



CANADIAN RESOURCE CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME
Ensuring the equitable treatment of crime victims in Canada

EMPOWER

A publication of the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime

March 2021

Volume 27, Issue 3

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CREATE CHANGE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME IN CANADA

VICTIMS OF CRIME ARE COUNTING ON CANADIANS TO TAKE ACTION FOR VICTIMS RIGHTS TO BE ENFORCED.

The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights came into force in 2015 and lacks teeth.
Sign the petition today for the CVBR to be reviewed.

[SIGN HERE](#)

Special thanks to MP Paul Manly and his office for their help and support in bringing this



Order here.

The CRCVC has been working tirelessly to ensure the voices of victims of crime in Canada are heard. After reaching out to ALL Canadian MPs, we are thankful for MP Cathay Wagantall for using her platform to raise the issue of a review of the Victims Bill of Rights in Question Period last week: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47rwyYkn9yU>

The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights came into force in 2015. Based on what the CRCVC has seen and heard over the past five years, it appears that the objectives set out in the Act have not been met. #ReviewTheBill

Clare's Law in Saskatchewan used a handful of times; Mounties review their role

Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of domestic violence per capita in the country. It was the first in the country to adopt the measure.

This first-of-its-kind law in Canada is meant to warn those at risk of domestic violence. Unfortunately, it has a slower-than-expected uptake in its first eight months, [comments](#) Stephanie Taylor.

[Clare's Law](#) is the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. It's named after Clare Wood, who was murdered in 2009 by her ex-boyfriend who had a history of violence against women. Clare didn't know he had a violent criminal history.

The law allows people who feel they might be at risk from a partner — or know someone who is — to apply to the police for information on an individual's past. Police can choose to warn potential victims if there has been abuse. Officers can also trigger a disclosure if they feel someone is in danger.

Legislation known informally as Clare's Law came into force in Saskatchewan in June 2020. A committee was formed including police and victim services, this committee makes

recommendations on what should be disclosed. An advocate who sits on that committee says six requests for information were made between June and January.

Discussions formed regarding why there were only six recommendations made. The committee concluded that there are several factors in this, including the fact that it launched during a pandemic. A large number of new relationships are rarely forming amidst a global pandemic. Clare's Law is geared towards people who are beginning a relationship and begin to notice red flags.

Other provinces are expected to implement Clare's law later this year. [Alberta](#) expects to implement Clare's Law in April after consulting with victims advocates, Indigenous groups, and new Canadians, a government spokesman said. [Newfoundland and Labrador](#) have also been working on bringing similar legislation passed in December 2019 into effect.

Jo-Ann Dussel, Executive Director at the [Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan \(PATHS\)](#) stated "There was one situation where the person got the call back from the police about the disclosure and they said, 'You know what? That's all I needed to know. If you have something to share with me, I've made my decision. I won't be continuing this relationship.'"

Canada's Divorce Act finally mentions "family violence", as of March 1st, 2021.

On March 1st, family lawyers and advocates for women watched closely as the first major changes [in more than 20 years](#) to [Canada's Divorce Act](#) came into effect.

The Act now sets out a specific list of factors that courts must consider when weighing the best interests of a child — including the impact of family violence.

The previous version did not refer to family violence, [according](#) to the Department of Justice. The change now recognizes that violence can often erupt during a period of family separation. "Statistics Canada data show that between 2007 and 2011 a woman's risk of being killed by her former spouse was nearly six times higher than a woman's risk of being killed by a spouse with whom she was living," said the Department of Justice in their statement to CBC.

Courts must now also consider the presence of family violence in the context of making parenting and contact arrangements. For example, in these cases, courts may consider if co-parenting is appropriate or if it could lead to [further violence](#), the Department of Justice website notes.

Michael Saini, an associate professor of social work at the University of Toronto, stated "The new amendments will bring the federal legislation into better alignment with certain provincial legislation and create a unified legal framework across the country". Additionally, Saini communicated that "We now have family violence included in a national piece of legislation that must be considered when parents are separating — that alone is huge."

The terminology used to describe parenting arrangements has also changed. The term "[custody order](#)" has been replaced by the more neutral "parenting order," which [aims to discourage](#) the idea there are winners and losers in these decisions.

Jennifer Hutton, executive director of Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region, [said](#) "We know that at the root of domestic violence is that sense of ... ownership or power over someone," said Hutton, whose organization runs two shelters for women fleeing violence. "So I like how that language has been shifted."

