



EMPOWER

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CREATE CHANGE

For victims of crime in Canada

Bill C-32:

Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (CVBR)
came into force in 2015.

The Act falls far short of delivering the real rights it promised.

Victims of crime are counting on Canadians to take action and make sure their rights are enforced.

SIGN THE PETITION TODAY FOR BILL C-32 TO BE REVIEWED!



Unlike normal life experiences, victimization is not sought out and never welcomed. It is debilitating and demoralizing. Its effects can be often long-term and difficult to overcome.

Five years ago the Canadian government released the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. The act has not been enforced and victims of crime are being lost and forgotten in the criminal justice

system every single day.

Join us by using your voice to help create change for victims of crime in Canada.

Sign and share the petition to have the CVBR reviewed.

SIGN HERE

Deadline: May 30th, 2021 – 10 am (EDT)

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) staff is not in the office right now.

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!

Sexual assault victims breaking of the publication ban on her own name calls for legal and policy changes from advocates.

A [sexual assault victim](#) in Kitchener, Ont., was fined \$2,000 plus a \$600 victim services surcharge, for breaking the publication ban on her own identity by privately emailing the transcript of the court ruling to her family and friends.

On Wednesday, April 14th, the sexual assault victim filed an appeal against the conviction in the Ontario Superior Court even though she had pleaded guilty. The victim's new lawyer, a former federal Crown attorney, [Robin Parker](#) is working to appeal this conviction, and the \$2,600 fine as "if not quashed, will have a chilling effect on the already low levels of reporting of sexual assault".

The breach of the publication ban was filed by the offender, the victim's ex-husband and domestic abuser, who is also protected by the publication ban as the mentioning of his name would identify the victim. It is suspected that he learned about the victim's email of court transcripts through a mutual friend sharing information on social media. He had been sentenced to a year in jail for sexually assaulting the victim while their children were nearby.

On their podcast, [The Docket](#); Episode 121: Prosecuting the Victim, Micheal Spratt, and Emilie Taman, two criminal lawyers residing in Ottawa, Ontario, noted how the lack of discretion used by the police officers, the Crown attorney, the victim's first defense lawyer, and the presiding judge have allowed the victim's ex-husband to continue abusing and controlling her by using the criminal justice system against her.

Additionally, Michael Spratt and Emilie Taman discuss how the charges placed on the victim will not go away and will have an impact on her future. The victim and offender are also involved in family court proceedings for the custody of their children, so the criminal record that the victim now has may present her as someone unable to follow court orders. This conviction will likely impact family court decisions.

As a result, this case has advocates calling for legal and policy changes due to the gross miscarriage of justice that has occurred. This case brings up questions about how the Canadian legal system treats sexual assault survivors as the large fine and prosecution of the victim, in this case, have revictimized her and given her a criminal record.

Sara Casselman, executive director of the Sexual Assault Support Centre in Waterloo [says](#), "Really, it's allowing the legal system to be used against a survivor." Casselman goes on to say publication bans are "being interpreted as a muzzle for survivors, which was never the intention of the law."

Publication bans were created by the Supreme Court of Canada to foster reporting while also protecting complainants and victims from trauma and humiliation.

While the court order, in this case, was violated, there is a level of discretion that can be employed as to whether a charge should be laid or not. As they discussed in their [podcast](#), Micheal Spratt and Emilie Taman noted that police often use discretion to not arrest suspected sexual and domestic abusers, so why was that discretion not used with this victim?

The Ontario Attorney-General Doug Downey refused to comment on this case because it is in the process of an appeal but he did [say](#) that "decisions made by prosecutors in the proper exercise of their discretion will be supported by the Attorney-General".

The prosecution of the sexual assault victim is unprecedented. The manual for Ontario prosecutors says that every prosecution must be "carried out in a manner consistent with the public interest". The Ontario prosecutor, Brian White, who brought the fines against the victim forward did not respond to inquiries asking how prosecuting the victim is consistent with the public interest.

The victim's lawyer, Robin Parker, [said](#) that Ontario prosecutors not only turned "the machinery of the state on a sex-assault victim" but "they didn't appear to have turned their mind to whether or not what she had done was actually a crime". Adding to Parker's statement, Emilie Taman [says](#) that "any prosecutor would have had a no-brainer on his hands that there was no public interest in proceeding...".

