



Government
of Canada

Office of the Federal
Ombudsperson for Victims
of Crime

Gouvernement
du Canada

Bureau de l'ombudsman
fédéral des victimes
d'actes criminels

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL
OMBUDSPERSON FOR
VICTIMS OF CRIME

Canada

The Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime is located on the traditional, unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, whose presence here reaches back to time immemorial. Canada must fully implement the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and ensure that Indigenous survivors and their families have enforceable rights in the criminal justice system.

We understand that the word “victim” is value-laden and may be problematic for many people who have experienced violence or whose loved ones’ lives were taken. We use the term here in the context of victim rights in the criminal justice system and in alignment with the definitions in the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*.

OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL OMBUDSPERSON FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

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Ombudsperson's Message

The past year was both demanding and consequential for the Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime (OFOVC). In 2024-2025, we responded to a significant rise in demand for our services while advancing critical policy, legislative, and systemic work on behalf of victims and survivors across Canada.

During the year, we opened 1,741 files, a 68% increase from the previous fiscal year and nearly triple the volume from two years ago. Despite the heavy workload, our team continued to provide information, referrals, and complaint support, helping victims navigate federal systems and exercise their rights under the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR). This sustained operational pressure underscores the essential role of independent oversight and advocacy for victims of crime.

At the same time, we delivered strong policy leadership. We appeared before parliamentary committees, issued submissions and public statements, and put forward 32 targeted recommendations to government on issues including gender-based and intimate partner violence, criminal court delays, wrongful convictions, hate crimes, enforceability of victims' rights, and the protection of children. We also strengthened partnerships with community organizations, federal institutions, and academic experts to ensure that lived experience and frontline realities continue to shape decision-making.

A significant portion of our efforts in 2024-2025 focused on a national systemic investigation on the treatment of survivors of sexual



violence in the criminal justice system. While the final report will be published in fall 2025, the extensive consultation and engagement that underpin this work's findings took place during this reporting period and informed our broader advocacy throughout the year.

In 2025-2026, our focus will be on completing the systemic investigation while continuing to push for practical reforms that reduce harm, prevent revictimization, and restore confidence in the justice system. **Victims' rights must be more than aspirational—they must be realized in practice.**

To the survivors who shared their experiences, and to the advocates, service providers, and partners who work tirelessly to support them: thank you. Your voices guide our work, and your leadership continues to drive meaningful changes.

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck (he/him)
Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime

About Us

Our Mandate

The mandate of the Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime relates exclusively to matters of federal jurisdiction. It has not changed since its inception in 2007, and it enables the Office:

- » to **promote access by victims to existing federal programs and services** for victims
- » to **address complaints of victims** about compliance with the provisions of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* that apply to victims of crime committed by offenders under federal jurisdiction
- » to **promote awareness of the needs and concerns of victims** and the applicable laws that benefit victims of crime, including to promote the principles set out in the *Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime* with respect to matters of federal jurisdiction, among criminal justice personnel and policy-makers
- » to **identify and review emerging and systemic issues**, including those issues related to programs and services provided or administered by the Department of Justice or the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, that impact negatively on victims of crime
- » to **facilitate access by victims to existing federal programs** and services by providing them with information and referrals

As defined in the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR), a victim is “an individual who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss as the result of the commission or alleged commission of an offence.” The CVBR further clarifies that where the victim is dead or incapable of acting on their own behalf, that “the following may also exercise a victim’s rights:

- » the victim’s spouse or the individual who was at the time of the victim’s death their spouse
- » the individual who is or was at the time of the victim’s death, cohabiting with them in a conjugal relationship, having so cohabited for a period of at least one year
- » a relative or dependant of the victim
- » an individual who has in law or fact custody, or is responsible for the care or support of the victim
- » an individual who has in law or fact custody, or is responsible for the care or support, of a dependant of the victim.”

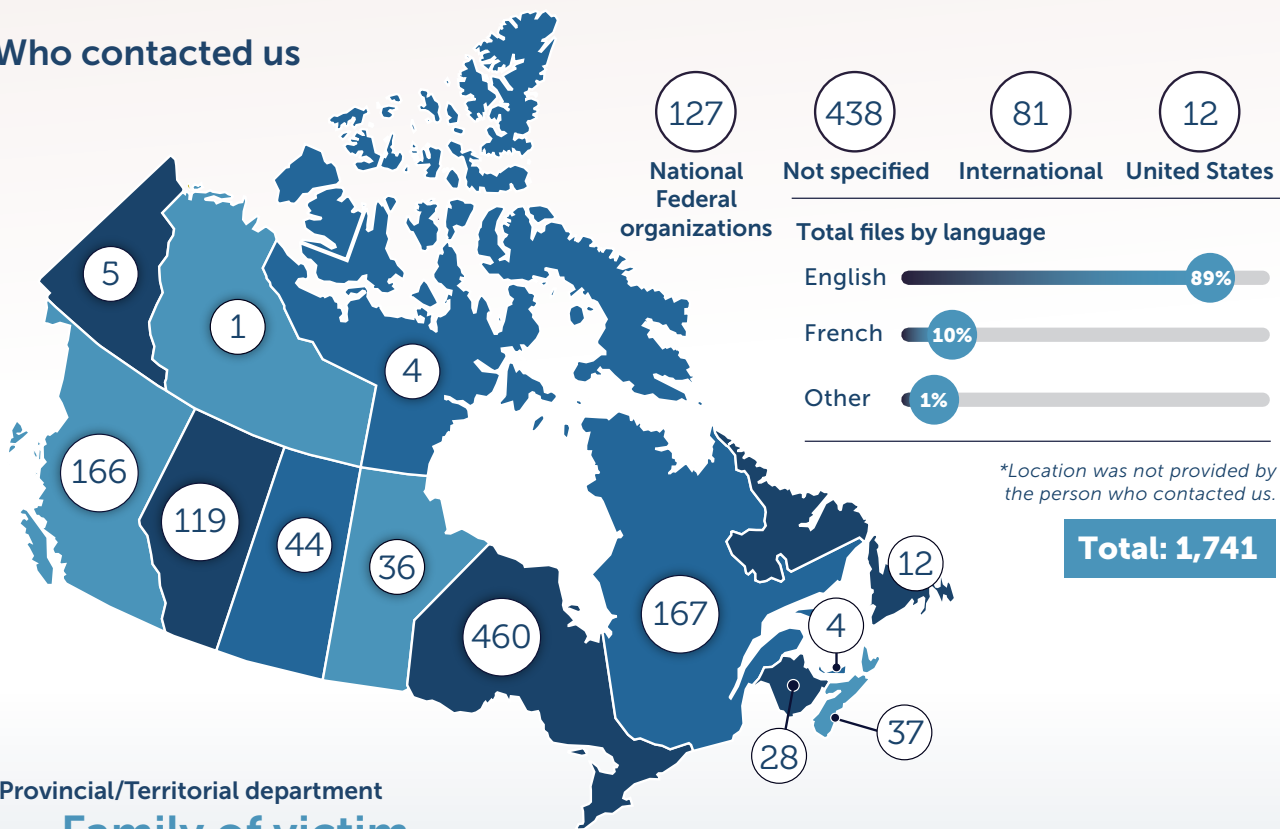
With crime on the rise in Canada, it has been increasingly challenging to respond to demands, especially given our Office’s limited resources. Self-reported victimization rates also remain high, particularly for sexual crime and among vulnerable populations who may not report to police.

Who We Serve

The OFOVC serves victims of crime in Canada. Specifically, we provide support, information, and advocacy for people who have been affected by crime as well as their family members and representatives. The Office helps victims navigate the criminal justice system, ensures their rights are respected, and raises their concerns with federal government departments and agencies.

The OFOVC also works to influence policy and systemic changes to improve the treatment and support of victims across Canada, collaborating with many stakeholders at the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal level, as well as not-for-profit organizations.

