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We respectfully acknowledge the CRCVC office is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the Omàmiwininiwag (Algonquin peoples) Nation.

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This year, CRCVC is celebrating its 30th anniversary! Thanks to all of your support, we've been able to bring meaningful change to victims of crime and their families over the last 30 years. The mission of this organization wouldn't have been accomplished without the efforts of our team, our sponsors and partnerships, as well as our donors, so thank you!

If you or your organization is interested in supporting CRCVC during its 30th anniversary, please email us at crcvc@crcvc.ca or make a [donation here today](#).

Cyber Security Awareness Month

October was Cyber Security Awareness Month (Cyber Month) in Canada! Communications Security Establishment (CSE) and its national public awareness campaign [Get Cyber Safe](#) kicked off their annual 5-week Cyber Month campaign with this year's theme being: "Step Up Your Cyber Fitness".

Get Cyber Safe was created to help individuals across Canada lower the risk of being a victim of cyber crimes by providing tools and advice to stay safe online, showing what possible cyber threats may look like, and how to defend against them.

The Cyber Month Campaign was created to educate the public on the importance of cyber security and give advice and tools to stay safe online that individuals can carry with them throughout the year. Each year the campaign revamps its information to stay up to date with the most recent cyber security threats. The Get Cyber Safe website offers constant up-to-date important information and tools for Canadians of all ages to stay cyber-safe.

The CSE states that becoming cyber fit is about taking small and easy steps to aid in the power to identify, react, and respond to threats online. During the 5 week campaign, each week identified a different sub-theme within the "Step Up Your Cyber Fitness" theme;

- **Week 1:** “The Warm-Up”: a brief overview of cyber crimes and a foundation for the rest of Cyber Month by covering topics such as identifying cyber threats, tools, and steps to become cyber safe and maintain online safety.
- **Week 2:** “Account Workout”: during this week, they worked up a “metaphorical sweat” by engaging in conversations about creating strong and unique passcodes, enabling multi-factor authentication (MFA), and avoiding phishing and other cyber scams.
- **Week 3:** “Learning Self-Defense”: learning how to defend/protect your devices through the use of a VPN, installing anti-virus software, and securing home Wi-Fi.
- **Week 4:** “Maintaining Muscle”: keeping on track and maintaining your security habits by using a password manager, enabling automatic updates, and backing up devices and data.
- **Week 5:** “Strength in Numbers”: How to be a coach for your friends/family/loved ones by informing people of all ages about cyber threats and security.

The 2022 [Get Cyber Safe Awareness Tracking Survey](#) documented the following statistics:

- 1 in 4 Canadians feel they will never really be protected online, thus one can never be fully prepared to face cyber threats,
- 1 in 4 Canadians say they have been a victim of a virus, spyware, or malware on their devices,
- 2 in 5 Canadians have looked online to see if their email is a scam.

For more information about cyber safety or to learn how to better protect yourself and your devices, check out [Get Cyber Safe](#).

A Costly Online Romance Scam

A [W5](#) documentary highlights the importance of being wary of romance scams in its story of a Barrie, Ontario grandmother. Suzana Thayer attempted to find love online five years after she became a widow. Her loneliness, naivete, and desire for love led her to fall prey to not one but two romance scams. Thayer first met a man online and over a few months, drained her out of thousands of dollars. She fell prey to a sophisticated romance scam initiated by a man who defrauded her of over \$200, 000, only to discover that he used a fake persona.

Sometime later, Thayer met another man online who also proceeded to deceive her. Thayer’s family and friends believe this second man was the same man she first met re-entering her life. They believe that this man used a new name and a new picture of himself. This time, he did not request money from her but had a completely different plan. Rather, he invited Thayer to Ethiopia to meet, and she agreed. He failed to show up for three weeks and then informed her that he would fly her to Hong Kong. Shortly before Thayer’s flight to Hong Kong, two men visited her, presenting her with gifts, including a suitcase filled with dresses.

This suitcase led to Thayer’s arrest fourteen hours later. The suitcase turned out to have 262 buttons filled with cocaine. Thayer expressed her shock at finding out about the cocaine. She claimed that she did not even realize there were buttons in the suitcase. She also felt a profound sense of guilt and regret, believing she let down her family and was responsible for their pain and suffering. To everyone’s surprise, Thayer’s charges were dropped and she was released from the Hong Kong prison without an explanation after spending 270 days behind bars on cocaine smuggling charges. She believes that the media coverage put pressure on the Hong Kong Justice Department which led to the dropped charges.

