

August 2014

Jim Chu, President, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

**Police Information and Statistics (POLIS) Committee
Annual Report 2013/14**

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 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 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/street gangs in criminal violations;
- begin work to determine the feasibility of collecting national uniform data on calls for service;
- advance data quality and the comparability of UCR other police-reported data across police services;
- implement a POLIS Sharepoint site, hosted and maintained by Public Safety Canada, to facilitate the exchange of committee-specific documents and other relevant information.

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 :

- Continue efforts to collect via the UCR2.2 data on the involvement of organized crime in criminal incidents that occur in Canada.
- With the support of the Data Quality Managers Working Group and the CACP, continue to address data quality and comparability issues within the UCR.
- 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.
- Through the assistance of a POLIS working group, establish common categories for classifying calls for service.

Summary of Major Activities and Initiatives in 2013/2014:

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, the data are not released and therefore have remained 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.

A POLIS sub-committee was struck in 2009 to conduct a consultation with the police services represented by POLIS. The objectives of the consultation were as follows:

- identify the causes of the severe under-reporting of the organized crime variable;
- identify potential solutions or best practices designed to improve reporting;
- ascertain and address concerns police agencies may have in relation to collecting/reporting these data, and;
- identify other potentially more relevant and reliable sources and indicators of the impact of organized crime in Canada.

In April 2011, the results of the consultation and the 12 recommendations were presented to POLIS. As a result of the consultations, POLIS ratified the recommendation to not remove the organized crime street gang variable. Since 2011/2012, the following work was completed to respond to some of the remaining recommendations:

- The CCJS combined the organized crime and street gang variables together.
- The CCJS remove from the UCR2.2 categories of criminal organizations that are based on ethnicity.
- A pilot project was developed and launched in 2013. The goal of the pilot project is to publish quality data on organized crime for a limited number of violations, to establish best practices that can eventually be applied to a greater volume of data, and to evaluate if the provision of quality data is sustainable with the application of best practices. The pilot project includes 12 of Canada's largest municipal police services, the OPP, the SQ and the RCMP. Phase I of the pilot included collection of quality data on violations causing death.
- With funding from Public Safety Canada, the CCJS and POLIS developed and piloted a half-day classroom-based training course which included an instructor's manual and a manual for participants. The goal of the course is to educate the police on key indicators of organized crime and the rules for scoring the information in the UCR2.2. This work was done in 2012/2013.
- With funding from Public Safety Canada, the CCJS and POLIS developed a Prairie Region-specific training course (adapted from the main package) and

delivery of training to Regina Police Service and Saskatoon Police Service. This work was done in 2012/2013.

Activity in 2013/2014:

- At the Fall 2013 POLIS meeting, the committee endorsed the following short term work plan:
 - August to October 2014: Verification and sign-off of the Organized Crime (OC) flag for “2013 Phase I (violations causing death)”
 - November 2014: Report on lessons learned, best practices and issues.
Report will include:
 - Assessment of feasibility of collection
 - Preliminary recommendation to POLIS whether or not UCR is an appropriate vehicle to collect OC involvement in criminal incidents.
 - January 2015: Expand pilot as per any recommendations in November report (“2015 Phase III”).
 - Spring 2015: Public release of “2013 Phase I” data for pilot participants who signed off.
 - August to October 2015: Verification and sign-off of OC flag for “2014 Phase II (selected drug offences)”.
 - September 2015: Discussion at Fall POLIS meeting re feasibility and next steps.
 - December 2015: Working group final report (English and French) and recommendation regarding collection of OC Flag via UCR.
 - Spring 2016: Public release of “2014 Phase II” data for pilot participants who signed off.
- With funding from Public Safety Canada, work on the training aspect of the recommendations continued in 2013/2014, as follows:
 - Four additional region-specific packages (West Coast, East Coast, Toronto region and Quebec) were developed and implemented.
 - With assistance from POLIS members, police chiefs and organized crime unit leaders, on-site training was delivered by the CCJS to the following police services/detachments:
 - St. John’s Police Service
 - RCMP B division
 - Halifax Regional Police Service

- Saint John Police Service
 - Montréal Police (SPVM)
 - Sûreté de Québec
 - Ottawa Police Service
 - Toronto Police Service
 - York Regional Police
 - Waterloo Regional Police Service
 - Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)
 - Winnipeg Police Service
 - Calgary Police
 - Edmonton Police Service
 - Vancouver Police Department
 - RCMP E division
 - Victoria Police Service
- Work on the pilot project also continued in 2013/2014, including: collection of the organized crime flag for UCR violations causing death that were reported to police in 2013; implementation and sharing of best practices by participating police services; further refinement of scoring rules; quarterly teleconferences for pilot participants to provide status reports, discuss challenges and best practices; implementation of “2014 Phase II” whereby pilot participants began applying organized crime flags and developing data quality best practices for selected UCR drug offences.
 - Statistics Canada, presented information on the changes to UCR2.2 organized crime flag as well as information on the training initiatives and the Pilot at the following meetings and conferences: Versaterm Conference (all Versaterm users); Niche Conference (all Niche users); POLIS (Police Information Statistics Committee); LOC (Liaison Officer’s Committee)

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. Several of the 12 recommendations being considered by POLIS to ensure successful collection of these data via the UCR survey require financial and human resources to implement. The POLIS committee and the CCJS will continue to pursue the recommendations to fully determine the feasibility of police to report and sustain the reporting of quality information to the UCR survey and the role of Statistics Canada in data quality assurance.