Hutton said she will be watching closely to see what the changes will mean in practice. In particular, Hutton said she wonders how victims may be asked to prove that violence happened.

"We know locally there are over 6,000 calls to police [a year] about domestic violence, yet we also know a lot of women don't call police," said Hutton.

Sexual assault survivor fined for violating publication ban on her own name

Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) learned of a sexual assault survivor in Waterloo Region who was charged and fined for breaching the [publication ban](#) in her own sexual assault trial.

She shared the trial transcript with some of her support people: According to [Michele Mandel](#), the transcript contained her name, which was under a court-order publication ban. When the convicted offender got wind of what she'd done, he complained to police and they charged her with violating the publication ban. This occurred despite the fact that those she shared the transcript with were friends and family who were obviously aware that she was the complainant in the case.

The ORCC [expressed](#) that this incident perpetuates both a lack of justice and a retaliatory approach to sexual violence survivors who use the criminal justice system.

Publication bans are used to protect a victim or witness' identity in criminal cases. There are some cases, such as sexual offences, where an individual's privacy and a person's safety are more important than the public's right to access all of the details in a court proceeding. By protecting the identity of the sexual assault survivors, publication bans try to encourage people to come forward about assaults, and seek help, according to [The Ontario Women's Justice Network \(OWJN\)](#).

Publication bans in sexual assault cases aim to make the criminal justice system more [trauma-informed](#). Being trauma-informed means recognizing that engaging with systems – such as services, police reporting or, going to court – can be re-traumatizing for victims.

Publication bans are supposed to encourage reluctant complainants, not punish the victim.

According to The Record, Ontario Court Justice Thomas McKay [noted](#) "the unusual set of circumstances" in the case but still went ahead and handed her a hefty fine.

Would you like to gain a better understanding on publication bans? Read our [publication here](#).

Ottawa to set up military watchdog to investigate accusations of misconduct and racism

The federal government is setting up an independent body to investigate accusations of sexual misconduct, racism, and discrimination in the military after facing criticism over how it handled allegations against top officials.

The military ombudsman and the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, now part of the military police, will be folded into the new watchdog agency that will either report to the

Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan is facing criticism over the way he responded when former military ombudsman Gary Walbourne told him about an allegation of inappropriate sexual behavior against then-chief of the defence staff Jonathan Vance.

In a parliamentary committee, Mr. Walbourne [stated](#) that Mr. Sajjan refused to look at evidence that he had regarding the allegation and that after Mr. Walbourne told the minister the complainant asked to keep the information confidential.

The Canadian Armed Forces have been recently impacted by two military police investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct involving the now-retired Mr. Vance and Admiral Art McDonald. Experts have been urging the government to put in place independent civilian oversight of the military because currently, military investigators report to the Chief of the Defence Staff.

Among these experts is Jesse Zillman. Zillman was a trained specialized sexual assault investigator with the Canadian Forces National Investigative Service (CFNIS) until his retirement in 2019 when he joined a civilian police agency in Manitoba. While working for the Canadian Armed Forces, Zillman [said](#) he developed a distrust of the military's internal justice system and came to believe criminal allegations should no longer be processed by the Forces' police, prosecutors, and judges.

"The military justice system seems ill-equipped to deal with these types of intimate crimes, sexual assaults, sexual exploitation, that type of thing," Zillman told The Fifth Estate. "It doesn't feel like that system was designed to deal with those types of offences."

An [independent inquiry](#) by former Supreme Court Justice [Marie Deschamps](#) had found sexual assault and harassment in the ranks had been vastly unreported because victims feared their superiors wouldn't take their complaints seriously and that they would face repercussions.

There are countless reasons victims of sexual assault don't come forward or report. Psychotherapist Beverly Engel [describes](#) the top eight barriers as:

1. Shame
2. Denial, minimization
3. Fear of the consequences
4. Low self-esteem
5. Feelings of hopelessness
6. History of being sexual violated
7. Lack of information
8. Disbelief, dissociated or drugged

Jesse Zillman saw these barriers first hand when he moved up in the military police to join the CFNIS, the specialized investigation unit, in 2016. He took courses on investigating sexual assault and on interviewing trauma victims.

At that time, an external inquiry had just found the skills of military police were lacking, that officers were confused about policies, insensitive to sexual assault victims, and lacked training on concepts such as consent. The review found victims did not report sexual assault or harassment because of a lack of trust in the justice system, and those who did report described their experiences as "atrocious."