Who contacted us



Top 5 issues raised



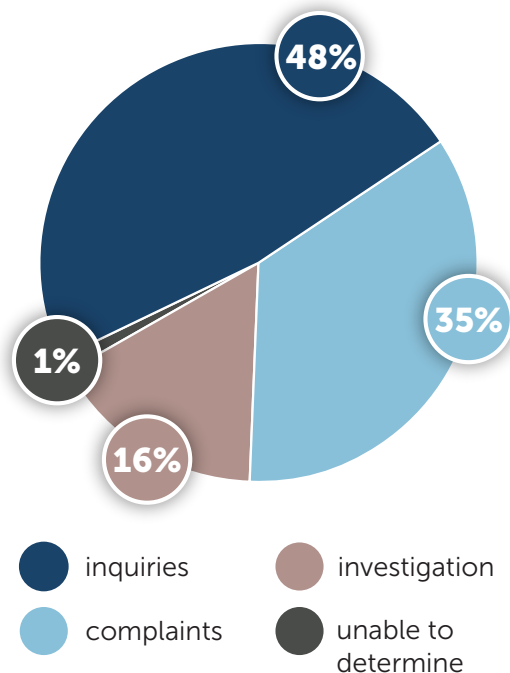
Rising Demand

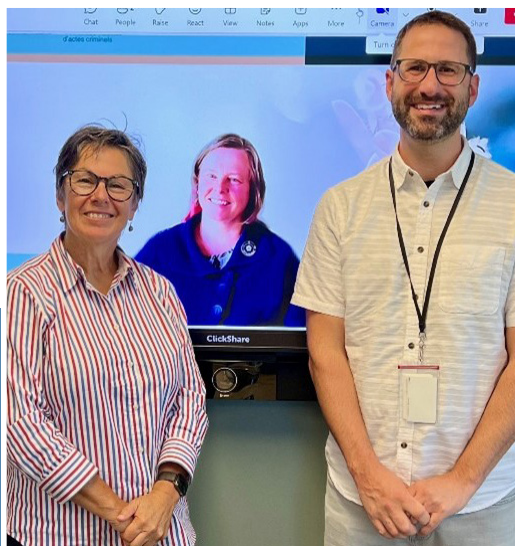
In fiscal year 2024-2025, the Office **opened 1,741 cases**, and **managed over 8,100 emails and phone calls associated with these cases**. This represents a **68% workload increase** from the previous fiscal year and **nearly triple that of the year before**. Cases include complaints from victims, consultations and interviews related to and ongoing systemic investigation on the treatment of survivors of sexual violence, requests for information, and referrals to victim-serving agencies across Canada.

Bringing Victims' Voices to Decision-Makers

The Ombud continues to engage directly with key decision-makers to ensure victims' voices are heard at the highest levels. Throughout the year, the Ombudsperson and senior staff also met with Ministers and several federal government departments such as:

Number of cases by type





"I admire the work that you all do and the differences you make each day with those who encounter your office. Your entire office has made me feel heard and validated. You are a gift to victims and the work you do leaves lasting impacts on very vulnerable individuals. Thank you."

– A survivor who reached out to the OFOVC

Meeting with the Honourable Senator Kim Pate.



Meeting with Minister of Women and Gender Equality, the Honourable Marci Ilen.



Meeting with Minister of Justice and Attorney general of Canada, the Honourable Arif Virani.

Reaching Out to Canadians

Victims and survivors need timely, accessible information—delivered through the platforms and channels they use every day. Reaching Canadians through multiple media channels helps ensure our work, and resources, are visible, trusted, and easy to find.

This year, we expanded our digital presence by launching an **Instagram account** for the Office to better connect with and increase awareness of our work among victims and survivors of crime, particularly youth and people seeking accessible, shareable information.

Our annual reach



5

Parliamentary committee appearances broadcasted live



10

Conference & presentations, speaking to more than **1,450 people**



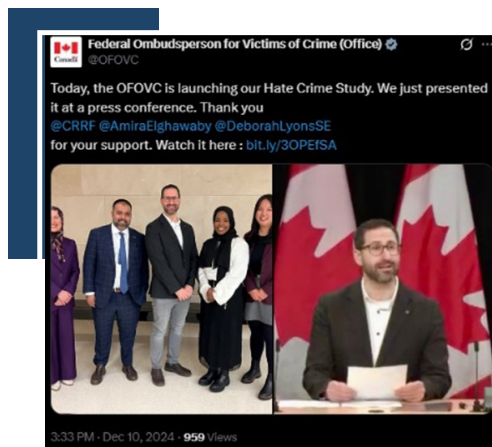
34

Media mentions, with 7 interviews or quoted appearances, amplifying victim perspectives in national conversations



150+

Stakeholder meetings



340

New followers on social media, contributing to a 13.8% increase in our audience



360

Post shares, a 195% increase, showing strong audience engagement and message amplification



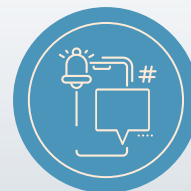
585

X (formerly Twitter) mentions, a 62.5% increase, underscoring growing influence in public and policy discussions



836

Social media posts, a 19.4% increase, sustaining consistent outreach



3,125

Followers on social media platforms



By reaching Canadians across various platforms and media, we strengthened awareness, deepened engagement, and ensured victims' voices were heard—online, in the news, and in national conversations.

Preventing and Responding to Violence

Systemic Investigation

Background and concerns

In Canada, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men will experience sexual violence in their lives.ⁱ Survivors of sexual violence have told our Office about the systemic barriers they face within the criminal justice system (CJS), including retraumatization and inconsistent application of their rights under the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (CVBR), such as limited access to information and meaningful participation. These challenges **undermine trust in the justice system and discourage reporting**.

We highlighted these systemic issues in our statement on Sexual Assault Prevention Month (May 2024), emphasizing the need for trauma-informed approaches, accountability, and systemic reform to prevent further harm to survivors. **The criminal justice system is harming survivors.**

How we worked to create change

In March 2024, the OFOVC launched a systemic investigation on the treatment of survivors of sexual violence. The investigation looks into survivors' interactions with law enforcement and the justice system from the point of initial contact through to post-sentencing.

Throughout the investigation, we will be guided by an advisory and consultation framework, including an Expert Advisory Circle (EAC) chaired by well-known sexual violence



expert Sunny Marriner and composed of 16 members from across Canada including survivor-advocates, legal professionals, clinicians, frontline anti-violence workers, and academics.

Members of this advisory circle play a central role in offering insights on emerging issues, identifying gaps, and eventually validating findings.

We also consulted with our Office's standing advisory circles:

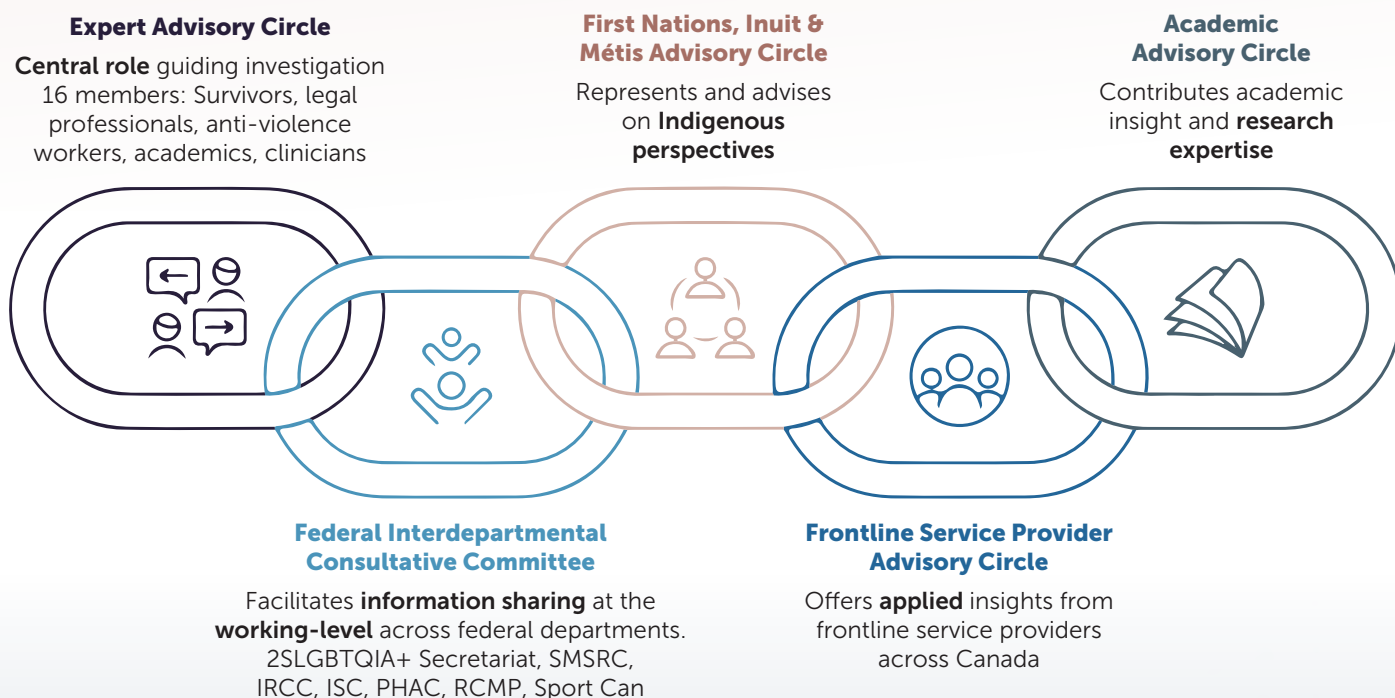
- » First Nations, Inuit, Métis Advisory Circle
- » Academic Advisory Circle
- » Frontline Service Providers Advisory Circle

All the Advisory Circles include victims and survivors.

