August 2016

Chief Clive Weighill, President, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Police Information and Statistics (POLIS) Committee Annual Report 2015/16

Executive Summary:

The POLIS Committee has extensive representation from police agencies across Canada. It is strongly supported by, and enjoys an excellent working relationship with the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) at Statistics Canada. As well, it has a formal linkage to Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Deputy Ministers responsible for justice and public safety through representation on the Liaison Officers Committee. The POLIS committee is currently co-chaired by Commander Mary Silverthorn of the OPP, and; Rebecca Kong, Chief of the Policing Services Program at the CCJS.

The POLIS Committee contributes value through the opportunity to develop, improve and deliver accurate statistical and analytical information to the Canadian public, police and government to better understand our environment with respect to offending, victimization and policing, and to thereby facilitate strategic decision making, policy development and resource allocation.

Over the past year, the POLIS committee worked with Statistics Canada to:
- improve the collection of data on the involvement of organized crime (including street gangs) in criminal violations;
- examine the feasibility of collecting national uniform data on calls for service and develop a proposal for a national set of standard police performance indicators;
- recommend and endorse changes to the UCR survey to improve data on cybercrime (accomplished with collaboration with the CACP e-crime committee)
- recommend and endorse other changes to the UCR survey to ensure data relevance
- begin a redesign of Statistics Canada's Police Administration Survey (included input from the CACP Human Resources committee)
- identify the availability of cannabis policy performance metrics
- continue to advance data quality and the comparability of UCR other police-reported data across police services;

Committee Partners / Sponsors:

The POLIS Committee would not be viable without the continuous support (logistical, administrative and financial) of the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics' Policing Services Program, led by Ms. Rebecca Kong, as well as the many police agencies who contribute the time and resources for their members to participate. POLIS is further strengthened by the active membership and participation of senior representatives from Justice Canada and Public Safety Canada.

Committee Vision / Mission / Mandate/ Objectives / Strategic Priorities

Vision: Quality data for quality policing

Mission: POLIS supports progressive change in policing, in partnership with the Policing Services Program of the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, a Division of Statistics Canada, and other partners, through the development and communication of meaningful public safety information**.**

Mandate/Objectives:

- Represent the police community in ensuring that emerging police issues, priorities and concerns are addressed by Statistics Canada surveys and products;
- Facilitate the development of partnerships among governments and criminal justice agencies to further the integration of justice information systems;
- Collaborate with Statistics Canada and police organizations in the development of standard police performance indicators;
- Promote improved police management and decision making by identifying, developing and communicating best practices in the collection, analysis and application of statistical information;
- Ensure that, in the development of new and ongoing surveys of crime and police resources, data can be provided by the police community in a standardized and cost-effective manner, minimizing respondent burden and costs;
- Promote innovation in information systems, collection techniques and other matters that improve the production and utility of police information;
- Review Statistics Canada reports before public release to ensure that appropriate context surrounding issues and trends is included to explain differences in local and regional comparisons, as well as to explain changes in trends.

Strategic Priorities 2014 – 2016:

o Continue efforts to collect via the UCR2.2 data on the involvement of organized crime in criminal incidents that occur in Canada.
o With the support of the Data Quality Managers Working Group and the CACP, continue to address data quality and comparability issues within the UCR.
o In working with other working groups and experts, recommend to CACP a suite of national, uniform police performance and community safety indicators that are or will be feasible to collect.
o Through the assistance of a POLIS working group, establish common categories for classifying calls for service.

Summary of Major Activities and Initiatives in 2015/2016:

1. Organized crime data collection:

Background: Since the launch of the organized crime variable as a part of the 2.2 Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) survey in 2005, police agencies have consistently produced low numbers of offences linked to organized crime. POLIS believes that the data being submitted to Statistics Canada represents a vast under-count of organized crime's involvement in police-reported crime. For this reason, it was decided in 2009 to suspend release of the data. As such, the data remain unusable for academics, federal and provincial/territorial governments, policy makers and other important stakeholders whose mandate it is to prevent and respond to the organized crime threat in Canada.

In 2009, a POLIS sub-committee was struck to conduct a consultation with the police services represented by POLIS to determine whether the under-counting is related to the nature and complexity of organized crime itself, or if it is the result of a lack of quality assurance processes and/or training.

The 12 recommendations as a result of that consultation have all been carried out, some with financial support from Public Safety.