This case has advocates once again [calling](#) for the federal government to require all rulings in sexual assault cases be made publicly accessible in written form to prevent the breaking of publication bans. There have also been renewed calls for a bill to be passed through Parliament which requires mandatory training for judges in sexual assault law. Included in this bill is the requirement for written decisions in sexual assault cases.

Constance Backhouse, the former chair in sexual assault law at the University of Ottawa, [noted](#) that imposing a large fine on the victim for violating the publication ban was a misstep.

Colin Westman, a retired judge in the same Kitchener court, [said](#) that the presiding judge could have questioned the guilty plea and not imposed the requested fine, even though these had been agreed upon by the Crown and defence. Westman makes an impactful final statement, saying “it’s the spirit of the law that you sometimes have to focus on. The spirit was to protect her”.

Micheal Spratt [said](#) that the police officers, Crown attorneys, the first defense lawyer, and the judge should be ashamed about how all aspects of this case have been handled. He calls for an investigation into those involved in this case because of their unprofessional behaviour.

In their podcast episode, Michael highlighted the importance of educating criminal justice workers in sexual assault law as this case has shown how without it, sexual assault victims can be further victimized by the system. Emilie ends the conversation by saying that the criminal justice system needs to be made more victim-centric as the current system often excludes victims from the justice process.

Victims shine light on sexual misconduct in Canada's military

On Thursday, April 8th, 2021 sexual assault survivors and experts [told](#) a parliamentary committee that sexual misconduct in the Canadian armed forces is a "national embarrassment" and discussed the steps needed to implement a culture change.

"Sexual violence has existed within the Canadian armed forces for decades," said Julie S. Lalonde, a sexual violence prevention educator. Lalonde appeared before the House of Commons standing committee on the status of women, which is probing sexual misconduct in the military.

Lalonde [spoke](#) of her experience training officer cadets at the Royal Military College in Kingston in 2014.

"I was and remain deeply troubled by the comments cadets made in regard to sexual violence," she said. "Victim blaming was rampant, and the cadets insisted that women who drink too much are asking to be raped."

Lalonde also told the committee, "I paid dearly for my courage." She has received thousands of threatening messages and phone calls and can no longer speak in public without a security detail since coming forward about her experience.

Christine Wood, a survivor of sexual assault representing the military sexual-trauma survivors group "It's Just 700", [discussed](#) how two former chiefs of the defence staff are currently facing military police investigations over allegations and of sexual misconduct. "It is outrageous that two chiefs of defence staff have faced allegations within weeks of each other, but it's even more outrageous to accept that 1,600 people report a sexual assault on average every year within the Canadian armed forces," Wood said.

Wood also says that victims are not speaking up because of possible retaliation and negative effects on their careers. There is not enough focus on what happens to victims when they report this, as many women are released, kicked out, and have to leave.

Lalonde mentioned that for significant culture change to happen - something the military has been promising for years - there needs to be long-term funding for prevention strategies, a willingness by the military to listen to outside voices, and buy-in from the senior leadership.

“Acknowledge you’re talking about sexual violence. I think we should even question language like ‘sexual misconduct.’ It’s a bureaucratic term. And in the military context, it conflates someone having a consensual affair with sexual violence.”

Wood said the government should be funding an online platform for peer support, moderated by professionals: “We need this space. Because we are mostly women, and we are at home and have different commitments within our families... an online platform is the safest, easiest way for the government to provide a minimum standard of care.”

Moreover, survivors of military sexual trauma along with experts recently [stated](#) to a House of Commons Committee that, “Ottawa must urgently set up an independent mechanism for members of the Canadian Armed Forces to report allegations of misconduct”. They also said the new oversight should report to Parliament instead of to military leaders and provide services to support the victims.

Advocates say victims of sexual trauma often do not feel they can get justice when expressing concerns through military channels. “Most members of the armed forces who experience misconduct pay a greater price than perpetrators if they make a complaint”, said Lieutenant Heather Macdonald to the Status of Women committee.