The [Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#) describe red flags to watch out for and be suspicious of to help protect against romance scams:

- Someone you haven't met in person professes their love to you.
- The person wants to quickly move to a private or different mode of communication (email, text, WhatsApp, etc.)
- They always have an excuse not to meet in person.
- You receive poorly/oddly written messages, sometimes even addressing you by the wrong name.
- The individual claims to live close to you but is working overseas.
- They act distressed or angry to guilt you into sending money.
- They discourage you from discussing them or their situation with your friends and family.

If someone you have never met is pressuring you to send money, don't be afraid to say NO! Additionally, the RCMP suggests that if any individual falls victim to a romance scam or any other cybercrime or fraud, they should contact the local police to report the crime. And, to contact the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) whenever there is an instance of fraud or cybercrime.

Military Sexual Misconduct Victims Failed by the Federal Government

Sexual assault charges in a retired corporal’s case stayed because the accused’s rights were violated. Justice Jeffery Richardson of the Ontario Court stayed the charges of sexual assault in ex-corporal Arianna Nolet’s case due to delays in getting to trial. According to the [Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), the accused has the guaranteed right to a trial within a reasonable time. Arianna Nolet’s case illustrates the challenges within the existing legal framework. In this case, the judge terminated her trial without rendering a guilty or not guilty verdict.

Nolet’s case is among the first military sexual assault allegations to conclude in a civilian court following the transfer from the military to the civilian system. The transfer from the military to the civilian court system was spearheaded by recommendations made by former Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour and then acted on by Defence Minister Anita Anand.

The [report](#) by Justice Louise Arbour recommended that the Canadian Armed Forces relinquish control over investigations of sexual offences by its members. Among the report's 48 recommendations, was a call for civilian police and courts to handle all sexual assault cases involving allegations against military members in the future. Arbour noted that the handling of sexual offences by military courts in the past two decades had failed to improve efficiency, discipline, and morale, instead eroding them. Therefore, Arbour suggested that Ottawa amend the National Defence Act, specifically removing the military’s jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute sexual offences under the criminal code. Thus, reversing the power granted to the military in 1998 and thereby addressing concerns surrounding the handling of sexual assault cases

within the military and enhancing civilian oversight and accountability in these matters.

While the military claims that Nolet's case is distinct and other sexual misconduct charges will not have similar results, Nolet fears that many cases of sexual misconduct brought to civilian courts may end similarly. In an interview with [CBC News](#) journalist, Nolet stated that the federal government is grossly deficient in its actions when it pertains to sexual assault victims in the military. She claimed that the federal government is not moving fast enough to take away the Canadian Armed Forces' power to investigate and prosecute sexual offences brought to their attention.

Even though the laws remain unchanged, the Department of Defence clarified that all new sexual offence charges are being directly laid in the civilian system. And, that there is no indication that the military justice system can cause delays leading to a stay in the civilian system in these cases. The Department of Defence further claimed that Nolet's case is an exception, as it involves charges laid in the military system, withdrawn at the complainant's request, and then re-laid in the civilian system.

This statement, however, has proven to be inaccurate as a later report from [CBC News](#)' Ashley Burke demonstrates. Yet another Ontario Court of Justice has stayed a sexual assault charge against two co-accused military officers due to the significant delays in bringing the case to trial. Here too, the trial was terminated and the co-accused have not been found guilty or not guilty.

Additionally, Defence Minister Bill Blair emphasized the government's commitment to addressing all of Arbour's 48 recommendations. He described it as a top priority and assured that they are working to institutionalize these changes correctly and as quickly as possible. Spokesperson Daniel Minden confirmed that the federal government is working with the provinces and territories to ensure that survivors of sexual misconduct are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect by all the institutions involved.

Megan McKenzie, a professor and Simon's chair in international law and human security at Simon Fraser University, conducted an international study on sexual misconduct in the military and claims that the government needs to prioritize taking away the military's jurisdiction if it does not want to see other victims being harmed by further delays. These unimplemented recommendations can lead to messy cases of delays and a system that does not help victims of sexual misconduct.

Retired Colonel Michel Drapeau, a lawyer with expertise in military law, agrees that measures need to be taken to not have the same outcomes. Drapeau emphasized the urgent need to promptly implement Louise Arbour's recommendations, without further delays. He argued that until these changes are made, there will continue to be a unique and problematic hybrid criminal system that ultimately harms the rights and well-being of sexual assault victims.

[Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime Acts on the Need for Information](#)

Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime's dedication to empowering, supporting, advocating, educating, and disseminating information to victims of crime is always a priority. CRCVC recognized the gap in information and resources for survivors who have experienced and have been impacted by sexual misconduct while in the Canadian Armed Forces. As a result, an informational booklet entitled, *The Sexual Misconduct Response and Support Centre Canadian Armed Forces Information Booklet* will be published in the upcoming months.

