for his trial but a judge called in sick and the other two were still at the conference.

Fast forward to September 2020, two years since the first non-trial and almost four years since the original attack, the accused offender's trial is stayed, prompting his lawyer to say; "A stay of proceedings because of delay means neither party gets their day in court. It's not ideal but sometimes it's the only just outcome. It's a relief that (the alleged offender's) long ordeal is finally over."

This comment unsympathetically ignores the long ordeal of the victim. Almost four years after being attacked, he is still a victim. He always will be a victim.

Victims in Canada need our help. They need somewhere to turn. They need someone to help. That someone can be you.

The legal system and its treatment of crime victims is imperfect. The stories can make us angry. But there's something we can do about it.

The system forgets about victims. We never will.

[Click here to donate today.](#)

*(Please feel free to copy/paste/send this article to a friend)*

Aline Vlasceanu  
Executive Director

## Snapshots

### **Ottawa to compensate Marylène Levesque's family after she was murdered by an offender on parole**

The family of homicide victim Marylène Levesque [will be compensated by the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada](#). Levesque was murdered by offender Eustachio Gallese, who was on day parole after being convicted of murdering his wife in 2004.

This crime has raised a lot of questions regarding how offenders are granted parole, as well as how conditions are chosen and imposed when they are granted parole. Specifically, how Gallese was allowed to visit erotic massage parlours.

Pierre Tabah, a lawyer specializing in correctional law, said that he was surprised an agreement was reached so quickly, noting that government agencies avoid going to public court, but fight

### **Regina mother fighting Canada, RCMP in memory of missing daughter.**

On Monday, Justice Glennys McVeigh began hearing arguments on whether to certify a class-action lawsuit for lack of action on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG).

Dianne Bigeagle is [fighting](#) for her daughter, Danita Faith Bigeagle, who vanished from Regina in 2007. Dianne has been raising her missing daughter's two children since Danita disappeared.

The case was first reported to the Regina Police Service and then the RCMP, whom the court heard Monday said Danita was likely taken out of Regina and a victim of foul play. Dianne claims she met with the RCMP numerous times but nothing came of it.

Dianne met with RCMP officers "50 times,"

lawsuits when they think they are right. This brings into question the unsettling circumstances of the tragic murder of Levesque, and if this perhaps could have been avoided.

The victim's family, the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole board of Canada have all declined to comment on the matter.

according to her statement of claim, and her lawyer alleges she was told her daughter lived a "high-risk lifestyle" and may be "an alcoholic."

Her lawyer, Tony Merchant, [shared](#) similar experiences of "dismissive" comments and excuses, allegedly made by Mounties to other families of MMIWG, and whose affidavits are included as evidence. "This is consistent with MMIWG inquiry findings of systemic, racially motivated non-investigation," he [told](#) the court. "(Dianne) is typical of the people who are going to recover (damages) in the class."

"That's why it's such an outrageous amount," Dianne said of the \$600 million in damages she is seeking. "I want the whole world to know that something is going on here."

"It's not her versus the RCMP – it's the class versus the RCMP," said her lawyer. He alleged Canada, which funds the national police force, was aware of the issue and failed to address it, despite owing the families a "duty of care."

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### Quebec to give \$5M from COVID-19 fines to crime victim support groups

Quebec announced it will be investing the money it has gathered through COVID-19 health measure violation fines into projects to help victims of crime. Justice Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette announced that \$5 million will be paid into the Fonds d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels, Quebec's fund for projects and activities intended to help victims of crime.

"The pandemic has exacerbated certain pre-existing situations among people who are victims of crime," [Barrette said in a statement](#). "Your government has chosen to invest this amount to support partner organizations that provide direct services to these people. This contribution aims to adapt the services that victims of crime need."

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### The surviving family of the deadly Oshawa, ON shooting, speaks out.

An uninvited relative from Manitoba, 48-year-old Mitchell Lapa is the [lone suspect](#) in the shooting deaths of a father, his two sons and his daughter in the September 5th Oshawa shooting. Lapa was also found dead inside the house after suffering a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Durham Regional Police confirmed that 50-year-old Chris Traynor and his children – 20-year-old Bradley, 15-year-old Adelaide, and 11-year-old Joseph, were killed in the shooting. The wife and mother, Loretta, was seriously injured but is recovering. Their one surviving son, Sam, was away at university at the time of the crime.