A key piece of the work were seven recommendations that came from police services that participated in a data collection pilot. These recommendations lay squarely on police services to implement in order to ensure complete and quality data on organized crime are submitted via the UCR.

Despite efforts, UCR data on organized crime remains unusable.

Activity in 2015/2016:
- POLIS engaged the CACP Organized Crime Committee and received their endorsement of the best practices.
- POLIS obtained support from key stakeholder federal/provincial/territorial committees.
- CCJS began work on a Juristat Bulletin report that will release the data from the pilot as well as highlight the issue with data collection, work done to date to improve data, as well as the recommendations for police services.
- Co-chairs of POLIS and CACP Organized Crime Committee will be briefing the CACP Board at their August Board meeting.
- Deputy Ministers responsible for justice and public safety may be briefed at their next meeting regarding the status of data collection.

Policy implications: Organized crime is a threat to the police community and the Canadian public. Accurate and timely data are required to quantify the threat that organized crime groups pose and to determine if their activity is increasing. More recently, the need for these data have recently been raised in the discourse on the

economics of policing in terms of the need to illustrate the changing nature of crime and the growing complexity of policing.

2. Development of national uniform categories for calls for service and police performance metrics

Background: With the recent discourse on the economics of policing, police leaders now more than ever are looking to metrics to measure and report on police workload and performance. Currently, UCR crime rates, the Crime Severity Index and clearance rates are often the "go-to" statistics on police workload and performance simply because very few other national indicators exist. Police services have estimated that responding to crime can account for 30% to 50% of their calls for service. It is also understood within the policing community that there is no national standard for categorizing the different types of calls for service within the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems, nor for the categorizing of call priorities.

Recognizing the need for data that will support police leaders in decision-making and management, in Spring 2014 the POLIS committee established a Working Group on Calls for Service to work with the CCJS to develop common categories for classifying calls for service and call priorities.

The CCJS and POLIS also undertook broader parallel work on the development of national police performance metrics.

The CCJS conducted a consultation with POLIS members on current Calls For Service data. In addition, Waterloo Regional Police hosted a meeting in January 2015 where the 5 police services that agreed to be part of a pilot data collection project developed the scope and objectives of the pilot. The pilot is focusing on **mental health related** calls, **domestic disturbances** and **missing persons**. The key issues that were identified for the pilot were: number and type of units dispatched; amount of service time spent on these calls; amount of hospital wait time; criminal incidents and charges, if any, and; persons involved.

Activity in 2015/2016:
The analysis of the pilot data submitted by the police services was completed by the CCJS throughout the fall/winter of 2015/2016. Results were presented in the Spring to POLIS and representatives for deputy ministers responsible for justice and public safety.

Calls for service categories from various police services were analyzed by the CCJS and and boiled down to 80 call types. Further refinement is currently being conducted.

A consultation was conducted to determine performance indicators currently used by police compared to those they deem as most important. This work helped determine gaps and direction for a basket of indicators.

Finally, in terms of broader police performance metrics, the benefit of collecting personal identifiers to enhance the utility of UCR and other potential police-reported data to create performance metrics was discussed throughout the year with POLIS and the CACP Board of Directors.

Policy implications: In the recent climate of fiscal restraint and enhanced public expectations, the discourse on the Economics of Policing has grown in Canada and is a priority of the policing community and the FPT Ministers of Justice and Public Safety. As was articulated at the 2012 Summit on the Economics of Policing, police services and governments are being challenged to find more efficient and effective methods to sustain current levels of policing services to ensure public safety. As evidenced in the Economics of Policing discourse, police leaders are being asked to provide evidence-based business cases to justify resource needs and to demonstrate value for money. For police to rise to this challenge, comparable national metrics beyond crime statistics are needed. Uniform information on all types of calls for service will assist police leaders to strategically manage and plan priorities and resources.

3.   Recommend and endorse changes to the UCR survey to improve police-reported data on cybercrime

Background
In 2005, the UCR2.2 was developed and included the addition of a cybercrime flag. The intention of this amendment to the survey was to allow police services to flag any criminal incident as "a criminal offence involving a computer as the object of the crime, or the tool used to commit a material component of the offence."