Maya Eichler, an associate professor, and Canada Research Chair at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax [said](#) it would be important for an external accountability body to report

directly to Parliament, adding that reporting to the Minister of Defence would not be sufficient. The federal government and the Prime Minister's Office should seek expert advice when setting up an external mechanism, Ms. Eichler added.

The House of Commons national defence committee, which is studying the issue of sexual misconduct in the military, met on Monday, March 22nd, and unanimously adopted a motion brought forward by NDP MP Randall Garrison to call Mr. Sajjan to testify for a second time.

The parliamentary committee also agreed to invite witnesses including Zita Astravas, Mr. Sajjan's former chief of staff, Elder Marques, former senior adviser to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and the PCO's Janine Sherman, to testify.

Family violence victim speaks out after unlikely intervention

A woman whose name was changed for her safety was blindsided and relieved when her son's school teacher approached her to ask about abuse in the home.



"Anita" was pulled aside by her son's teacher and asked if something was going on in her life. The teacher had noticed concerning comments made by Anita's son. He had said things like "This happens to my mom, my father does this and my mother cries, my mother's face is injured." the teacher **told** Anita.

Anita said what started as emotional abuse, escalated to repeated physical abuse. Since the first time Anita was physically abused, she brainstormed ways of getting out. Unfortunately, there are many barriers when it comes to women leaving abusive situations.

Nina Gorka, the Director of Shelters, Girls and Family Programs from the [Arise Shelter](#), which is a free shelter run by YWCA specifically for women and children fleeing abuse, said the women who don't have status in Canada, employment, or a support system are often forced to remain with the abuser because they don't have the privilege of choice.

Many factors were preventing Anita from leaving her potentially life-threatening situation.

To begin with, Anita was threatened that if she did not cooperate, her abuser would take her son away from her and would leave her without financial support.

Additionally, she was a newcomer to Canada without legal status and little support from family friends, many of who told her the abuse was her doing. She was silenced by her family and told to do what her husband said.

Shiba Anjum is the Operations Manager at [Nisa Homes](#) in Mississauga, an organization that serves as a transitional home to newcomers to Canada and women of Muslim descent. The number of people receiving help from Nisa Homes has increased 10 times in the last five years alone, and the organization's services are now available at six locations across Canada.

Anjum said when it comes to housing, the waitlist for affordable housing is seven to 10 years in Toronto alone, and five to seven years in other surrounding communities. She added there is also a stigma in many communities when it comes to single women living on their own.

This stark reality contributed to Anita's decision to stay in her abusive situation. Anita still lives with her husband and child, as well as his parents. She's now a legal migrant but feels paralyzed doing minor things like walking to the post office to mail a letter. But there's a ray of hope as her son grows up.

Anita's experience confirms that schools can be safe havens for children who see and experience violence at home and educators are critical front-line staff who are trained to pick up on the warning signs.

This safety net accumulated many holes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, teachers and school counsellors were often among the first adults to notice unusual changes in students -- a possible sign that something was wrong at home. Now, with school taught virtually and less face-to-face time between teachers and students, child welfare experts fear that violence at home is going undetected.

“The pressures are incredible for some families,” said Wendy Carr, a professor of teaching in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia who specializes in youth mental health literacy education.

Spotlight on Research

Study confirms that a female in Canada dies violently every 2.5 days

A new [report](#) has found that—on average—a woman or girl suffered a violent death every 2.5 days in Canada in 2020.

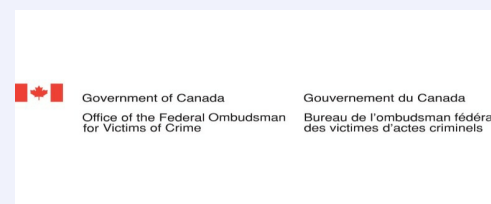
An 88-page report entitled [Call It Femicide](#) published this month found that at least 128 of the 160 women were killed by men. In another 17 cases, the killer has yet to be identified.

While the study avoids linking instances of killings to the pandemic because specific data is not yet available, Anuradha Dugal, vice-president of community initiatives at the Canadian Women’s Foundation in Montreal, [told](#) CBC News there were increased calls to shelters in 2020.

Of the 128 women and girls killed by men in 2020, Terry Haig said the type of relationship they shared was known for 88 victims of which 36—or 41 percent—involved a current or former intimate partner relationship.