Finally, we created a Federal Interdepartmental Committee, comprised of working-level representatives from various federal departments, including the Sexual Misconduct Support and Resources Centre (SMSRC) from the Department of National Defence DND, Sport Canada with Heritage Canada, Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the 2SLGBTQIA+ Secretariat at Women and Gender Equality Canada.

We will release the final report in fall 2025 with actionable recommendations, including the need to integrate a trauma-informed and victim-centred approach in the CJS. **We can do better.**



Systemic Investigation Timeline

March 2024



Launch of investigation

May 2024



Ombud participates in joint press conference on section 278.1

Material gathering and public consultations

June to Sept 2024



Interviews with survivors

September 2024



16-member Expert Advisory Circle convened

October 2024 to January 2025



Consultation tables held across different sectors

November 2024



Submission and Remarks to the FEWO and launch of written submission portal

December 2024



Launch of national survey for survivors

January 2025



Launch of national survey for stakeholders

March 2025



Surveys close

Completion of material gathering

April – June 2025



Analysis, theme development, report writing begins

July to October 2025



Consultations on chapters, design and translation

Investigation Methods

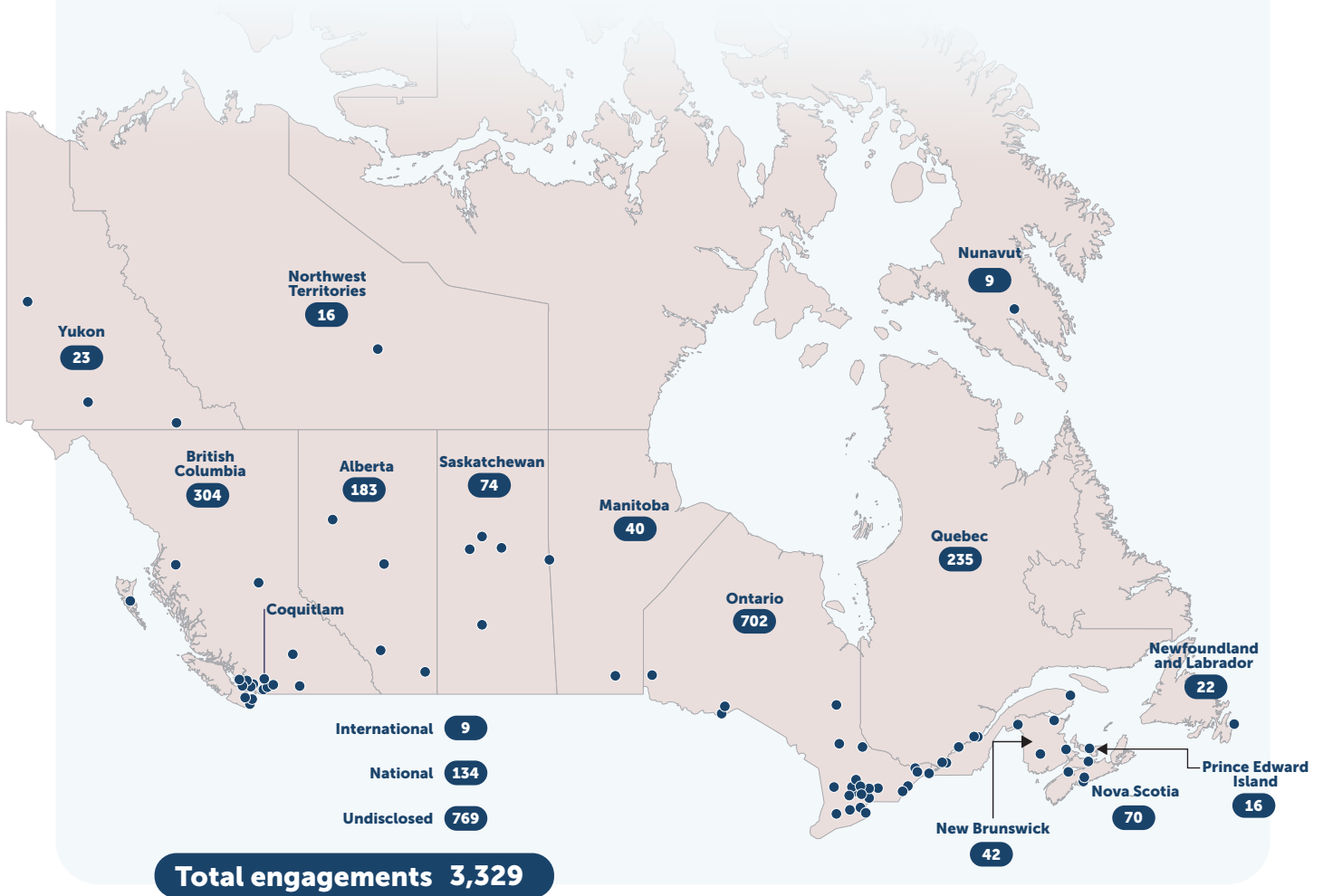


"The treatment of survivors of sexual assault within Canada's criminal justice system demands urgent improvement.

It's shocking how often victim rights are ignored. Survivors experience retraumatization and can feel disposable once their testimony is heard. Survivors who contact our Office have told us they felt unsafe in a system that is supposed to protect them. We have normalized the idea that the criminal justice system will be a painful experience for survivors of sexual violence."

**— Dr. Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson
for Victims of Crime**

Country-wide Engagements



For more information, [consult the investigation's webpage](#).

Two of the issues we examined closely during our investigation were the impact of survivor therapeutic records being subpoenaed and stays resulting from the *R v. Jordan* decision of the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC).

Section 278.1 – Therapy Records Used as a Weapon Against Survivors

Background

Parliament enacted sections 278.1, 278.2, and 278.92 of the *Criminal Code* to protect the private records of sexual violence survivors. These sections seek to balance the accused's right to defend themselves with the privacy and safety of survivors. The SCC has upheld their constitutionality, affirming that courts must consider the importance of this balancing act.ⁱⁱ

We heard that defence applications for private records increasingly seek access to therapy records to intimidate survivors and undermine their credibility. This also places highly sensitive, private information into the hands of the person who caused harm.

Across the country, we heard that the number of subpoenas for therapeutic records is rising, often mid-trial, creating allowable delays and deterring survivors from seeking mental health support. Judges may be reluctant to deny requests for records, even where the probative value of the records is low. **These practices delay trials, raise costs, and erode public confidence.**

During our investigation, a Crown prosecutor told us that a complainant was cross-examined for several hours about a dream she had confided to her therapist in a private counselling session, and was questioned about why the dream differed from her testimony.

Survivors should not have to choose between healing and justice.

How we worked to create change

In May 2024, we participated in the Survivor Safety Matters [joint press conference](#) alongside survivor advocates, drawing



national attention to the weaponization of therapy records and the urgent need for reform. The systemic investigation on the treatment of survivors of sexual violence was also referenced in the [Ombud's remarks](#), reinforcing the connection between individual experiences and broader institutional harm.