While the CCJS collects, verifies and publishes these data annually, POLIS has identified limitations. For instance, some challenges include: incidents being stored on servers and not in the records management system (the location from which UCR records are pulled); backlogs in the entry of reports, and; inconsistencies in methods of counting of incidents, victims and accused and a need for the UCR to modify and/or clarify current scoring rules (it should be noted that the UCR was designed to capture unique incidents that occur in a specific geographic place in Canada and have a clear beginning and end date). In this current environment, the need for accurate police-reported information on the nature and extent of cybercrime in Canada is essential for public policy development, strategic policing and crime prevention.

POLIS discussed UCR cybercrime counts at their spring 2015 meeting and it was agreed that research is needed to better understand the operational challenges to reporting to UCR; to examine the unit of count and potential changes to UCR scoring and counting methods; to review methods of counting by others; to identify complementary data sources. The goal of this work is to identify the extent of the limitations and make recommendations for improvement.

Activity in 2015/2016
With financial support from Public Safety Canada, and in close collaboration with the CACP E-crime committee, the POLIS committee accomplished the following:

* Consultations with police services to determine information priorities, the issues with reporting and how UCR can be improved. Several recommendations were identified beyond just the UCR. Some were addressed during the year, including:
* Agreement on an improved, standardized national definition for the purpose of UCR;
* Identifying "smart edits" that can be applied in the RMS that will ensure the cybercrime flag is completed for certain offences likely to be committed via or targeting information communications technology;

Other recommendations, including developing a pointed UCR cybercrime on-line training course, will be addressed moving forward.

Policy implications
The rapid growth in Internet use and technology has allowed for the emergence of new criminal opportunities. Criminal offences involving a computer or the Internet either as the target of a crime or as an instrument used to commit a crime are collectively known as cybercrime. Frauds, identity theft, extortion, criminal harassment, certain sexual offences, and offences related to child pornography are among the criminal violations that can be committed over the Internet using a computer, tablet, or smart phone.

As technology advances, new ways of using computers and the internet to commit crime continue to evolve. The continued evolution and complexity of cybercrime pose various challenges for police services and the criminal justice system as a whole. Investigations can become complex and costly, requiring advanced expertise and costly technology and hardware.

4. Data quality and the comparability of UCR and other police-reported data across police services

Background: In 2007, upon recommendation by POLIS, a national UCR Data Managers Data Quality Workshop was held in 2007 at Statistics Canada. This represented a significant achievement in bringing together Statistics Canada staff and records managers from across the country to address major data quality issues and concerns.

Among the many Workshop recommendations were those to create an ongoing Data Managers Working Group to deal with emerging UCR data quality issues and information sharing; for Statistics Canada to work closely with police services to provide multi-level training; and, for Statistics Canada to continue their regional training workshops.

Since then, the UCR Data Managers Working Group hold tele-conference calls quarterly. Recently, the group has been dealing largely with identifying UCR violations that are subject to differences in reporting across police services, and the reasons driving these differences.

Activity in 2015/2016:

In response to the CACP resolution passed at the 2013 CACP Conference, the CCJS has conducted an audit of one police service in 2015/2016 and has another planned for this fiscal year.

The CCJS is hosting a UCR Data Quality Workshop September 26-27 in Ottawa. Registration of 100 participants was full within days of sending the announcement. POLIS members, particularly from Vancouver PD, will be assisting with the agenda.

Policy implications: The credibility of police-reported crime statistics ultimately boils down to data reported in a uniform, consistent and timely manner. Only the ongoing communication and data quality efforts between Statistics Canada and police services will ensure that Canada will continue to be at the forefront in terms of the quality of its incident-based crime data.

5. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics' Products

Each year, the POLIS committee provides suggestions for special topic reports and input into the final selection of reports that the CCJS will release in the next fiscal year. The committee also reviews and provides feedback on all policing-related articles.

The POLIS committee reviewed the following *Juristats* that were released between September 2015 to July 2016:
- Emergency Preparedness in Canada, 2014
- Criminal victimization in Canada, 2014
- Homicide in Canada, 2014;
- Family violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2014;
- Youth crime in Canada, 2014;
- Police resources in Canada, 2015;
- Canadians' experiences with emergencies and disasters, 2014
- Young adult offenders in Canada, 2014
- Trafficking in persons, 2014
- Police-reported crime in Canada, 2015.

Meetings Held :
September 28-29, 2015 in Ottawa
April 6-7, 2016 in Calgary

Meetings Planned:
September 28-29, 2016 in Ottawa

POLIS committee members as of August 2016:

See list submitted.