Crime Victims’ Experience with Chronic Pain in Canada

In 2018, the Government of Canada formed the [Canadian Pain Task Force \(CPTF\)](#), giving it a three-year mandate to investigate how to develop an improved approach to the prevention and management of chronic pain. The CPTF produced its initial report on assessing how chronic pain is managed in Canada in 2019 and is currently working on its [second report](#).



The research addresses the significant linkage between the chronic pain some Canadians suffer as a result of their experience with violence, abuse, and trauma. The data narrows in on specific experiences of victimization including:

- Gender-based violence
- Intimate partner violence
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Victims of impaired driving
- Female victims of sexual assault

- Gun Violence

State of the Criminal Justice System Annual Report 2020 Report: Focus on women

The inaugural State of the Criminal Justice System Report (2019) provided a comprehensive analysis of Canada's criminal justice system performance across key Framework indicators.



The 2020 report provides an overview of criminal justice system performance from a gender-based perspective. It situates performance on key indicators within the broader social context by drawing from social science research. The report explores gender differences in perceptions of the criminal justice system, as well as in the prevalence and nature of experiences as victims, survivors, accused, and offenders.

View the full report [here](#).

Necessary Actions for Cities to Reduce Violence by 50 percent by 2030:

How to save lives, stop victimization, protect women and children, and generate GDP.

Cities will reduce violence by 50% by 2030 by shifting from the status quo to investing strategically in prevention that tackles the causes.

Globally each year, this will save up to 250 thousand lives, stop 15 million women from rape, and protect half a billion children from violence. It will increase GDP in many countries according to research conducted by Irvin Waller and Audrey Monette

They claim that this report is written for city, regional, and national politicians who want to take decisive action now to reduce violent crime in cities by 50 percent and sustain those reductions through 2030 and beyond.

Read the full report [here](#).

Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2019.

Statistics Canada released a detailed analysis in the Juristat article titled Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2019.

Hate crimes target the integral and visible parts of a person's identity and may disproportionately affect the wider community. A hate crime incident may be carried out against a person or property and may target race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, language, sex, age, mental or physical disability, or any other similar factor.

The analysis narrows in on non-violent and violent hate crime, police-reported crime against the Indigenous population, a record-high number of hate crimes targeting sexual orientation, and a decrease in hate crime targeting religion.

View the full report [here](#).

recipients. Some of the people who received notifications that they'd received CERB payments didn't apply or receive any money.

This means that victims of this CERB fraud who, according to CRA records, received thousands of dollars in CERB payments are responsible for paying taxes on that money as the CRA investigates the matter.

In some cases, Canadians are being told they owe thousands of dollars in taxes on benefits they didn't apply for, need or receive.

Beyond the fact that people fell victim to identity theft, tax season is further complicating matters because now the CRA expects taxes to be paid on that money, even if the "recipient" didn't get anything, according to the financial post.

Identity theft is a serious crime that is becoming increasingly common in Canada. It occurs when a person — or people — steal another person's name and other personal information, without their knowledge or consent, for fraudulent purposes.

Once the information is stolen, identity thieves manipulate it to invade their victims' personal and financial lives. Have you or someone you know been the victim of identity theft?

For helpful information and tips to help limit the damage, view our publication on identity theft [here](#).

Many of the children were sexually, physically, or psychologically abused in a system described by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as cultural genocide.

Edmund Metatawabin, a survivor of St. Anne's Residential School, [said](#) the struggle continues for a fuller narrative over what happened at the school, as well as for Indigenous rights. "It doesn't mean that we are finished, that we will stop, just because the IAP (Independent Assessment Process) is going to be terminated," said Metatawabin.

Unfortunately, it is common for victims to feel re-victimized and under-valued as they await the lengthy compensation process to end.

At times, victims are challenged by invasive questions and judgments while moving through compensation eligibility requirements. When the impact of trauma and abuse is overlooked, it leaves victims feeling alone and undermined.

Edmund Metatawabi expressed his pain in this process, "It's an unfinished story that keeps getting brushed aside. That's what hurts."

Teacher identified as victim in North Vancouver stabbing.

"I've never really understood the feeling of being crippled by the feeling of panic, but it felt that way, for sure." [said](#) Meagan Rae, who works at a nearby bank.

Six people were injured and one person was killed in North Vancouver on March 28th, 2021. A 28-year-old man was [charged](#) with second-degree murder.

Two of the victims in the North Vancouver stabbing have been identified as a single mom, Susanne Till, and a teacher with the District of North Vancouver, Sheloah Klausen.

The school district [confirmed](#) that Klausen was injured during the incident but the staff is "relieved to be able to share with you that Ms. Klausen is expected to make a full recovery."