Experts say an external and independent mechanism that reports directly to Parliament rather than to the Department of National Defence is vastly needed. Maya Eichler, a professor and Canada Research Chair at Halifax's Mount Saint Vincent University, said a systemic change in military culture is needed to address the issue and ensure this is not an issue five years from now.

Countries such as the United States, Australia, and France have independent offices to which sexual misconduct can be reported, and that provide victim support, conduct training for prevention, and track data. The Canadian government has recently indicated in a federal budget, plans to implement new external oversight mechanisms to bring greater independence to the processes for reporting sexual misconduct in the Canadian Forces.

At a recent news conference, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the Liberal government has taken “significant measures” over the past five years, but he acknowledged it has “become very clear that they are inadequate.”

The Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime recently wrote a [letter](#) to the Minister of National Defence, Harjit Sajjan, expressing concern about the hostile sexualized culture of the Canadian Armed Forces and restating support for the creation of an independent oversight body for reporting allegations of sexual misconduct.

The letter also discusses the recommendation for “permanent funding for peer-led and peer-run support groups for survivors of military sexual trauma that help survivors to navigate care options, break isolation and find meaningful support when they are victimized by sexual violence”.

Additionally, the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime addresses how none of the major provisions relating to victims have come into force in Bill C-77 that was given Royal Assent in June of 2019 to enhance victims’ rights in the military justice system.

The office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime has also recently called for a Parliamentary Review to strengthen the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and believes this review offers a space of opportunity to make improvements to Bill C-77, which will ensure victims

within the military have adequate and enforceable rights.

"I firmly believe that transformational systemic change within the CAF begins with effective oversight and accountability. This must be coupled with enforceable rights for victims so that those with lived experience of sexual misconduct within the CAF feel truly supported to come forward. Rooting out sexual misconduct requires survivors to be empowered; not silenced by fear of career reprisals or the requirement to report through the chain of command", Illingworth said.

On April 29, Minister of National Defence Harjit Sajjan announced former Supreme Court justice and noted war crimes prosecutor Louise Arbour to lead what it claims will be an independent review into the handling of sexual misconduct in Canada's military. According to a [news release](#), the review will "examine the policies, procedures, programs, practices, and culture within National Defence, and make recommendations aimed at addressing systemic issues and creating lasting culture change within the organization."

If you are a victim of sexual violence and need support, reach out to the **CRCVC** via:

Text: Our number is 613-208-0747

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

Phone: Call our office toll-free at 1-877-232-2610

Email us: crcvc@crcvc.ca

Ottawa police launch new unsolved homicides task force

The Ottawa Police Service is taking a new approach toward solving open homicide cases by launching an 'Unsolved Homicide Task Force'.

"We will never forget the victims of homicides and all of these cases remain active. We have been meeting with and working with the families and loved ones of the victims to offer them support and ensure these crimes are solved," Chief Peter Sloly [said](#) in a news release Monday, April 12th, 2021, announcing the task force.

The new task force is meant to be the next step in the mission to solve homicides, support the victim's families, hold the perpetrators accountable and improve the safety of all affected communities.

The task force will examine cases that primarily involve young men from marginalized communities. The task force will be focusing on cases dating back to 2009 with 22 particular homicides.

As part of that work, Chief Peter Sloly [said](#), it's important for police to develop more links to those communities. The Homicide Unit, formerly known as the Major Crime Section, will lead the task force, bolstered by additional resources and new officers with diverse cultural backgrounds

These are cases that they know individuals out there have information about that they can share with the police. In some of these cases, police know who these individuals are. Overall, no piece of evidence is insignificant as it can help bring closure to families, [said](#) Insp. Cartright.

Cartwright expressed "In every case, we have evidence and leads that we will follow up on, but we need help from our community. Homicides are solved because people with information come forward to the police. If you know something, we ask you to come forward and do the

right thing both for the victims and their families, and to ensure this does not happen again." The task force will report to Insp. Cartright.

"Our unit is dedicated to being the voice of the victims of homicides," Cartright said, "and to bring justice to their loved ones." There may be trust issues with police in some marginalized communities, Cartright said, but he appealed to those with information to think of the victims' grieving families when deciding what to do.