In November 2024, we provided [written submissions](#) and oral [remarks](#) to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women as part of its study on gender-based violence (GBV) and femicides against women, girls, and gender-diverse people. We highlighted how motions for the disclosure of therapeutic records contribute to trial delays and discourage survivors from accessing mental health support, directly undermining the objectives of section 278.1. An entire chapter in our systemic investigation report will be dedicated to therapeutic records, including recommendations for meaningful reform.

The bottom line

Allowing access to survivors' therapeutic records deters life-saving care, increases delays and costs, and undermines confidence in the justice system—without clear benefit to fairness or truth-seeking.

R v. Jordan and Criminal Court Delays

Background

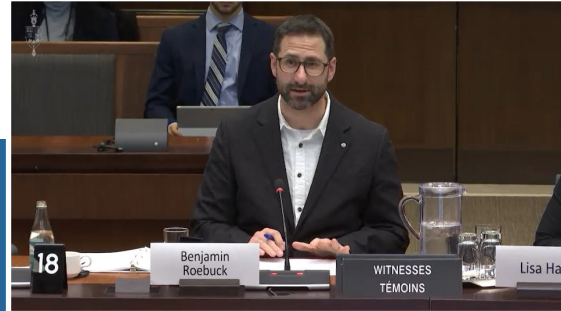
The SCC has issued many decisions on unreasonable delays for accused persons following *R v. Jordan* (2016). In practice, the decision has created unintended consequences that disproportionately affect survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

We heard that, in some cases, police or Crown delay laying charges despite having sufficient evidence, to ensure cases are fully prepared before the *Jordan* timeline begins. This can increase risks to survivors and public safety. Once proceedings are underway, the ruling has also incentivized the use of allowable but unnecessary motions by defence contributing to further delay. These include challenges to testimonial aids and applications for survivors' private therapy records.

We also heard that sexual assault charges may proceed as simple assault to resolve cases more quickly, and that courts have stayed serious sexual-assault charges—including cases involving children—because of delay. In 2022-2023, sexual assault cases were the most likely to be stayed or withdrawn after exceeding the *Jordan* limit. **These outcomes undermine accountability and erode public confidence in the justice system.**

How we worked to create change

We addressed the impact of criminal court delays on victims' rights through targeted parliamentary engagement. We developed and delivered [remarks](#) to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO), centring victims' experiences in discussions about delay, efficiency, and justice system



reform. Our remarks emphasized that timely justice is a victims' rights issue and that delay disproportionately affects survivors of gender-based and sexual violence.

We also prepared a written [submission to the FEWO](#) that outlined how systemic delays affect victims' rights to information, participation, protection, and restitution. The submission highlighted the need for victim-centred considerations to be integrated into efforts to address court backlogs and improve the administration of justice.

Our final report on the systemic investigation on the treatment of survivors of sexual violence will include a chapter dedicated to the issue of *R v. Jordan* and provide actionable recommendations.

The bottom line

Systemic delays harm survivors and public safety. Stronger protections for survivors could reduce unnecessary motions, limit delay, and improve justice outcomes without compromising fairness. **Justice delayed is often justice denied.**

Strengthening Legal Responses to Gender-Based and Intimate Partner Violence

Background

Gender-based and intimate partner violence (IPV) remains widespread and deeply rooted in systemic inequality. Women—particularly Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and those facing economic insecurity—are disproportionately affected. Victims may experience coercive and controlling behaviour, economic abuse, and barriers to safety that extend beyond physical violence. These harms can force survivors to leave their homes, exit the workforce, and navigate complex legal and social systems with limited support.

Despite the right to information in the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*, many survivors report not being informed of their rights, not being kept up to date on investigations that

affect them, and experiencing secondary harm through institutional responses. **IPV is an epidemic in Canada**, requiring coordinated, sustained, and survivor-centred legal and policy responses.

Canada must take effective action to ensure the safety of women and girls. GBV and IPV violate human rights.

How we worked to create change

We Need a Prevention Strategy

On May 2, 2024, the Ombudsperson appeared before the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on Bill S-249, An Act Respecting the Development of a National Strategy for the Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence.

His remarks emphasized that our Office was contacted over 100 times in 2023 because of IPV. Survivors' experiences have informed our recommendations for a permanent national strategy that complements innovative interventions and engages with the health care sector.





Economic Stability

On October 8, 2024, Dr. Roebuck provided [remarks](#) to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance about [Bill S-233 – An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income](#). He highlighted that the CVBR guarantees victims protection from intimidation and retaliation, yet more must be done to prevent femicide, advance gender equity, and support those who have to start over because of violence.

We underscored the need for a framework that ensures survivors’ **financial independence, safety, and dignity**, and recommended that it be developed in consultation with the people who will access it.

A Need for Leadership and Accountability

This past year, we participated in consultations with the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund ([LEAF](#)) on proposals to establish a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Commissioner, providing guidance on independent oversight, accountability, and survivor-centred approaches.

Our Office supports the creation of a GBV Commissioner, recognizing that comparable structures exist internationally. In the United Kingdom, for example, there is both a Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses responsible for promoting the interests

“I left an abusive relationship. I couldn’t leave the kids [at home] safely – I stopped working. My husband tried to kill me. I had to find a way to get out while keeping the kids safe and getting them out too. I did everything to keep them safe, including leaving EVERYTHING behind. We left with the clothing on our backs. I wasn’t even clothed properly because I wasn’t allowed access to proper clothing. My husband left me with 14 cents.

You have cupboards to put your food in, and I keep mine tucked and hidden in my vehicle with my kids. We went to eating once a day. Kids always had food. I went without, but they always had at least one meal a day. My vehicle has been ticketed so much.

.... because I had the courage and strength to say enough is enough.”ⁱⁱⁱ

– Survivor of IPV

What It Takes: Establishing a Gender-Based Violence Accountability Mechanism in Canada

Written by Dr. Amanda Dale



LEAF WOMEN'S LEGAL
EDUCATION & ACTION FUND
FAEJ FONDS D'ACTION ET D'ÉDUCATION
JURIDIQUE POUR LES FEMMES

of victims and witnesses of crime, and a Domestic Abuse Commissioner established in law to provide national leadership on domestic abuse issues and champion the voices of victims and survivors. Should a GBV Commissioner be appointed in Canada, we believe there would be significant opportunities for synergy with our Office. A coordinated approach could help streamline efforts, reduce duplication, strengthen data collection and enhance advocacy for victims' and survivors' rights.

No Firearms for Domestic Violence Offenders

Between 2010 and 2019, firearm injuries were the second leading cause of death in domestic homicides in Canada.^{iv} Beyond physical harm, the presence of a firearm in the home can make victims of IPV more fearful for their safety and the safety of their children and facilitates coercive control.

The OFOVC exercised public leadership through our statement on the [National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women](#), honouring victims of GBV while calling on the Government to urgently implement the remaining provisions of Bill C-21, *An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)*, in particular to prevent domestic violence offenders to legally own a firearm license.

The bottom line

Ending gender-based and intimate partner violence requires more than individual interventions. **Together, we can work collectively to ensure that no more lives are taken by preventable violence.**

"I admire the work that you all do and the differences you make each day with those who encounter your office. Your entire office has made me feel heard and validated. You are a gift to victims and the work you do leaves lasting impacts on very vulnerable individuals. Thank you."

— A survivor who reached out to the OFOVC

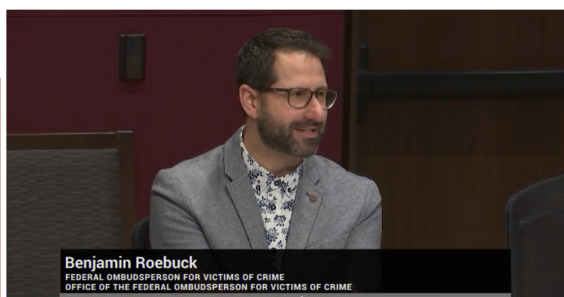
Strengthening Victim Rights in Canada

Access to Justice and Accountability in Miscarriages of Justice

Background and concern

Wrongful convictions not only harm the person convicted but also have profound impacts on victims and survivors. Survivors can experience trauma, loss of privacy, safety concerns, stigma, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, financial strain, and gaps in access to victim services. Indigenous, Black, racialized and other marginalized communities bear a disproportionate share of miscarriages of justice, reflecting systemic inequities in the justice system.