[One neighbour described the couple](#) as "super kind people" who were "very involved in the community." "They were very happy, outgoing, very family-oriented people," he said. Neighbours and co-workers said the husband and wife were teachers at Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB).

In a [message released](#) through Durham Regional Police on Thursday, the Traynor family said it is grateful for all the messages and support it has received in the wake of the tragedy.

"Loretta is recovering from her injuries, with Sam remaining closely by her side. Both are devastated over the tragic loss of Chris, Bradley, Adelaide and Joey, but the support provided by the staff and students at the

family's schools, the Durham Catholic District School Board and the entire Oshawa community have been of great comfort to the entire family," the statement reads.

At the funeral on September 17th, both her and her son, Sam, spoke of their lost loved ones and their beautiful personalities and quirks.

"In no way, shape or form can I believe that good will come out of this tragedy. I can't and I won't accept it. But what I have to take with me is that light that I have found from all of you. You have given me a lens into my family's lives that I didn't have and that is a gift for which I am forever grateful," she said during her tearful eulogy.

A GoFundMe page has been set up for the family, who said they will put together a committee to advise on the disbursement of the funds "to support and appropriately memorialize the entire family."

Neighbours, friends, classmates, and colleagues continue to pay tribute to the family. The family has also asked for privacy at this time.

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### **Canada delivers class-action suits to the Iranian government**

Almost 8 months after the Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 was shot down, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been served .

The Canadian government has confirmed that it recently delivered two class-action lawsuits to Tehran's foreign affairs ministry. The two class-action lawsuits are taking two separate approaches to the case.

The first lawyer's suit, Mark Arnold, alleges the downing of the plane was an act of terrorism. The second suit headed by Tom Arndt accuses Iran of negligence.

Arnold has complained about the delays, which was speculated to be due to the revival in diplomatic talks between Canada and Tehran. The government has now noted the delays were purely related to COVID-19 since Ottawa was legally obliged to serve them on Iran, the defendant in both cases.

"I'm delighted that Global Affairs Canada, after having this claim in their possession for eight months, has finally figured out a way to serve it on Iran," he said. But, the lawyer added, the department "has to be more transparent and more co-operative, particularly in the face of this tragedy." Up until now, Ottawa did not update anyone about the progress of the situation.

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### **The mother of an 11-year-old girl that was sexually assaulted, finally recognized as a victim of crime in Quebec compensation ruling.**

The mother of an 11-year-old girl that was sexually assaulted, and that later fell pregnant, has finally been recognized as a victim of a crime and is therefore entitled to compensation for victims of crime, in the province of Quebec.

The girl was sexually assaulted by a family friend that was allowed to stay in the house at the time. The suspicions arose when the girl began feeling ill and doctors could not diagnose her. Finally, the family realized she was pregnant but the pregnancy was already too far along. The girl has since given birth, and the baby is being raised by her mother as her own.

In the meantime, 32-year-old Mathieu Roy was arrested and charged and later found guilty and sentenced to 57 months in prison, in 2016. He has since been released.

The mother was diagnosed with PTSD and attended psychotherapy but had to stop in 2015, when she could no longer afford it, nor handle the hardship accumulated between taking care of a newborn and dealing with the aftermath of the impact of the traumatizing birth on her daughter. After having applied for compensation for victims of crime through the Quebec IVAC program, with the help of her lawyer, Mr. Bellemare, her application was dismissed as she was found to not be a victim, specifically to "Not have been a victim or direct witness of a crime."

After various judicial detours, the mother alongside Mr. Bellemare found themselves before the TAQ (the administrative tribunal of Quebec), where the lawyer argued for a broader definition of a victim of crime.

The judge in the case noted that case law, alongside IVAC parameters, [state](#) that a person must be present at the scene of the crime at the time it is committed, and to play an "Active role" to be formally recognized as a victim. That being said, differentiating decisions handed down after 2013 have created a dissonance, and thus paradoxes wherein an overly restrictive definition of a victim of a crime was applied to this mother. The IVAC was thus ordered to compensate her.