In every case, the police have evidence and leads that they will follow up on, but the police need help from the community, according to Cartright. "Homicides are solved because people with information come forward to the police. If you know something, we ask you to come forward and do the right thing both for the victims and their families, and to ensure this does not happen again."

The homicide unit is expected to update the public as the task force's work unfolds. Anyone with information is asked to contact the police unit at 613-236-1222, ext. 5493.

Anonymous tips can be submitted by calling Crime Stoppers toll-free at 1-800-222-8477 or at crimestoppers.ca.

If you or someone you know has lost someone to homicide, view our publication *Homicide Loss: Dealing with Grief for Survivors* [here](#).

For more information on our monthly "Loss to Violence Support Group" please email crcvc@crcvc.ca.

Nova Scotia mass shooting memorial one year after gunman's rampage and gun-control reform in Canada

On April 18, Nova Scotia's premier invited people in the province to participate in two minutes of silence for those lost in last year's mass shooting.

The government asked citizens to unite in honouring and remembering the 22 Nova Scotians who were killed on April 18-19, 2020. A 51-year-old gunman committed the murders, including the killing of a pregnant nurse, in a shooting and burning rampage that lasted for 13 hours before he was killed by an RCMP officer.

Family members also gathered for a private church service to remember their lost loved ones. Addressing the gathering, Premier Iain Rankin said, "while the tragedy had caused shock and terror, it had also led to an outpouring of love, compassion and a sense of community." The thousands of messages and support the province received from people all over the world have been compiled into a book of remembrance. "We will never forget", [said Rankin](#).

In addition to the church service, a memorial marathon was also held on the same day by the Nova Scotia Remembers Legacy Society, a group that is working to build a permanent memorial site for those who died. All funds raised from the run went towards a permanent memorial for the victims.

The group has also helped organize a memorial walk for the public in Victoria Park to remember the 22 people and the unborn baby tragically lost one year ago in the shooting rampage.

"The walk itself is meant to provide a time and space for people to remember the victims of

last April's horrible events in a way that they can be private, quiet, and contemplative," said co-organizer [Denise Burgess](#). "It's meant to allow people time to remember the people we lost, and to honour the wonderful lives that they had."

Along the trail, were 15 memorial sites – one for each family – honouring those killed during the attacks. Each post had a heart written with the names of each victim and a tartan ribbon. At the base were memorial rocks for each person, painted by students, community members, and artists, and a solar light.

Furthermore, on Sunday, April 18, about 400 people attended a peaceful march to the local RCMP detachment to honour the victims and police officers who were on duty during the rampage, but also to protest against a lack of transparency from the police force about its handling of the rampage.

The RCMP continues to face scrutiny and questions about why it took police 13 hours to stop the gunman. "We want to make sure that everybody here is acknowledged, everyone here matters. A lot of us lost our family, but a lot more of us lost faith in our police force," said [Tara Long](#), the sister of one of the victims.

If you are a surviving victim of a homicide and you need help, please contact CRCVC or consider joining our Monthly Loss to Violence Support Group – the last Thursday of every month.

Victims of gun violence speak out on gun-control reform

Less than two weeks after the April 2020 mass shooting in Nova Scotia, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government banned more than 1,500 models of assault-style weapons, making their use, sale, or import illegal. For years polls have shown that a majority of Canadians support stricter gun control, but gun control advocates and big-city mayors say they are disappointed that Trudeau's government has not proposed a national handgun ban.

Similarly, victims of gun violence in Ontario [said](#) the federal government's proposed gun-control laws are "toothless and cowardly". Victims and families affected by Toronto's Greektown mass shooting that resulted in two dead and 13 injured, say the government's plan to allow municipalities to ban handguns should be erased and replaced with a federal law banning handguns completely.

Bill C-21 would give municipalities the option to ban handguns, through bylaws restricting their possession, storage, and transportation. It also proposes a buyback of several recently banned firearms that the government deems to be assault-style weapons as owners would be permitted to keep them under strict conditions.