The CVBR guarantees victims the right to information, protection, and participation. However, gaps remain in ensuring these rights are fully respected when addressing wrongful convictions, leaving survivors without adequate support.



How we worked to create change

On November 7, 2024, the Ombudsperson provided remarks to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on Bill C-40, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal a regulation (miscarriage of justice reviews). He supported the reform to Canada's criminal conviction review process while highlighting that Bill C-40 requires the Commission to establish policies to communicate with victims, but it falls short on the rights to protection and participation. Under the CVBR, the proposed Commission on Miscarriages of Justice will be required to establish a complaints process for victims of crime. Where victims are dissatisfied with the Commission's response, they will be able to bring complaints to the OFOVC, as set out in the legislation. We expressed our desire to collaborate with the Commission as it develops its policies and practices for victims, with the goal of reducing common barriers, minimizing harm, and strengthening accountability.

Our remarks also advanced concrete recommendations to strengthen victims' rights within the new framework. These included ensuring the Commission has clear legislative authority to disclose information to victims, notifying victims when an investigation is initiated or when an appeal may overturn a conviction, and seeking

victims' input on safety concerns when an applicant is released pending a hearing. We further recommended expanding the Commission's authority to provide support to victims "without means," including access to counselling or limited independent legal advice, recognizing the long-term impacts of miscarriages of justice on survivors.

The bottom line

Bill C-40 represents a critical step toward addressing systemic failures and advancing justice, but the Commission on Miscarriages of Justice should also address the ways the justice system has failed victims. Ensuring survivors' rights to information, participation, and protection is essential to restoring trust, accountability, and fairness in the criminal justice system. **Wrongful convictions are a miscarriage of justice for victims of crime.**

Enforcing the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*

Background and concern

Nearly a decade after the CVBR came into force, many victims and survivors still struggle to have their rights meaningfully upheld. Awareness remains low and institutions often provide rights only when victims explicitly request them. Without clear remedies or enforcement mechanisms, the CVBR's promise is unevenly realized across the CJS.

The CVBR is quasi-constitutional legislation meaning it has primacy over other legislation when there is a conflict. Nevertheless, victims do not have standing to challenge inconsistencies in court. The CVBR also lacks an independent Commissioner to oversee its implementation. Survivors who file complaints with the OFOVC do so without legislated protections against subpoena or reprisal, creating additional barriers to accountability.

"The offender has the ability to devastate and impact our lives significantly, and yet, we are not allowed to openly express ourselves when we have a chance to finally let all that anger out, we are stifled and stripped of our voices.

We should have the freedom, the right, to say what we have been holding inside without restriction."

– A member of the OFOVC Frontline Service Providers Advisory Circle

Federally-sentenced offenders who file complaints with their Ombud, the Correctional Investigator, are granted greater confidentiality and the Correctional Investigator cannot be compelled to appear in Court.

How we worked to create change

In July 2024, we issued an [open letter](#) to Parliamentarians calling for urgent reforms to make victims' rights enforceable ahead of the CVBR's 10-year anniversary. The letter built on all-party support from the [House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights](#) and the [Government's commitment](#) to strengthen federal efforts to uphold victims' rights.

Drawing on our complaints work and consultations with survivors and stakeholders, we identified practical, cost-effective reforms that would improve access to information, safety, legal advice, counselling, restitution,

and testimonial aids—without interfering with the rights of accused persons. We provided legislative language that emphasized the need for clearer authorities for the Ombudsperson, that improve access to recourse under the CVBR, and that would ensure criminal justice legislation complies with its quasi-constitutional status.

The OFOVC plans to conduct a review and release a 10-year progress report on the CVBR in the next fiscal year. In the meantime, we invited all parties to cooperate to implement urgently needed reform that will strengthen victim rights.

The bottom line

Victims' rights cannot be effective if they are optional, inconsistently applied, or unenforceable. With broad consensus already in place, Canada has a clear opportunity to strengthen the CVBR before its 10-year anniversary. Enforceable rights are essential to justice, accountability, and public trust, and to building a safer, more compassionate justice system.

The time to act is now.

Driving System Reform to Protect Victims of Economic Abuse

Background and Concerns

Economic abuse remains a critical yet often overlooked form of gender-based violence, creating long-term financial barriers for victims and survivors—especially in accessing banking services, restoring credit, and achieving financial independence. The OFOVC's conversations with partners, including WomanACT, Financial Transactions and

Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC), and national experts, reinforced the urgent need for coordinated action, stronger data, and trauma-informed financial responses. The Canadian Centre for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE), with whom we met in October 2024, echoed similar concerns, highlighting persistent gaps in provincial responses, limited disaggregated data, and increasing intersections with issues such as reproductive coercion and tech-facilitated abuse.

How We Worked to Create Change

To address these gaps, the OFOVC and CCFWE strengthened collaboration through targeted policy initiatives, shared research, and joint advocacy. Key actions discussed include co-developing a letter to the Canadian Banking Association to ask Canadian banks for support to improve protections for victims of economic abuse and exploring engagement with FINTRAC coordinating awareness efforts leading up to Economic Abuse Awareness Day. We also supported knowledge-sharing by connecting CCFWE with experts such as Dr. Kim Stanton, and by encouraging written submissions for our systemic investigation.

The Bottom Line

Economic abuse is a growing public safety issue, and fraud victims deserve financial systems that respond with empathy, consistency, and accountability; we need more proactive protection to avoid further harm. Our work this year laid essential groundwork for future engagement with federal partners, including the Minister of Finance, and continue moving toward a more coherent, survivor-centred approach to economic safety.

Truth and Reconciliation: Protecting Children and Advancing Justice

Background and concern

The legacy of residential schools continues to negatively impact the lives of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. For over 150 years, Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and subjected to abuse, cultural erasure, and violence. The trauma of these systems continues to impact survivors, families, and future generations. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) issued 94 Calls to Action. Nearly a decade later, the majority remain unfulfilled. Indigenous peoples continue to face disproportionately high rates of violence and systemic barriers to justice. Reconciliation requires more than remembrance—it requires concrete action to prevent harm and protect children.

Call to Action #6 calls for the repeal of section 43 of the *Criminal Code*. Section 43 permits the use of force “by way of correction” against children. While its application has been narrowed and clarified by the SCC, it undermines evolving understandings of children’s rights, bodily autonomy, and consent.

How we worked to create change

On the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, we issued a public [statement](#) honouring survivors of residential schools and those who never returned home. We encouraged people in Canada to wear orange in recognition of the harm inflicted on Indigenous children. We announced the new chair of our First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Advisory Circle, Cristi Adams, reaffirming our

commitment to listening to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities to identify barriers to justice and uphold victims’ rights.

In December 2024, the OFOVC provided a [written submission](#) to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on their study of Bill S-251, *An Act to Repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code*. Our submission emphasized that repealing section 43 is necessary to fulfill Call to Action #6 and to protect children from violence. We reinforced that corporal punishment has well-documented long-term harms to children’s psychological and cognitive development, disproportionately affects marginalized children—including Indigenous children and children with disabilities—and is inconsistent with Canada’s commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We recommended the passing of Bill S-251 to protect children and urged the Committee to provide culturally relevant and accessible education and supports to people living in Canada.

The bottom line

Reconciliation requires action that protects children from harm and addresses the legacies of colonial violence. Repealing section 43 of the *Criminal Code* is a concrete step toward fulfilling the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action and affirming that all children in Canada deserve equal protection under the law. Honouring survivors means preventing future harm—and ensuring justice systems reflect the values of dignity, safety, and respect.

Increasing Access to Justice for Victims of Hate Crime

Background and concern

Police-reported hate crime rose 32% in 2023^v—the fifth consecutive annual increase—more than doubling since 2018. Victims often face fear, isolation, and barriers to reporting, safety, and support.

Online spaces have intensified these harms. People communicate threats and hate online that would not be tolerated in person, including graphic, racially targeted death threats, sextortion, and child sexual exploitation. While there is growing consensus on the need to act against child sexual abuse online, victims of hate continue to face gaps in protection and accountability. The consequences are severe—real-world violence, retraumatization, and, in some cases, loss of life.

The cost of inaction is high.