2. Development of national uniform categories for calls for service

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 mandate of the working group is to determine the feasibility of collecting national, uniform and comparable data on calls for service and make recommendations on a strategy for national data collection. The work of this Working Group will also feed into broader parallel work being led by the CCJS, in cooperation with POLIS, on the development of national police performance metrics.

Activity in 2013/2014:

- The Working Group was established in May 2014 and is being co-chaired by the CCJS and Sergeant Sean Tout of the Waterloo Regional Police Service. Representation also includes: Ottawa, York, Toronto, OPP, Saskatoon, Regina, Vancouver, Victoria, and the RCMP.
- The CCJS developed a proposed work plan for review by the Working Group.
- Calls for services and call priority documentation was provided by all police services in the pilot, as well as a few other police services on POLIS, but not participating in the pilot. The CCJS analyzed all the documents provided and put together a report for the working group that identified: preliminary recommendations on common categories; anomalies and overlaps in categories; recommendations on common definitions for call priorities. A teleconference was held in August for the Working Group to discuss the initial report and recommendations.

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. Data quality and the comparability of UCR 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. Findings and recommendations by the group are reported at each POLIS committee meeting.

Matt Torigian, past co-chair of POLIS, made a presentation to the CACP Board of Directors in August 2012 that outlined the issue, implications and the recommendations by POLIS. The recommendations were supported by the Board. The issue of comparability will be a standing item at the POLIS meetings. Engagement by the POLIS committee and the CACP are needed in order for the work of the Data Managers Working Group to move forward.

Activity in 2013/2014:

- Based on variances across police services identified by POLIS, the CCJS followed up with police services directly to document reasons for reporting highs or lows and continues to increase context within its public reports.
- During the year-end verification of 2013 crime statistics, then co-chair Chief Torigian sent a directive to all police chiefs in Canada explaining the importance of providing explanations to Statistics Canada for notable annual variations in their 2013 data and requesting their co-operation in the verification process.
- With respect to concerns around the quality of police-reported statistics on child pornography violations, the CCJS consulted extensively with the RCMP's National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre, invited a representative from the NCECC to present the issue of data collection and data

- quality to POLIS and developed scoring proposals for POLIS's consideration at their Spring meeting. Revised scoring guidelines are under development.
- At their Spring meeting, the POLIS committee endorsed the renewal of efforts by the CCJS and the committee to improve the collection and quality of data on the Aboriginal Identity of victims and accused collected through Statistics Canada's Homicide Survey.
 - At their Spring meeting, the POLIS committee endorsed a framework for the CCJS to apply when conducting internal reviews of police service data submitted to the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. This framework was developed in response to the CACP resolution passed at the 2013 CACP Conference. In addition, Statistics Canada has identified internal funding for this current fiscal year to support one data quality review.

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.

4. 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 in fiscal year 2013/2014:

Family violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2011; Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2011; Police-reported crime in Canada, 2012; Co-offending in Canada, 2011; Homicide in Canada, 2012; Police resources in Canada, 2013.

Policing-related topics reviewed and released to date for fiscal year 2014/2015 include:

- Firearms and violent crime in Canada, 2012 (April 2014)
- Police-reported sexual offences against children and youth in Canada, 2012 (May 2014)
- Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2012 (June 2014)
- Police-reported crime in Canada, 2013 (July 2013)

Meetings Held :

September 30 & October 1 2013 in Ottawa
April 10 & 11 2014 in Montreal

Meetings Planned:

September 29 and 30, 2014 in Ottawa

POLIS committee members as of August 2014:

Alcorn	Greg	Inspector	Edmonton Police
Auld	Sean	Superintendent	Halifax Regional Police
Gaudet	Sylvain	M.	Sûreté du Québec
Kijewski	Kristine	Ms.	Toronto Police
Kong*	Rebecca	Ms.	CCJS
Lawrence	Austin	Mr.	Public Safety Canada
MacLean	Alyson	Ms.	Justice Canada
Malone	Brian	Mr.	Saint John Police
Markus	Jon	Mr.	Saskatoon Police
McDonald	Tracesandra	Ms.	RCMP
Morin	Bob	Deputy Chief	Regina Police
Ormiston	Bruce	Superintendent	Winnipeg Police
Perry	Darlene	Ms.	Victoria Police
Perry	Debi	Ms.	Calgary Police
Price	Liam	Mr.	RCMP
Silverthorn*	Mary	Provincial Commander	OPP
Singleton	Ab	Deputy Chief	St. John's, RNC
Skinner	Jill	Deputy Chief	Ottawa Police

* Co-Chair