According to a 2020 Statistics Canada report, the rate of violent gun offences increased for a fifth straight year in 2019. In Toronto, the number of people killed or injured by guns has increased significantly since 2015, when the Liberals gained power. In 2020, 39 people died, and 178 others were injured in 462 shootings in Toronto.

Alison Irons, whose daughter was shot and killed by her ex-boyfriend discussed a different part of gun reform legislation – Bill C-71 – part of which would allow a background check on a gun-buyers entire life. Currently, background checks are limited to the past five years. "My daughter's killer had a criminal record or personal violence that he hid from her... and applied for his gun license and received it", she [said](#). "It's an appalling example of how the system is failing Canadians."

How and why this massacre in Nova Scotia occurred, one of the safest and most unlikely places in Canada will now be the subject of an inquiry in the province of Nova Scotia, but a final report is not expected for more than a year.

The RCMP acknowledges that there are many questions about how the gunman obtained so many firearms, as well as his ability to impersonate a police officer with uniforms and police cars. Charges related to the investigation are currently before the courts. "It is our hope that the Mass Casualty Commission will provide a full accounting of what happened for the families of the victims and the public", said Lee Bergerman, Nova Scotia RCMP commanding officer.

As friends and family members placed a bouquet of flowers for each victim at the altar in church on Sunday, they await more legal reform that can assure them that no community will ever again have to experience this kind of gun violence.

Quebec invests \$223M to fight domestic violence with femicides on the rise

The Quebec government recently [announced](#) a \$223-million investment over five years to combat domestic violence, following a significant spike in femicides in the past year. Of that, more than \$90 million is dedicated to women's shelters in the hopes of increasing spaces and the availability of services to women seeking help upon leaving violent situations.

In 2021 alone, at least 10 women have been killed by their male partners in Quebec. Advocates have said that the number of femicides thus far in 2021 is shocking given that Quebec typically averages 12 domestic violence deaths in a calendar year. The most recent homicide occurred in mid-April, when Dyann Serafica-Donaire, 38, was killed by her husband, Richard West, 50, before taking his own life in their home.

The new funding will help women's shelters create 163 new spaces and hire 313 more full-time staff. Additionally, women's shelters will have their annual funding increased from approximately \$77 million to \$126 million by Quebec's 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Public Security Minister Genevieve Guilbault [told](#) reporters, "It's very important to ensure shelters are adequately equipped to complete their mission." According to Quebec's federation of women's shelters – Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes – thousands of women are turned away from shelters each year due to facilities operating at capacity.

The announcement of increased funding comes after the Quebec government was criticized for spending too little on the fight against domestic violence, allocating only \$22.5 million over five years in the most recent budget. Guilbault assured women's shelter associations that the money would flow more quickly after complaints were made of the slow rollout of previously allocated money.

Chantal Arseneault, president of the women's association Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has made it easier for violent partners to exercise control. "I can tell you working in a shelter, we've seen the level of control exerted become practically absolute," said Arseneault.

Despite the health orders that are in effect, such as the nighttime curfew in place across Quebec, Guilbault urged women to seek safe shelter if they're facing physical or psychological abuse: "To all Quebec women – pandemic or not, full hospitals or not, curfew or not – there are no constraints that should stop you from fleeing a violent situation."

Indigenous women say Canadian police aren't taking their Nygard allegations seriously

Fashion Mogul Peter Nygard is accused of sexually assaulting and trafficking dozens of women and girls, dating back to 1977. The class action was filed in February 2020 and has grown to include allegations of 57 women in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Bahamas.

Nygard was indicted on nine charges including racketeering and sex trafficking by the United States Attorney's Office in December 2020. The charges are connected to a decades-long pattern of criminal conduct involving victims from the United States, Canada, Bahamas, among other locations.

Alleged victims of Peter Nygard who are Indigenous and residents of Canada are concerned that their police complaints are being under-investigated and that the Canadian authorities are not looking at their allegations with as much interest as law enforcement in the United States.

In the 1990s, Inuk Serena Hickers was hired at a Winnipeg retail store owned by Peter Nygard. Hickers remembers receiving compliments from the female store manager quite often. After a few weeks of her employment, Peter Nygard visited the store himself, and Hickers' manager told her to go clean out the back dressing rooms, despite the store not being busy. Before leaving the store, Nygard told Hickers he would see her in New York.

