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CANADA

CANADA–UNITED STATES BORDER MANAGEMENT

**Report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and
National Security**

Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Chair

**MAY 2026
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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Chair**

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

To assist the reader:

A list of acronyms used in this report is available on page xi

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has the honour to present its

FOURTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied Canada-United States border management and has agreed to report the following:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
BITEP	Border Integrity Technology Enhancement Program
CBSA	Canada Border Services Agency
CIROC	Canadian Integrated Response to Organized Crime
CSIS	Canadian Security Intelligence Service
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
FINTRAC	Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
IRPA	<i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i>
JOIC	Joint Operational Intelligence Cell
kg	kilograms
NSICOP	National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians
ONDCP	Office of National Drug Control Policy
PRRA	Pre-Removal Risk Assessment
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police

SUMMARY

As the intersection of national security and economic traffic, the Canada–United States border is a critical area for protecting the country while ensuring the smooth flow of trade. This report provides an overview of this border and the complementary responsibilities of the Canada Border Services Agency and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It addresses issues such as their respective mandates, challenges related to recruitment, training, and operational capacities.

This report also highlights operational challenges at land, maritime, and rail ports of entry, where the state of infrastructure and technological limitations influence border efficiency and security. It also addresses certain legal constraints that hinder intelligence sharing with transnational partners, although rapid and reliable flow of information remains essential for combating transnational crime.

Finally, this report examines various courses of action, notably modernizing the mandates of border agencies, improving technological tools, making legislative adjustments, and raising awareness on the fentanyl crisis. The complexity of transnational criminal organizations, irregular migration, and the need for enhanced cooperation are key factors guiding the proposed solutions.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada add to the mandate of Canada Border Services Agency officers the power to patrol and intervene in the event of urgent situations outside official ports of entry at the Canada–United States border. 66

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada provide dedicated funding to support Royal Canadian Mounted Police operations related to border security. 66

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada invest in modern surveillance and intelligence technologies to strengthen operational capacity of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the fight against transnational criminal activities. 66

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada ensure long-term training capacity for Canada Border Services Agency officers, including by:

- **investing in the expansion and modernization of training facilities, infrastructure, and equipment;**
- **providing the necessary funding to the Canada Border Services Agency so that its college in Rigaud can deliver training at full capacity year after year; and**
- **exploring alternative types of training, other than the traditional 18-week model, to maintain required professional standards. 66**

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada ensure that new positions within the Canada Border Services Agency primarily strengthen front-line operational functions at the border and that it report on the balance between operational and administrative positions created as part of the new hires, and that it report to Parliament with a by-annual report until the completion of the hiring of the 1 000 jobs.

66

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada strengthen the Canada Border Services Agency's operational capacity by increasing the number of officers assigned to inspections to reduce excessive reliance on automated systems where possible and improve risk detection by:

- **ensuring the fair and equitable representation of opportunities in recruitment, training, promotion and working conditions to reduce excessive reliance on automated systems and improve risk detection; and**
- **retaining officers who are injured or require accommodation in order to preserve operational expertise and stabilize frontline staffing levels.**

67

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada mandate the Canada Border Services Agency to conduct a structural review of its organization to rebalance, in particular, the ratio of operational to administrative positions, where necessary, reducing the number of middle managers as necessary, and that this review include, among other things:

- **an independent assessment of practices related to accommodating and retaining injured or disabled employees, conducted in collaboration with the union; and**
- **an independent assessment of inclusive practices that promote staff retention and ensure fair working conditions.**

67

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada properly resource the Canada Border Services Agency to reduce its reliance on student border officers, who represent nearly 19% of the workforce at major locations like Trudeau airport, and only have three weeks of training before evaluating national security threats and drug smuggling at primary inspection points. 67

Recommendation 9

That the Canada Border Services Agency commit to exploring simplified processes, such as reducing the length of initial questioning and establishing secondary lanes for expedited processing for in-depth assessments, in order to improve the flow of traffic at border crossings. 68

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada strengthen its participation in and use of trusted traveller and trader programs—primarily administered by the United States—by enhancing cooperation with United States authorities to improve access and compatibility, and by offering incentives that promote proactive compliance and information sharing for risk assessment, thereby reducing reliance on controls at the time of crossing. 68