A number of students were in the area and witnessed the incident unfold and will be indirectly impacted by the experience. The district made counsellors available for students and staff to speak with, and they encouraged parents to speak to their children about what happened.

Mass violence is not defined in Canadian statutes. It is interpreted as an act or instance of violent action(s) or behaviour(s) where the perpetrators are armed and attacking unarmed or defenseless civilians.

Mass violence and traumatic events can have a devastating effect on victims, their families, and the community. With any traumatic event, it is important to establish a support system and, if needed, get professional help. Early intervention can help reduce the anger, pain, anxiety, and other normal feelings associated with the aftermath of a traumatic event, [according](#) to the Pacific McGeorge School of Law.

Having a supportive network is a critical component to the healing journey in the aftermath of mass victimization. The CRCVC has developed the [Terror Victim Response](#) website. This resource has the mandate to help communities respond effectively and compassionately to mass violence incidents.

The website is packed with resources, including a helpful [checklist](#) to compare your local emergency response plan against, in order to augment your response aptitude towards victims and survivors of a terrorist event or mass victimization.

Quick Links

Nearly \$2 million was stolen in one week through cryptocurrency scams, say Vancouver police. Read more [here](#).

'It's heartbreaking!': Asian Canadians in London speak out after a surge in anti-Asian attacks. Read more [here](#).

A broad group of Canadians is calling on the public to sign a petition to free Canada from violence. Sign the petition [here](#).

A group called Not In My City has teamed up with the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) to encourage truckers to be advocates for victims of human trafficking. Read more [here](#).

No-fault automobile insurance silences car crash victims and reduces benefits, experts [says](#).

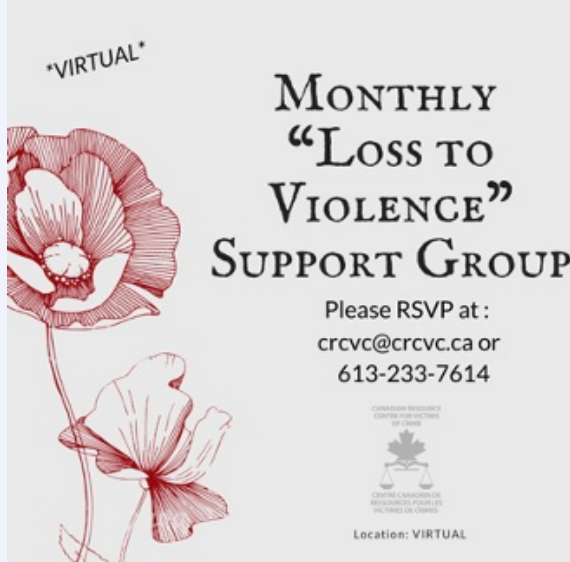
Calgary women speaking out against gender-based violence and street harassment. Read [here](#).

Upcoming Events



Effective Communication with Survivors of Sexual Assault

Working with survivors requires an understanding of sexual trauma, the impact



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 violent loss.

Last Thursday of every month.

To RSVP please email us at crcvc@crcvc.ca

of trauma on memory, and trauma reactions. This training will provide an overview of trauma associated with sexual assault, trauma reactions, and effective strategies for communicating and working with survivors.

Date: Tuesday, April 6th, 2021

Time: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm EST

Register [here](#).



The Impact of Trauma on Youth: Responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences

This 2-day conference will showcase 8 speakers from various Central Ohio agencies that work directly with youth and trauma survivors and spotlight a survivor who will share her story.

Date and Time

Start: Mon, Apr 12, 2021, 9:30 AM

End: Tue, Apr 13, 2021, 5:30 PM ADT

Register [here](#).



Webinar: Technology and Domestic Abuse

The webinar is hosted by [Narika](#), a not-for-profit organization, in partnership with the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV).

This webinar seeks to raise awareness of technology-facilitated domestic abuse and empowers victims, survivors, and solution seekers.

Date: Thursday, April 8th, 2021

Time: 8:00 PM EST

Register [here](#).

Cette école d'été est organisée par [Jo-Anne Wemmers](#) sur le thème *Justice internationale et droits des victimes*.

Son objectif principal est d'offrir une formation complète sur les droits des victimes. Dans une approche interdisciplinaire, le cours rassemblera des experts renommés en criminologie, en victimologie, en droit et dans les domaines connexes.

Elle sera offerte à distance du lundi 24 mai au vendredi 11 juin 2021.

[En savoir plus.](#)