Until this day, Hickers has no recollection of what happened when she was with Nygard. Hickers states, "I just remember getting home and just taking everything off and just getting in the shower and I threw up." She says she remembers one detail, the outfit she was wearing. Hickers was wearing her favourite outfit, which was gifted to her by her husband, who she left the day after the incident. When Hickers returned to work the next day, a ticket to New York was waiting for her.

Hickers went to the Winnipeg Police service in July 2020 and is still waiting for the crown to contact her. "Canada I have no faith in but the FBI for some reason I have faith in", said Hickers.

Toronto-based therapist Shannon Moroney, who is treating dozens of other class-action Canadian claimants, including Hickers, said it is appalling that there have been no Canadian criminal charges against Nygard yet. Moroney highlighted the situation in Canada, where there are close to 20 women who have given statements to the police while Nygard still has to face Canadian charges. Moroney is calling on the RCMP to coordinate the complaints against the country. The RCMP, however, says they will not get involved unless they are directed by federal or provincial authorities.

The Winnipeg Police Service would neither confirm nor deny an active investigation into Peter Nygard, while the Toronto Police Service does acknowledge an active investigation.

Spotlight on Research

Access to Economic Resources among Survivors of Economic Abuse During COVID-19 in Ottawa.

The Canadian Centre For Women's Empowerment is conducting research in Ottawa with survivors of economic abuse.

Phase 1 is a 30-minute online survey related to your experiences of economic abuse. Phase 2 is a 30-minute phone interview asking more in-depth questions about economic abuse. For your participation in each phase, a \$25 Amazon gift card is given as compensation. All interviews are confidential and participation is voluntary.

To participate in this research you must be;

- At least 18 years of age
- Identify as a woman
- Be a victim/survivor of Intimate Partner Violence
- Live in the National Capital Region (Ottawa, Hull, Gatineau)
- Comfortable speaking English and/or French

The English survey closes on May 14th, 2021. A French survey is expected to launch soon. To participate in these surveys click [here](#).

Independent Review Finds Serious Flaws in How Toronto Police Handle Missing Person Reports

On April 13th, 2021, the Independent Civilian Review into Missing Persons Investigations released their final report, [Missing and Missed](#). The report, headed by Honourable Gloria J. Epstein and lead Counsel Mark J. Sandler, details a series of serious deficiencies in the investigations into the missing cases that prompted the Review. The recent report found serious flaws in how the Toronto police handled several missing person investigations in the city's Gay Village and has offered a total of [151 recommendations](#).

The main issues identified in the report included poor data management practices and insufficient communication between police services and within the Toronto Police Service itself. Epstein said that investigators "repeatedly failed" to recognize when the criteria had been met to categorize missing person investigations as major cases.

The review included the case of serial killer Bruce McArthur, who plead guilty to eight counts of first-degree murder in 2018. Epstein stated that McArthur's victims were "[marginalized and vulnerable](#) in a variety of ways" and that their disappearances "were often given less attention or priority" by the police.

McArthur was first interviewed by the police in 2013 as part of an investigation into the disappearance of his victims. Epstein found that the officer responsible for the interview had failed to do a criminal database search, which would have revealed McArthur's conviction in 2003 for an unprovoked attack on another man in the village using a metal pipe.

McArthur's arrest in January 2018 came just weeks after a news conference in which Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders insisted that there was no evidence that a serial killer was preying upon individuals in the Village.

The report recommends a transformative new approach to the roles of both police and communities in addressing missing person cases. This would mean preserving a centralized Missing Persons Unit while recognizing that some cases are best addressed by social service, public health, and community agencies. Epstein also suggested doubling the investigators assigned to the Missing Persons Unit from four to eight, while also assigning a missing person coordinator to every police division.

An apology was issued by Interim Police Chief James Ramer on Tuesday, April 13th, for the statements made by police, including Saunders, which discounted the possibility of a serial killer behind the disappearance of men in the Gay Village. Ramer called the shortcomings in the report inexcusable and has vowed to act on every recommendation offered by Epstein.