How we worked to create change

On April 5, 2024, we publicly supported federal leadership on Bill C-63, the *Online Harms Act*, emphasizing the need to balance freedom of expression with effective tools to protect people online. We called for mechanisms that empower users, hold platforms accountable, and provide meaningful recourse for victims, supported by strong oversight.

To strengthen coordination and access to supports, we signed Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) in July of 2024 with the Office of the Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia and the Office of the Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism.



"Islamophobia is a pervasive issue that affects many communities in Canada. Through this partnership, we aim to enhance our ability to support victims of hate crimes and discrimination so that they know they are not alone. Together, we can create a more inclusive and just society for all."

– Amira Elghawaby, Canada's Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia



"For far too long, Jews have been disproportionately targeted as victims of hate in this country. I welcome this commitment to fostering a collaborative approach to addressing hate crime and discrimination; there is no room for hate against Jews, Muslims or any community in Canada. Let's work together to uphold the dignity of each person in our midst, bolstered by our shared values of compassion, understanding, and tolerance"

– Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism.

Under these MOUs, each organization commits to working with the OFOVC, making referrals and sharing information and best practices, to support victims negatively impacted by criminal justice policies, services, or programs under federal jurisdiction. The aim is also to improve access for victims of crime in Jewish and Muslim communities to existing federal programs and services. This will also strengthen the OFOVC's capacity to fulfill our obligation to ensure policymakers understand systemic issues that negatively affect victims of crime.

A major focus of our work this year was the release of *Strengthening Access to Justice for Victims of Hate Crime in Canada* on **December 10, 2024 (Human Rights Day)**.

Drawing on mixed-methods research—including survey responses from **187 police and victim service organizations**, interviews with community leaders and academic experts, and a review of legislative and policy frameworks—the study examined barriers to reporting, gaps in victim support, investigative challenges, and emerging issues related to online hate. We heard consistently that underreporting remains a significant



barrier due to fear of retaliation, mistrust of institutions, and concern about further stigmatization, and that only a fraction of victims who report are connected to meaningful supports.

The report highlighted the need for specialized hate crime units, clearer definitions of hate crime in the *Criminal Code*, improved training across police and victim services, stronger accountability for online platforms, and a vital role for the CVBR in Canada's response to hate. The report concludes with **13 recommendations** aimed at strengthening prevention, accountability, and access to justice for victims, while upholding fundamental rights and advancing reconciliation.

We held a [press conference](#) for the [report's](#) launch and our team was joined by Amira Elghawaby, Canada's Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia, and Mohammed Hashim, Executive Director of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

After the report's release, we wrote to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister of Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities, the [Honourable Pascale St-Onge](#), and the [Honourable Kamal Khera](#) respectively, sharing the report's findings, requesting meetings to discuss the work of

our Office and how we can collaborate on the implementation of Canada's Action Plan on Combatting Hate.

The bottom line

Hate crimes cause severe harm and deepen fear and exclusion. **Victims face barriers to reporting, protection, and support—especially online.** Strong federal leadership, enforceable victim rights, and accountability are essential to ensure everyone in Canada can live safely and with dignity.



Building Change Through Partnership and Engagement

Progress happens when we work together. Our work is grounded in strong partnerships and ongoing engagement with victims, advocates, community organizations, and government partners. By listening to lived experience and working collaboratively, we help ensure that policies and practices respond to real needs and lead to lasting impact.

Policy Leadership on Behalf of Victims of Crime

In 2024-2025, the OFOVC elevated victims' voices through **five parliamentary committee appearances, two additional submissions, nine statements, three letters, and an investigative report**—delivering **32 targeted recommendations** to government decision-makers, listed in [Annex A](#).

Our Advisory Circles

Effective advocacy for victims of crime must be informed by evidence, frontline realities, and the voices of those most affected. To strengthen our advice to government and ensure our work reflects diverse perspectives, the Office convenes three Advisory Circles that provide ongoing, issue-specific guidance.

Academic Advisory Circle

This advisory circle brings together researchers and subject-matter experts to ground our work in evidence, emerging trends, and best practices. Members support policy development, research design, and

the interpretation of data to ensure our recommendations are credible, rigorous, and forward-looking.

Frontline Service Provider Advisory Circle

This advisory circle connects the Office directly with organizations supporting victims and survivors across Canada. Participants help us understand system gaps, barriers to services, and unintended impacts of policy decisions. Their insights ensure our recommendations are practical, trauma-informed, and responsive to real-world conditions.

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Advisory Circle

This year, we revived our First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Advisory Circle and welcomed Cristi Adams as Chair. Cristi is a proud member of the Lake Babine Nation and a Senior Executive of Indian Oil and Gas Canada, a Special Operating Agency within Indigenous Services Canada.

Members of this circle provide critical guidance rooted in Indigenous perspectives, rights, and lived experiences.

This circle supports our commitment to reconciliation and helps ensure our work reflects Indigenous realities, addresses systemic harms, and aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

We are grateful to all Advisory Circle members for their time, expertise, and commitment—your contributions and insights make our work more impactful.

Northern Community Engagement

In late July and early August, Dr. Roebuck accompanied Saskatchewan Ombudsman Sharon Pratchler on an outreach visit to northern Saskatchewan, beginning in Saskatoon and including a stay in the La Ronge area, to engage with victims, justice system partners, and community representatives.

During the trip, the Ombud met with victim services, police, and prosecution partners, as well as with complainants and Indigenous community leaders. They all provided valuable insights into the realities facing victims in northern and remote communities.

The visit also included cultural engagement activities, such as meetings facilitated by a Cree language specialist supporting the Office's commitment to victim-centred

engagement. These meetings informed ongoing work with Indigenous and northern communities.

This collaboration with a provincial ombud provided a unique opportunity to meaningfully engage with victims and stakeholders across Canada and supported ongoing efforts to inform victim-centred approaches grounded in lived experience and regional realities.

"I want to say thank you for sharing your time and wisdom today (...) Once again thank you for the support and advocacy you and your office provide to survivors and victim serving providers across the country."

– A stakeholder who took part in one of our consultation table



Benjamin Roebuck and Sharon Pratchler, the Saskatchewan Ombudsman.

Shelter and Housing Crisis

In July 2025, the Office met with the Federal Housing Advocate, Marie-Josée Houle, to explore the intersections between housing insecurity and victimization. We discussed the failure to prevent homelessness—particularly for Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people—and research on refugee claimants’ experiences. We acknowledged discriminatory housing practices, barriers created by tribunal delays, encampment displacement, and opportunities to collaborate on accessibility, data, and systemic advocacy.



Why This Matters

Housing instability is a major but often overlooked factor driving victimization and limiting victims’ ability to exercise their rights. This meeting strengthened our understanding of rights-based housing approaches and identified concrete opportunities for shared analysis, research exchange, and coordinated advocacy. Integrating housing considerations into our work will help the OFOVC better address systemic barriers affecting victims’ safety, recovery, and equitable access to support.

This exchange reinforced the importance of legislated powers, data access, coordinated justice responses, and strong implementation supports as Canada continues to modernize its victims’ rights landscape. The meeting strengthened international collaboration and informed our analysis of where federal reforms could meaningfully improve enforceability of victims’ rights.

Learning Exchange with the UK Domestic Abuse Commissioner

As part of our commitment to strengthening victims’ rights and advancing evidence-based reform, our Office met with Dame Nicole Jacobs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales in May 2025 to exchange insights on national oversight models, legislative frameworks, and system-level challenges.



Continued Research Partnership

In 2024–25, the OFOVC maintained its collaboration with the Université de Montréal on the research initiative *Victims, Law, and Justice: A Partnership Approach to Transformative Justice*, led by Dr. Jo-Anne Wemmers, an internationally recognized scholar in victimology and transformative justice.

The project supports the Office's priorities by convening academics, practitioners, and survivors from across Canada to examine innovative approaches to justice while strengthening knowledge of victims' rights. It also creates opportunities for dialogue, learning, and professional development within the victim services and justice communities.

Building on its ongoing engagement, the OFOVC continued to contribute actively to the partnership for a third year, using insights from the research to inform policy discussions and strengthen recommendations to the federal government. Collaboration with victim-serving organizations and a wide range of government and non-government partners reflects a shared commitment to improve justice system responses for victims and survivors. The research is supported by a Partnership Development Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.



