



Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Supporting police professionals through innovative and inclusive police leadership
to advance the safety and security of all Canadians.

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CACP Statement: Canada's police leaders say combatting auto theft means combatting organized crime

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with federal government officials, and other industry stakeholders to address the complexities of organized crime. This summit specifically focused on auto theft and the role that organized crime has taken in exploiting port security in Canada to further its interests. The CACP believes police and law enforcement must be involved in addressing this problem. The CACP is calling on the federal government to invest additional resources to address gaps that have enabled this problem to grow exponentially; specifically, the Canada Border Services Agency's (CBSA) lack of capacity to respond to this issue in concert with law enforcement.

This is not a new problem. Organized crime groups have been involved in auto thefts for decades. There are well documented cases of organized crime groups smuggling stolen vehicles in shipping containers to overseas locations dating back to the 1990's. What has changed since then is the scope of the problem.

The CACP recognizes that immediate attention must focus on the activity at the Port of Montreal. This port is being used to export vehicles that are stolen from southern Ontario, specifically the greater Toronto area, as well as vehicles stolen in Quebec in and around Montreal. However, this cannot be the only focus. Organized crime groups will adapt.

Much of Canada's shipping industry is reliant on international intermodal shipping. International intermodal shipments travel in 20- or 40-foot containers. As international intermodal shipments travel between ocean carriers, trucks and trains, the product stays in the same container for the entirety of the trip. Limiting the focus on activity at the Port of Montreal will not solve the problem. In addition to Montreal, there are ports in Quebec City and Port Cartier that also move goods and cargo along the St Lawrence seaway to the Atlantic. There are also major ports in Vancouver and Prince Rupert which serve as a gateway to the Pacific Northwest and Asia.

Currently, port security consists of a patchwork of federal, provincial and municipal police agencies with limited resources. Depending on the region, police coordination with the CBSA is also inconsistent.

Canada's police leaders are united in calling for a better coordinated response that transcends municipal or provincial jurisdictions. Federal, provincial, and municipal police work well together to disrupt and dismantle the organized crime groups involved in this activity; however, police resources are strained. Public order events in the form of protests and demonstrations have increased dramatically in the past few years and require significant police resources to manage. Police agencies, with federal and provincial government support, have also focused considerable resources on gun-related crime. To take on organized crime groups involved in the complexities of international intermodal shipping will require further long-term investment to:

1. Strengthen port security and monitoring mechanisms to disrupt the illegal export of stolen vehicles.
2. Enhance intelligence sharing and operational coordination.
 - Currently there is good operational coordination and intelligence sharing between local, provincial, and federal police in southern Ontario and Quebec. However, there is limited opportunity to extend operational coordination and intelligence sharing with the CBSA.
 - Operational coordination and intelligence sharing with the CBSA is also limited in other regions of the country.
3. Implementing advanced technological solutions to track and recover stolen vehicles.

Addressing this problem must also include the auto manufacturing industry, the shipping industry, and the insurance industry to seek opportunities to leverage technology and innovation to create an environment that deters organized crime from involvement in auto theft.