

2025.01 Federal Government to Create a Unified and Centralized Cybercrime Reporting System for Individuals in Canada

Resolved, that national council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada in 105th national annual meeting of members assembled urges the federal government to create a unified and centralized cybercrime reporting system for individuals in Canada as recommended by the auditor general of Canada in its “Report 7—Combatting Cybercrime.”

Brief: Federal Government to Create a Unified and Centralized Cybercrime Reporting System for Individuals in Canada

The auditor general of Canada's "Report 7—Combatting Cybercrime" identified numerous system issues and a plethora of deficiencies in terms of combatting cybercrimes and procuring cyber safety for Canadians. The report indicated that the Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC), the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) "had not built the capacity it needed to combat the growing issue of cybercrime" (Office 7). Federal entities focus on and cater to larger institutions, government organizations, national security and not on individual members of the public (Office). The threat to Canadians extends to financial assets, private information and personal safety (Office). These deficiencies warrant a unified cybercrime reporting system so centralized reports of cybercrime could be directed to appropriate agencies for action (Office).

Cybercrime describes any crime where technology has a large role in the commission of a criminal offence. These crimes include a wide range of illegal activities such as fraud and identity theft (Royal). Fraud is not a victimless crime. Victims lose money, personal and financial information and are exposed to psychological and emotional harm. Fraud targets all age demographics, with younger age groups increasingly victimized by age-specific forms of fraud. Vulnerable populations, such as seniors, continue to make up a growing portion of total fraud (Canada, "Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre Annual Report"). Fraud is an emerging public health problem in older adults (Ebner et al.).

Although the CSEC met the standards for timely incident response and notification of victims, thousands of cybercrime reports were not acted upon by the CSEC. Its "mandate does not extend to assisting individual citizens who [are] victims of cybercrime" (Canada, National Cyber Threat; Office 11).

The number of police-reported instances of cybercrime increased by 12,822 (15.94%) incidents in 2023 from the previous year. With 93,068 incidents, the instances reached its highest value in the observed period (Canada, "Police-Reported Cybercrime"). Canadian Anti-fraud Centre reported more than \$647 million lost to fraud in 2024. Despite the recent announcement by the RCMP that it has been pilot testing the National Cybercrime and Fraud Reporting System for the last five years, it is still only beta testing a minimal number of reports a day (Royal). This supports that a centralized cybercrime reporting system is still urgently needed.

Individual Canadians need a national strategy for financial crimes and a unified and centralized reporting system for cybercrime (Webster et al.). It is an essential step recommended by the auditor general so reports of cybercrime can be directed to appropriate agencies for action (Office).

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Works Cited

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Action Plan: Federal Government to Create a Unified and Centralized Cybercrime Reporting System for Individuals in Canada

1. Write letters to the prime minister and members of parliament, including the minister of public safety and emergency preparedness urging them to develop a national strategy to combat fraud beginning with a unified cybercrime reporting system for Canadians of all ages, where centralized reports are directed to appropriate agencies for action.
2. Organize local parish information sessions with programs such as Compassionate Community Care and Community of Hope Outreach: Connecting with Seniors Project—a new nationwide calling service.
3. Conduct in-person sessions with bank personnel to build trust, create comfort and educate the public on banking effectively and protecting financial records.
4. Host information sessions with law enforcement agencies.
5. Work collaboratively within communities to encourage law enforcement organizations to eliminate the under-reporting of cyber fraud and scams.
6. Support education for older adults and interested citizens offered by municipalities and police departments such as courses and workshops.