

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

24 January 2022 / 24 janvier 2022

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-21-25: RISE IN OTTAWA CYBERCRIME
ATTACKS**

**OBJET: RÉPONSE À LA DEMANDE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS I-21-25 :
AUGMENTATION DES CYBERATTAQUES À OTTAWA**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board receives this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du
présent rapport à titre d'information.**

INQUIRY

Rise in Ottawa Cybercrime Attacks- On December 20, 2021 The Ottawa Citizen reported a rise in Ottawa area cybercrimes. The Service has advised the Board on multiple occasions that the OPS lack the required resources to staff a cybercrime unit.

1) Can the Service provide statistics relating to reports received from cybercrime victims in 2020 and 2021, particularly during the pandemic? How many of the crimes have been investigated and/or resolved?

2) Given the increasing prevalence of cybercrimes in Ottawa, will the Service be able to strengthen their cybercrime capacity within the 2022 budget? If so, how?

RESPONSE

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) leverages technology through its Digital Forensic Section (DFS) to resolve incidents of fraud-based and other types of e-crimes. This specialty service is used to forensically track crimes conducted using computers, cellphones or other technology, including fraud, threats, and crimes against children.

The OPS' current complement in its DFS is one sergeant and three investigative constables; two of which are seconded by the province to work specifically on Internet Child Exploitation (ICE) files not only for the OPS but also in assistance to other smaller police services in the Eastern Region, which leaves one constable available for all other investigations or requests.

In 2020 the OPS ICE received 486 files for investigation, while in 2021, it received 451 new files between January and November. This averages to about 45 new files per month, outside of tips generated from partners like Cybertip or Crime Stoppers. There are currently 565 active ICE investigation files attached to the OPS.

Because there are limited resources tied to high tech investigations, our Fraud Unit has had to prioritize its caseload. In 2020 the OPS Fraud Unit had 5,746 reports filed, many of which related to online or computer-originated incidents. The OPS has not been able to benefit from high tech forensics due to resource limits and organizational priorities.

Although the OPS does not have a dedicated Cybercrime Unit, this is partially offset by the RCMP and Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) assets. However, when a file originates in Ottawa it is assigned to the OPS to investigate, leaving us at a disadvantage and requiring the assistance of the other police services.

Due to budget and other pressures the OPS has not been able to realize the creation of a Cybercrime Unit and it has been removed from the 2022 Budget to be revisited in 2023.