The *Sexual Misconduct Response and Support Centre Canadian Armed Forces Information Booklet* will be a comprehensive resource guide for survivors of sexual misconduct and their families. In summary, it will help survivors and their families understand their rights, how to seek help, and how to obtain support.

[A Database for Missing and Murdered People in Canada](#)

Lori Culbert, from the [Vancouver Sun](#), highlights the creation of Sasha Reid's new database. To cope with the unexpected death of her high school friend, she decided to create a new database focused on missing persons and unsolved murders in Canada. This database served as a way for Sasha to remember her friend by preserving her name and information.

This database, managed by a group of volunteers known as the Midnight Order, now contains nearly 12,000 names. They record crucial details such as the victim's race, age, gender, the date and location of their disappearance or where their remains were found, mental health issues, addiction history, and vulnerability factors like involvement in sex work, hitchhiking, or belonging to the LGBTQIA2+ community.

Sasha Reid's database is believed to be the largest created by private citizens in Canada, distinguishing itself by its comprehensive collection of names. While the federal government and law enforcement agencies provide some information online about unsolved cases, Reid's project consolidates this data into a single resource.

This extensive database serves a critical purpose: it aims to identify information gaps, shed light on the primary causes behind missing and murdered cases, and provide insights for community activists, politicians, and law enforcement agencies to enhance the safety of residents. The database's location data is linked to a map of Canada, offering a visual representation of where each case occurred and emphasizing any geographical clusters.

Reid believes that many communities could significantly benefit from the wealth of data and insights provided by the database, potentially leading to more effective efforts to address and prevent missing and murdered cases in the future.

Christine Wilson, the director of advocacy for Indigenous women at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, believes that Reid's comprehensive spreadsheet would be highly beneficial. She highlights that currently, no government database with such extensive data exists, and this project could provide a much-needed resource to underscore the true scale of the issue, particularly concerning Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. The database could help governments and the public better understand and address the significant number of victims, which has been a longstanding challenge in Canada.

Nathan Griffiths, a data journalist at Postmedia, analyzed the 6,325 completed files and found that over a quarter of them are from British Columbia. Furthermore, approximately one-third of the victims identified in those B.C. files are Indigenous, and the majority of them are female. This data highlights the critical

issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in the region.

Vancouver lawyer Sue Brown contends that British Columbia has a disproportionately high level of violence against women and girls. She describes an epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in the province and expresses concerns about the quality of investigations into these cases, emphasizing the need for more thorough scrutiny.

Ayah Ellithy, another member of the Midnight Order and a registered psychotherapist with Corrections Canada, highlighted the challenges they face. Thousands of cases lack basic information that was not released by the police. Some victims' details, such as age, full name, or hometown, are absent. Additionally, internet links to these cases sometimes no longer work, making it difficult for the team to give the victims a voice and understand who they were and what happened to them. The absence of crucial information feels as if the victims have been erased from public records.

Christine Wilson emphasizes that for Canada to fund a national database would be a small but significant step towards acknowledging the recommendations put forward by various reports and inquiries. Establishing a comprehensive national database could spark important conversations about how victims are treated, how missing person reports from families are handled, and the investigation of these cases.

Canadian inquiries, such as the 2012 Missing Women Commission and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, have brought to light significant concerns about the quality of law enforcement efforts in cases involving Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Sue Brown believes that these issues have not been adequately addressed, highlighting the need for more comprehensive and effective actions to address the challenges associated with these cases. Brown states that British Columbia currently lacks the resources in law enforcement required for the proper investigation of missing and murdered cases. Despite this challenge, she and the other dedicated volunteers will persist in their efforts to update their extensive database of missing and murdered individuals, aiming to provide a voice for these victims and to support the ongoing pursuit of justice and awareness.

Upcoming Events

Homicide Support Group

Our **Homicide Support Group** is for family members, friends, and close loved ones of homicide victims and is intended to offer peer support to those dealing with violent loss. This support group is offered nationally meaning that we can connect with and support survivors from across the country. *English only.*

When: November 30, 6:30 PM EST

Where: Virtually

To RSVP: email us at crcvc@crcvc.ca or call us at 1-877-232-2610



Giving Tuesday!

“You are the first person who has listened to me” (a quote from a victim CRCVC helped).

November 28, 2023, is Giving Tuesday! The CRCVC is proud to be participating in a global day of giving! The Giving Tuesday campaign is a fantastic way to help us continue to support and advocate for victims of crime across Canada and make a difference in their lives. Please help with our mission by participating in #GivingTuesdayCA by making a donation. Your donations will impact the lives of those touched by crime. Every little bit helps. We are grateful for your donations.

[Donate Today](#)

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