A similar decision was handed down in 2018, to her ex-spouse. [The mother added that](#) "He, too, deserves help. He has a lot of feelings of guilt, given that it was his best friend that abused our daughter. Perhaps if he had received the help he should have been entitled to, we would still be together."

The mother called the IVAC inhumane, stating that she had to not only advocate for herself, but also for her daughter... The direct victim of this heinous crime.

She said she hopes that this decision will have a positive impact on cases to come. "It opens a door for me, but also a lot of families" [she stated](#).

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### **Update regarding the summer cyberattacks on GCKey related accounts**

Following the cyberattacks that took place this summer, where usernames and passwords were stolen through non-governmental third parties to log into some GCKey accounts, the GCKey service itself was not compromised. The CRA identified the suspicious activities occurring between early July and August 15th on approximately 48,500 of the more than 14 million CRA user accounts.

[As a response](#), the government revoked 9,300 GCKey credentials and put in place measures to prevent further attempts to access its services with these compromised credentials. These measures blocked subsequent attacks.

Emergency payments will continue to be made to those who need them. The CRA will work with individuals affected by identity theft or fraud to help ensure they are not held liable for fraudulent claims and payments made by fraudsters using their account. Individuals whose accounts have been compromised will be offered credit protection services free of charge.

Service Canada and CRA have taken additional safety measures to protect account holders, such as deactivating the compromised accounts, temporarily removing some online abilities, and adding additional security measures to the account sign-in process. These mitigation measures have proven to be effective.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigation is ongoing and affected departments are also conducting their own investigations. As well, affected departments have been in contact with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC) to provide updates on instances where personal information has been compromised. Account-holders are being notified in such instances.

Affected parties are encouraged to review information in all their accounts to make sure nothing has changed.

If anything looks out of the ordinary, contact the service provider to let them know. Citizens who fear that they have been the victims of fraud can contact their local police or the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#). More information is available on [Canada.ca](#). If you have immediate concerns, please call 1-800-O-Canada.

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## Spotlight on Research

**Identifying femicide locally and globally:  
Understanding the utility and accessibility of  
sex/gender-related motives and indicators**



CSSLRV (Centre for the Study of Social and Legal Responses to Violence) researchers Myrna Dawson and Michelle Carrigan released research this month in *Current Sociology* that explores the utility of numerous sex/gender-related motives and indicators (SGRMIs) for distinguishing femicide from other homicides. This research uses a comprehensive database whose primary focus is documenting the characteristics of femicide. Results show that multiple SGRMIs are most common in male-perpetrator/female-victim killings other than homicides. This means that they are useful for distinguishing femicide as a distinct type of violence. However, there is weak accessibility to information with high proportions of missing data. Implications of the research conducted are discussed, including how data biases may endanger the lives of women and girls. Emphasis is also given to the need to collect data as well as focusing on prevention as the priority for data collection rather than the administrative needs of governments. The research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The full article can be accessed at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0011392120946359>.

For more information, you can email: [cfoja@uoguelph.ca](mailto:cfoja@uoguelph.ca).



### **One in ten women students sexually assaulted in postsecondary settings**

A [new study](#) says more Canadian university and college students who identify as women were sexually assaulted in a postsecondary setting over a year than those who identify as men, with the majority of sexual assaults perpetrated by other students. This most often took the form of unwanted sexual touching, which accounted for 86 percent of incidents for women and 83 percent for men.

It says other students were behind the sexual assaults in similar proportions for women and men — 60 percent and 61 percent, respectively.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that most classes have shifted to online platforms, the data does provide great insight for postsecondary institutions to better prevent and address such incidents in the future.

“People who experience unwanted sexualized behaviours can feel disrespected, uncomfortable and unsafe, and this type of victimization can have immediate and long-term impacts on well-being and mental health,” the study says.

While the survey found most students expressed positive views about their school’s policies and procedures on sexual assaults and unwanted sexual behaviours, students who had experienced those things generally had more negative opinions on school policies than those who hadn’t.

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## Quick Links

[Read the letter](#) from the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime addressed to Jennifer Oades, Chairperson of the Parole Board of Canada, on strengthening the trauma-informed approach to interactions with registered victims.

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Canadian company creating face masks that offer support to domestic abuse victims, as domestic abuse calls skyrocket during COVID-19. [Read more](#).

