

#OFOVCCOMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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Welcome Message From New Ombudsperson

I have started in this new role with gratitude for those who came before me - for Steve Sullivan, Sue O'Sullivan, and Heidi Illingworth who gave so much of themselves to this Office. I am thankful for the victims of crime who have trusted us with their concerns, for our dedicated staff team, and for our stakeholders in government and other positions across the country.

Over the past two months, I have met with many government and community leaders, and been inspired by their openness and hope. I feel a sense of momentum.

I believe that improving victim rights is a developmental process. The criminal justice system has developed over hundreds of years and the rights of people accused of criminal behaviours are well established in law and in practice. The rights of victims of crime are still developing, and I believe there are many ways to strengthen rights and services for victims that do not interfere with the rights of the accused.

Now is the time for courageous leadership to address long-standing challenges we have heard from victims of crime. It is time to endure that all victims of crime are provided with information about their rights within the criminal justice system and how to share concerns about their personal safety.

I am encouraged by the December 2022 report from the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on [Improving Support for Victims of Crime](#). The report includes 13 recommendations to strengthen the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (CVBR) and guarantee consistent access to victim services across the country.



Picture of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Benjamin Roebuck.

In November, Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) launched the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV), which also emphasizes support for victims, survivors, and their families, as well as investment in prevention. Achieving this objective will require bold action. Ending GBV in Canada will require significant improvements to victim rights.

In the New Year, we will continue to listen to the voices of victims of crime, take action to resolve their complaints, and advocate for systems change. We also hope to re-launch our Indigenous, Academic, and Service Provider Advisory Circles so we can be responsive to emerging issues across Canada, and receive guidance on our continued support for the recommendations of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I am filled with hope for the coming year. Still new and optimistic, but supported by a great team and surrounded by so many champions for victims of crime.

Thank you for all the ways you continue to make things better across the country. Get in touch! We look forward to learning from you and working together to build a safer and more inclusive future. From our OFOVC family, we wish you a wonderful holiday season and a fulfilling New Year.

Sincerely,

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



Events and Engagements with Stakeholders

The Ombudsperson has had a busy first few months.

On November 10th, he provided welcoming remarks to Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention's conference on "The Future of Safer Communities".

On November 14th, the Ombudsperson appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to discuss Bill C-28.



Photo of the Ombudsperson at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

He urged the committee to consider the legislation through the lens of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, and made three key recommendations. His recommendations were considered and influenced the report's final recommendations.

The Ombudsperson had introductory meetings with Commissioner of Correctional Services Canada, Anne Kelly, Chairperson of the Parole Board of Canada, Jennifer Oades, senior officials at Justice Canada and Public Safety Canada. He had an opportunity to participate in the Federal Territorial Provincial Victims of Crime working group hosted by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues.



On December 13th, the OFOVC met with officials from South Korea's Ministry of Justice, who came to Canada to learn more about victims' rights in Canada.

Photo of the delegates from South Korea's Ministry of Justice, the Ombudsperson and members of our team at the Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime.

What's New



The following reports were prepared during the previous Ombudsperson's term:

- **(Not all) Hurt people hurt people: rethinking the victim-offender overlap**; examining the correlation between victimization and criminal offending
- **Repairing the Harm: A Special Report on Restitution for Victims of Crime in Canada**; examining the current state of victim restitution and recommendations going forward
- **What We Heard - Yukon Sharing Circle**; a summary report of what we heard from participants in the Yukon Sharing Circle we hosted in May 2021.

We have published several reports from external subject matter specialists on victimology, which can be found in our research corner:

- **Understanding the Experiences of Coercive Control and Sexual Exploitation**, prepared by Andrea Silverstone, Carrie McManus, Dr. Rod Dubrow-Marshall
- **Federalism and Victims' Rights in Canada**, prepared by Marie Manikis
- **The differences in application of legislation and criminal justice practice to address issues experienced by victims of private versus public violence**, prepared by Dr. Hannah Scott

- **Developing a modernized federal response plan for Canadians victimized abroad in acts of mass violence: How Canada can address the needs of cross-border victims based on international best practices**, prepared by Canadian Coalition Against Terror (C-CAT)
- **Victims and survivors of impaired driving and Canada's parole process**, prepared by MADD Canada



You may have noticed our name changed to the Office of the Federal Ombudsperson of Crime. The term “Ombudsperson” is gender-neutral and encompasses individuals of all genders who serve in this important role. We thank our stakeholders for updating our name on their websites and we look forward to serving you under our new name.



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You can reach out to us by email at victimfirst@ombudsman.gc.ca or
on our toll-free line at 1-866-481-8429.

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