Mark Henderson, the victim of Bruce's 2003 attack, said he remains hopeful that the recommendations for the police will be enacted. Henderson [stated](#) that "the City of Toronto and all of its communities can have their voices heard with Toronto police, but we have to hold them to it."

To read the full report, [click here](#).

Snapshots

Government of Canada announces funding for project to support human trafficking survivors

Human trafficking is a heinous crime that devastates victims, survivors, their families, communities, and society as a whole, [according](#) to Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. It also disproportionately affects women and girls, as well as vulnerable and marginalized individuals.

On April 1st, 2021, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Honourable Bill Blair, announced that over \$488,000 in federal funding has been made available over four years under the Contribution Program to Combat Serious and Organized Crime (CPCSOC) to [Voice Found](#) for the next phase of their [Hope Found](#) project.

Voice Found is a survivor-led, Ottawa-based organization that has been supporting survivors of sexual exploitation and childhood sexual abuse for over 10 years. Since 2015, their Hope Found project has supported 236 individuals.

The project helps those wishing to exit the sex trade to do so safely and empowers survivors to regain their independence. The funding will go towards providing victims and survivors with immediate support, including food, shelter, clothing, psychological and emotional help, and training to help prepare them for education and employment opportunities.

Families to wait years for justice as COVID-19 pandemic halts jury trials

In December of 2017, Susan Forsyth's only child, Jeffrey Johnston, was stabbed to death in an Oshawa rooming house. Nearly four years later, Forsyth and her family are still waiting for justice.

The jury trial for the man accused of Johnston's murder was set to start in the fall of 2020, however, the case has faced repeated delays. In addition to initial delays caused by the accused changing lawyers and backing out of a plea deal, COVID-19 court closures have postponed the trial until February 2022.

"I was so angry at the accused and now I'm just as equally angry with the system," Forsyth told [CityNews](#). The Director of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association's Criminal Justice Program, Abby Deshman, upholds Forsyth's concerns: "It's extremely serious...We had a justice system that was under serious strain before the pandemic."

It is estimated that 5,595 trials and judgments were postponed between March and December of 2020 in the Ontario Court of Justice, Canada's busiest court system. The Superior Court of Justice has suspended jury trials until at least June 7.

Heidi Illingworth, the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, [spoke](#) to the negative impact these delays could have on victims and their families, "There's a lot of stress and anxiety around criminal proceedings in the best of circumstances. When we have delay after delay, victims are retraumatized." Illingworth also expressed concern about the civil liberties of the accused, as delays can leave individuals in remand for an extended period of time.

Given that the majority of Ontario's court cases deal with non-violent allegations, Deshman suggests diverting cases of mental health, addictions, and administration of justice offences out of the formal justice system. "We need to work with our police to make sure we are not responding by criminalizing people where a

better response would be social services,”
Deshman said.

Some courtrooms across the province can hold remote hearings, however, jury trials are excluded because they cannot be held virtually. They also require more space to adhere to COVID-19 social distancing rules, which further delays the process.

Forsyth has yet to take Johnston’s ashes to his final resting place as she continues to wait for their court date. “I just need closure. We just need this to end,” Forsyth said.

Edmonton man charged in child sex offences, other victims sought in Alberta, B.C, N.W.T.

An Edmonton man has been charged with a series of sexual offences against teens in an east-central Alberta town, and police have launched a [search](#) for other victims in Alberta, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories.

Vegreville RCMP first received reports of the alleged offences in November 2020. Several organizations were involved in the investigation including the [Alberta Internet Child Exploitation Unit of ALERT](#) and the [Zebra Child Protection Centre](#).

Brad Dahr has been charged with offences that took place in the area of Vegreville, Atla, involving teenage female victims who were known to him.

Brad Dahr was charged with two counts of sexual interference and one count of voyeurism for alleged events between January 2018 and October 2019.

With alleged events between April and October 2020, Dahr is facing charges of sexual exploitation, luring a child, one count each of possession and distribution of child pornography as well as making sexually explicit material available to a child.

Dahr is scheduled to appear in Vegreville Provincial Court on May 3rd, 2021.