Faculté des arts et des sciences
École de **criminologie**

Why it matters

Survivors involved in the project have indicated that participation offers a meaningful opportunity to share their experiences and contribute to systemic change.

OFOVC Online Complaint Form

Early in 2024–25, we launched a secure, user-friendly [online complaint form](#) to cut barriers and speed access to support, ensuring more people can exercise their rights under the CVBR.

Federal Ombuds Collaborating to Find Solutions

Following a few inquiries from survivors, our Office collaborated with the Taxpayers' Ombudsperson to streamline the referral process for victims of financial exploitation experiencing challenges with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

This initiative established clear procedures to ensure timely access to appropriate resources, including the integration of complaint forms and the Urgent Request for Action (URFA) process for high-risk cases.

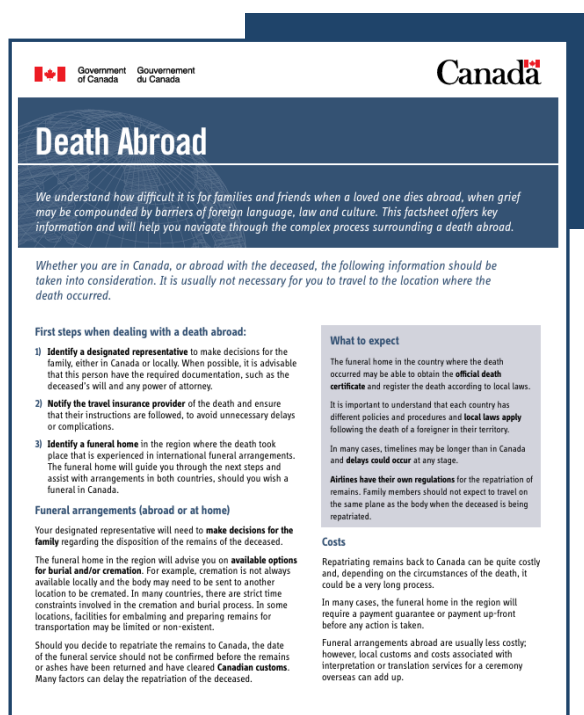
The collaboration aims to reduce delays, enhance inter-office communication, and minimize the risk of re-traumatization for victims having to explain the ordeal several times, while promoting efficient and compassionate service delivery.



Raising Awareness of Resources for Canadians Victimized Abroad

After receiving an inquiry in August 2024, the OFOVC reviewed webpages from Global Affairs Canada (GAC), including the *Death of a Canadian Abroad* webpage and fact sheet. We noticed that neither referenced the **Canadians Victimized Abroad Fund**—a federal financial assistance program intended to support affected families. Having identified a significant gap in publicly available federal information related to supports for families of Canadians who die as a result of a crime abroad, the Office contacted GAC to recommend that both the website and associated materials be updated to include clear information about the Victims Fund and eligibility guidelines.

Through follow-up correspondence and collaboration across departments, GAC confirmed that the requested updates would be made, including adding a statement on the webpage directing Canadians to the financial assistance available for serious violent crimes committed abroad.



This work strengthened federal coordination, improved access to essential information for grieving families, and ensured that victims and survivors are more consistently directed to the supports they are entitled to.



Sharing Knowledge and Lessons Learned to Increase Awareness

Victims and Survivors of Crime Week 2024

On May 13, 2024, Dr. Roebuck introduced the moment of reflection for the Department of Justice's Victims and Survivors of Crime Week's opening ceremony. He invited attendees to pause, reflect, and consider their role in upholding justice, safety, compassion, and strengthening the CVBR.

Teaching about the Resilience of Survivors

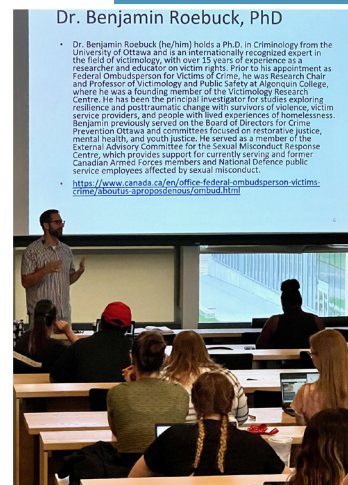
In August 2024, Dr. Roebuck presented on Violence, Resilience, and Posttraumatic Change at a national webinar hosted by the Pacific Region Victim Advisory Committee (VAC). The event drew significant interest from across the country. Following the session, organizers shared heartfelt feedback from some of the 120 participants expressing gratitude for the Ombudsperson's insights and advocacy.

"Thank you for the support and advocacy you and your Office provide to survivors and victim serving providers across the country."

– A stakeholder collaborating with the OFOVC

Carleton University: Restorative Justice

In September 2024, Dr. Roebuck presented on Restorative Justice to Carleton University students taking a course on Restorative Justice in the Department of Sociology. It was great to see so many young minds interested in victimology!



Keynote speaker at 2024 Interdisciplinary Conference in Psychology

In June 2024, the Ombud had the honour to be the keynote speaker at the 2024 Interdisciplinary Conference in Psychology, where he brought his national leadership and expertise in victimology, trauma, and systemic reform to an academic and professional audience. His address highlighted the importance of centring survivor perspectives in research, policy and frontline responses.



Strengthening Victim-Centred Approaches in Policing

Dr. Roebuck was invited to present to senior police leaders participating in a national professional development program co-hosted by the University of Ottawa's Professional Development Institute and the Canadian Police College, with a focus on hate crime. This engagement underscores the Office's role in advancing victim-centred, trauma-informed, and culturally competent practices within policing. Through this collaboration, the OFOVC contributed to discussions on improving trust with victims of crime—particularly those from marginalized communities—and on addressing systemic barriers that affect access to justice and support. Sharing this expertise with influential RCMP, provincial, and municipal police leaders helps strengthen policy, practice, and leadership approaches across Canadian law-enforcement institutions.



Other impactful speaking engagements

Ombudsperson delivers opening remarks for the 2024 National Restorative Justice Symposium



Ombudsperson speaks at the Justice as Trauma Conference on *Rebuilding Trust: Trauma-Informed Foundations for Fairness & Justice*.

Justice as Trauma 2025 Conference

March 17-19 2025 @ The Vancouver Convention Centre

www.myrtamccallum.co/jat2025

& more to come!



Gratitude

Our Office stands alongside people in Canada and around the globe who affirm that victims and survivors of crime deserve dignity, respect, and to have their voices heard. Their experiences are central to any true pursuit of justice and reconciliation. We also want to recognize remarkable individuals who have devoted their lives to making meaningful and lasting improvements for victims and survivors.

LUNA Children and Youth Advocacy Centre

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the LUNA Child and Youth Advocacy Centre for their precious support with planning four consultation tables focused on children and youth, including one dedicated to conversations with Crown attorneys. Their expertise, leadership, and commitment to centering the voices and needs of young people greatly enriched these discussions and contributed meaningfully to the success of our engagement process.



The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking

We would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking for their valued support in organizing and moderating six consultation tables on sex trafficking across the country, one for each region in Canada since local support and needs

vary based on where survivors live. The expertise and involvement of staff from the Centre greatly contributed to the success of these discussions and helped us gain a better understanding of this growing form of exploitation.



The Gatehouse

Lastly, we offer our sincere thanks to The Gatehouse for their invaluable contribution for helping to bring together experts in restorative justice and to plan two consultation tables on this important topic. Their insight and collaborative spirit greatly strengthened these conversations and enriched the depth and quality of our engagement.



Annex A:

Recommendations made in 2024-2025

Study of Bill S-251: An Act to Repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code (December 2024)

1. **Pass Bill S-251 to protect children.** Section 43 of the *Criminal Code* should be repealed as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This will send a strong message to people living in Canada around what is not an acceptable way to discipline children.
2. **Provide culturally relevant and accessible education and supports.** It is crucial that with the repeal of section 43 of the *Criminal Code*, education and supports are provided alongside this repeal. It is essential to offer parents, teachers and caregivers the necessary resources to learn and adopt new childcare strategies. These resources must be culturally relevant and accessible, while considering Canada's diverse population.