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Read the letter to Minister David Lametti on Canadian legislation recognizing coercive control as an offence, from the office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime.

Listen to Heidi Illingworth, Canada's Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, tell you why she believes missing persons is a national concern targeting vulnerable people, and how it affects Canadian society, [here](#).

Court heard 20 victim impact statements at the sentencing hearing of a Calgary neurologist who sexually assaulted dozens of women during their 15-minute appointments. [Read more](#).

See what the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime has been up to. Read their Summer 2020 Newsletter [here](#).

Courts give no justice for young victims of violence in Windsor, say vigil attendees. "Over and over and over again. The justice system keeps failing us," said Lisa Valente, organizer of an annual Windsor vigil for youthful local victims of homicide. Read more [here](#).

## Upcoming Events

### CRCVC's Monthly Drop-In Support Group for "Loss to Violence"

The drop-in support group for family members, friends and close loved ones of homicide victims, and is intended to offer peer support to those dealing with violent loss.

Last Thursday of every month.

*Please note, we have gone VIRTUAL.*

To RSVP please email us at [crcvc@crcvc.ca](mailto:crcvc@crcvc.ca)

### Victims and Survivors of Crime Week 2020 Virtual Event

Due to COVID-19, Victims and Survivors of Crime Week (Victims Week) 2020 has been rescheduled to **November 22 to 28, 2020**.

In place of an in-person federal symposium, the Policy Centre for Victim Issues will be hosting a **virtual Victims Week event online**.

This year's event will commemorate the 15th annual Victims Week, the 20th anniversary of the Federal Victims Strategy, and five years since the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* came into force.

Further registration information will be available in advance of the event and a draft agenda will be posted [online](#).



**Victim Support Europe: Annual Conference for 2020 to be held online!**

### 2020 Alberta Restorative Justice Conference

The Alberta Restorative Justice Association will be hosting its 2020 Alberta Restorative Justice Conference online, on November 19th and 20th.

This premier virtual meeting, **being held on November 19th**, will provide plenty of creative formats of live and recorded conference sessions:

- Video tour of the organization/ behind the scenes
- Digital gadget demonstrations
- Product walkthroughs
- 5-minute lightning talks
- Live in-person interview
- Live debate

This year's conference theme is 'Bridging High-Tech and Victim Support Services'.

The conference will unite tech companies that are passionate about technology and social good with victim support community leaders who are leveraging technology for the benefit of victims of crime.

For more information, please visit their [website](#).

You will be able to hear informative and inspiring keynote presentations and workshops, explore their exhibitor hall and take advantage of the networking opportunities all from the comfort of your own home.

You will not need to pre-register for any of the workshops, you can just decide which ones you would like to attend when the time comes. If there are too many to choose from, don't worry they will all be recorded and available to view for a short time after the conference!

For more information, and to register, please visit [their website](#).

On **October 8th** the Canadian Police Knowledge Network will host its third webinar in its the Network Webinar Series: "The Violence Link & Recognizing Human Violence".

They will discuss the important link between animal cruelty & violent victimization.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/3i27hv4>

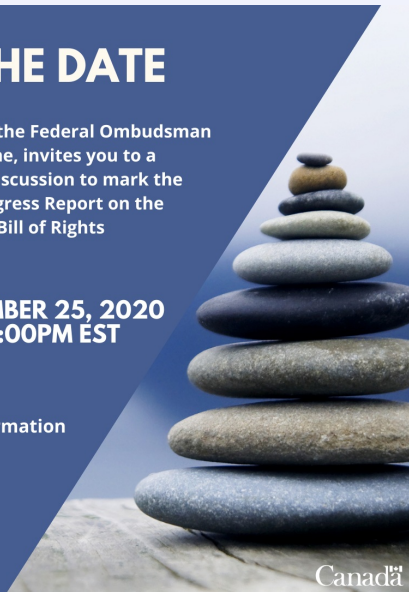
## SAVE THE DATE

Heidi Illingworth, the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, invites you to a virtual launch & discussion to mark the release of the Progress Report on the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights

**DATE: NOVEMBER 25, 2020**  
**TIME: 1:00 - 2:00PM EST**

Registration information to follow

 Government of Canada  
Office of the Federal Ombudsman  
for Victims of Crime

 Canada