Investigators are seeking other potential victims in a handful of municipalities in western Canada. These include the Alberta communities of Edmonton, Vegreville, Drumheller, Beiseker, and Beauvallon, as well as Yellowknife, N.W.T., and B.C.'s Lower Mainland.

Seniors in Hamilton scammed out of \$347k in 2020, police say

Hamilton police say that scammers defrauded seniors \$347,644.65 last year, which is surprisingly less than the number of frauds committed in 2019. A [report](#) released by the police service states that there were 103 reports and 32 victims of fraud against seniors in 2019, compared to 72 and 27 respectively in 2020.

Despite increased public education and awareness, extortion remains the main form of fraud that seniors face, with a rise in scammers faking their caller ID information specifically. According to the report, “The fraudsters will often use very persuasive language and trickery to lure the victims and continue this deceit in order to take as much money as possible from the victim.” Additionally, there has been a rise in scams involving seniors withdrawing money and investing it into scammer’s Bitcoin accounts.

Along with fewer scams in 2020, there were fewer charges and arrests, with 20 total charges and 14 people arrested. The police report attributed this to the “complex, time consuming and challenging” nature of fraud investigations, and the fact that they require multiple interviews, evidence collection such as video surveillance, and detailed financial records. Acting Hamilton police chief Frank Bergen [said](#) that these investigations pose a “continuous struggle,” noting that perpetrators of fraud are often not Canadian residents.

Anyone with information is asked to contact [Vegreville RCMP](#) at 780-631-2750 or their local police. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can contact [Crime Stoppers](#) at 1-800-222-8477 or online at [P3Tips.com](#).

Quick Links

The Menace of Human Trafficking from a Canadian Perspective - Human trafficking is a growing and prevalent crime, and it is happening on a global level, in cities, and local communities every day. Read the full article [here](#).

Hundreds of cell phones donated by OPP in Southwestern Ontario to victims of crime or vulnerable people in crisis. Read the full article [here](#).

Canada-wide warrant issued for suspect in fatal Etobicoke double shooting. Read the full article [here](#).

Names of Nova Scotia impaired driving victims to be memorialized on a provincial monument. Read the full article [here](#).

Ransomware demands estimated to have cost hundreds of millions of dollars in Canada. Read more about the report [here](#).

Upcoming Events



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

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

Abundant Approaches: Exploring Inclusive Healing for Sexual Violence

This Speakers Series will provide professional development workshops to frontline sexual assault support workers and advocates. This is a space to question, or even unlearn, our previous assumptions about best practices for working with survivors as we learn what abundant practices to healing can look like.

There are upcoming sessions in May, September, October, and November. The sessions take place on the second Tuesday of each month and run from 1:30 to 3:00 pm EST.

Register [here](#).

violent loss.

Last Thursday of every month.

To RSVP please email us at crcvc@crcvc.ca

Prevention of Violence in the Home During and After Lockdowns.

Join the Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention for a webinar on Preventing Violence in the Home During and After Lockdowns and the Official Launch of CMNCP's Peaceful Homes Report.

Date And Time:

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM EDT

Register [here](#).

Victims' Rights Around the USA: A National Conversation About Victims' Rights

Join NCVLI Attorneys and victims' rights experts from across this country for this FREE training during Crime Victims' Rights Week. This event includes 5 sessions on victims' rights taught by top practitioners. Session topics include: advocating for survivors beyond the courtroom, appellate review of victims' rights, victim standing, restitution, and more! Victims' rights experts will leverage case studies, share their expertise, and facilitate a national dialogue on the challenges practitioners face and the promising practices they use as they fight to secure victims' legal rights.

All sessions take place on Thursday, April 22, 2021, from 1:45 PM-8:00 PM.

To read more and register for the sessions, click [here](#).

Effects of Community Violence on Children and Youth

The violence that goes on in a child's house, in their neighbourhood, and their community can have lasting effects on them. Children can experience an increased risk of victimization as direct victims of violence, especially when witnessing traumatic events and being exposed to secondary trauma.

This training aims to provide an overview of how exposure to violence impacts children, youth, and families, including physical, emotional, and social impacts.

Date and Time:

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

1:00PM – 3:00 PM EDT

Register [here](#).