Strengthening Access to Justice for Victims of Hate Crime in Canada (December 10, 2024)

3. **Ensure victim rights play a central role in Canada's Action Plan on Combatting Hate.** The *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR)¹ is quasi-constitutional and must be considered in federal policy or legislation on victims of crime. The rights to information, protection, participation, to seek restitution and to file a complaint are important levers to strengthen access to justice for victims of hate crime. The CVBR builds on Canada's commitment to implementing the UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power.²
4. **Strengthen existing complaint mechanisms.** Victims of hate crime need multiple opportunities for resolution because of the barriers they experience. We support efforts to strengthen access to human rights complaint mechanisms and encourage equivalent consideration of ways to streamline complaint mechanisms in the criminal justice system.
5. **Amend the Criminal Code to create a standalone hate crime offence.** The proposed offence should not require consent from the Attorney General. Without a standalone hate crime offence or definition of hate in the *Criminal Code*, there will continue to be challenges identifying, reporting, and tracking conviction rates of hate-motivated crimes.

1. *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*, S.C. 2015, c.13, s.2.

2. United Nations. (1985). *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power* (Resolution A/RES/40/34).

6. **Clarify the evidentiary basis to apply section 718.2 (a)(i) of the Criminal Code.** Without a standalone offence, hate crimes are often charged as other offences (mischief, assault) and hate motivation is used as an aggravating factor at sentencing. Mixing hate crimes and other crimes hides the prevalence and patterns of hate crimes. Judges have varied interpretations of the extent of motivation required to apply hate as an aggravating factor at sentencing. Dr. Ferguson, a Professor of Law at the University of Victoria suggested the following revision:

Evidence that the offence was motivated **in a significant (i.e. more than trivial) way** by bias, prejudice or hate, **or the offender was reckless or penally negligent in respect to the harm that would probably be caused by his or her prejudice, bias or hate**, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor.³
7. **Consider hate-specific offences.** Hate-specific variations of the common *Criminal Code* offences used to lay charges for hate crimes (hate crime – assault).
8. **Add “Femicide” and its definition to the Criminal Code.** This would respond to recommendation 79 of the Renfrew County Inquest.⁴ It could be included as a hate-specific offence (femicide - homicide), as a standalone offence, or be added to section 718.2 (a) of the *Criminal Code* as a specific aggravating factor for sentencing.
9. **Establish accountability for online hate speech and algorithmic discrimination.** Algorithms, which are often tailored based on users’ personal information and behaviour, can inadvertently amplify harmful content, including hate speech and misinformation. Platforms should ensure that their algorithms are not used to target or promote hateful content, and they actively prevent the spread of online hate. Stricter measures and transparency are needed to hold companies accountable. Proprietary algorithms and business practices of online communication companies should not violate the *Charter* rights of Canadians.
10. **Develop a National Resource Hub.** A resource hub within an existing department could facilitate a Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group to create **national standards** for preventing and investigating hate crimes and meeting the needs of victims.
11. **Invest in training for police and victim services.** Budget 2024 announced \$28 million for the Federal Victims Strategy to provide support to victims following a hate-motivated crime. A resource hub could gather best practices from across Canada and collaborate with police and victim services to develop and deliver training. We recommend further investment in the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to expand their Building Bridges Workshops.⁵

3. Ferguson, G (2016). *A review of principles and purposes of the sentencing in sections 718-718.21 of the Criminal Code*. Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada.

4. Office of the Chief Coroner. (2022). *Verdict of Coroner’s Jury*.

5. Canadian Race Relations Foundation (2024). *Building Bridges Workshops*.

12. **Implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice.** This is an important step in addressing state-perpetrated hate crimes against Indigenous Peoples.
13. **Consider legal mechanisms to counter Indian Residential School denialism.** Review findings from the Independent Special Interlocutor's Interim Report⁶ on Missing Children and Unmarked Graves. This includes considering legal mechanisms to address Indian Residential School denialism.
14. **Continue improving the Canada Community Security Program (CCSP).** This program provides essential funding to communities at risk of hate-motivated incidents or crimes to enhance security measures at their gathering spaces. Securing these spaces is costly⁷ and applicants have faced challenges completing the application process and being approved.⁸ We are pleased to see the recent renewal of the fund and efforts to reduce barriers. We recommend continued outreach, technical assistance, and a process evaluation to continue making the fund more accessible to those who need it most.
15. **Honour commitments made in Canada's Action Plan on Combatting Hate.** This can be done by creating an expected results framework with clear outcomes for each pillar, to be reviewed annually, similar to the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

Remarks to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on Bill C-40: An Act to amend the Criminal Code, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal a regulation (miscarriage of justice reviews (November 7, 2024)

16. **Ensure the Commission has legislated authority to disclose information to victims.** Bill C-40 may require a coordinating amendment with section 26 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA).
17. **When the Commission notifies an applicant it will conduct an investigation, notify the victim as well.** [Section 696.5 (2)]

6. Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools. (2023, June) *Sacred Responsibility: Searching for the Missing Children and Unmarked Burials*. Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor

7. Marceau, R. (2024, May 23). *Evidence [Number 105]*. House of Commons, Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, Ottawa, ON, Canada.

8. Nalir, S. (2024, June 3). *Evidence [Number 107]*. House of Commons, Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, Ottawa, ON, Canada.

18. **If an applicant is released from custody pending a hearing, ask victims if they have safety concerns.**⁹
19. **Notify victims who are not registered to receive information if there is an appeal that may overturn a conviction.**¹⁰ The length of a sentence can influence the choice to register. Withholding new information further erodes trust.
20. Expand the authorities in section 696.84 (2) to authorize the Commission to provide support to victims “without means” as well as applicants in need. This could include compensation for counselling or limited Independent Legal Advice (ILA).

An Open Letter to the Government of Canada: It’s time for victims and survivors of crime to have enforceable rights. (July 23, 2024)

21. When victims report a crime to the police, tell them their rights – don’t expect them to ask.
22. When independent legal advice is available, tell victims so they are better protected.
23. When a victim’s safety is at risk, provide tangible help and referrals to victim services.
24. When a victim needs counselling, help them access it and respect their privacy.
25. When a restitution order is made, help the victim collect the funds.
26. When a person is removed from Canada because of a criminal offence, tell the victim.
27. Ensure testimonial aids are not unreasonably withheld.
28. Legislate the authorities of the Ombudsperson to better protect survivors who file complaints.
29. Remove or consider changes to sections 28 and 29 of the CVBR so survivors have more access to recourse.
30. Ensure all proposed criminal justice legislation complies with the quasi-constitutional provisions of the CVBR.
31. Monitor the implementation of victim rights through updated statistical measures and commit to ongoing evaluation and training.
32. Affirm that upholding the rights of victims of crime serves the interests of justice and the proper administration of justice.

9. The Charter statement from C-40 indicates that the person will be released pending a new trial or appeal. *Bill C-40: An Act to amend the Criminal Code, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal a regulation (miscarriage of justice reviews).*

10. The Bill amends the *Criminal Code* to provide that policies must be created to deal with notifications to victims. Bill C-40, sec 696.83

Annex B:

Operations and financials

Summary of actual expenditures from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

	Actuals	
Salaries and Wages	2,007,887	Note: Includes Employee Benefits package
Information/Communications	8,788	
Training and Professional Dues	7,829	
- Professional and Special Services	25,255	
- Legal Services: 200		200
- Translation Services: 1,240		1,240
- Other Services: 23,815		23,815
Operations and Maintenance		
Rentals	-	
Repair and Maintenance	14,263	
Utilities, Materials and Supplies	5,037	
Acquisition of Machinery & Equipment	1,043	
Travel & Relocation	15,807	
Other	3	
Total Expended by Ombudsman's Office	2,085,913	
Total Expended by Justice Canada	2,085,913	

* Public Service and Procurement Canada covered the cost of occupying and maintaining the OFOVC's premises.

** The Department of Justice Canada covered certain corporate costs for the OFOVC which are not included in the expenditures reported above.

Endnotes

- i Statistics Canada. (2014). *Personal victimization incidents reported by Canadians, by type of offence and selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, table 4*
- ii *R v. J.J.* 2022 SCC 28, [2022] 2 S.C.R. 3
- iii OFOVC (2024, October 8) *Remarks to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance about Bill S-233*
- iv Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative (2018, June 2)
- v Statistics Canada. (2024). *Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2023.*