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada commit to investing in the modernization of technological tools and infrastructure related to border operations, including by improving scanning and surveillance tools, intelligence-sharing mechanisms and cross-border coordination; that it consider the adoption of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence; and that it strengthen system resilience to reduce vulnerabilities and minimize disruptions to industry and border communities. 68

Recommendation 12

That the Government of Canada deploy safe drive-through multi-energy portal technology at all major Canadian export seaports (such as Montreal, Vancouver and Halifax) to instantly screen 100% of the outgoing cargo for stolen vehicles and smuggled drugs without impeding the flow of trade. 68

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada examine funding options to support the effective, consistent, and proportionate application of border security obligations, in a manner that avoids imposing excessive financial burdens on operators of airports, ports, bridges, tunnels, and other critical infrastructure. 68

Recommendation 14

That the Government of Canada increase its funding to the Canada Border Services Agency for the modernization of the technology used at ports of entry and the implementation of a plan to maintain continuity of operations in the event of technological failure. 69

Recommendation 15

That the Government of Canada significantly strengthen the Canadian Border Services Agency's inspection capacity by:

- **increasing the number of inspections and controls of goods to exceed the current inspection rate of less than 1% and reduce vulnerabilities that compromise border security;**
- **increasing the number of border officers by hiring new frontline officers and deploying them to rail stations and seaports of all sizes;**
- **exploring the installation of infrastructure necessary to conduct inspections of rail transport; and**
- **increasing investments in modern surveillance systems and maritime radar.** 69

Recommendation 16

That the Government of Canada prioritize the procurement and use of Canadian-manufactured aircraft to support Royal Canadian Mounted Police border enforcement. 69

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada simplify and streamline the process, managed by Public Services and Procurement Canada, for procuring new equipment for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency. 69

Recommendation 18

That the Royal Canadian Mounted Police make its pilot project to establish satellite command posts in border municipalities permanent so that it can respond quickly and effectively during emergency operations by having all the necessary resources near the border. 69

Recommendation 19

That the Government of Canada establish and deploy where possible a permanent, integrated technological surveillance network along the Canada–United States border, including the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway, by increasing the use of radar, sensors, and drone detection and neutralization systems in order to strengthen the ability of border officials to detect, deter and respond to criminal activity and threats to national security. 70

Recommendation 20

That the Government of Canada develop and implement a national security strategy, including a clear border management framework, that establishes strategic priorities, clarifies the roles and responsibilities of federal institutions, strengthens interdepartmental coordination and international cooperation, and takes into account regional and local realities along the border in order to make border security a top national security priority. 70

Recommendation 21

That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with the Canada Border Services Agency, police services, provinces, municipalities, and international partners, continue to strengthen measures to prevent, detect, and intercept stolen vehicles to maintain the downward trend in theft. 70

Recommendation 22

That the Government of Canada conduct prevention activities in Canadian communities, including investing in prevention and awareness-raising initiatives targeting young people, in order to reduce the harms associated with illegal substance use.

70

Recommendation 23

That the Government of Canada establish a formal and sustainable framework for sharing information with national and international partners on immigration matters, including:

- **formal protocols for interagency communication;**
- **a secure platform for the ongoing exchange of relevant data;**
- **institutional mechanisms to preserve organizational memory, particularly in the event of retirements or staff changes;**
- **joint training and regular meetings to strengthen collaboration and reduce reliance on informal relationships; and**
- **explicit and robust privacy safeguards, including compliance with applicable Canadian legislation, adherence to the principles of necessity and proportionality, and consultation with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.**

70

Recommendation 24

That the Government of Canada dedicate immediate additional resources to locating and removing the 33 458 individuals with active deportation warrants and who, as of 29 January 2026, had not been located.

71

Recommendation 25

That the Government of Canada work with federal law enforcement to fortify and sustain collaboration mechanisms with United States border agencies to improve information sharing and cooperation.

71

Recommendation 26

That the Government of Canada continue to collaborate with First Nations police services, adopting a culturally informed approach, particularly with regard to marine surveillance in response to transnational crime. 71

Recommendation 27

That the Government of Canada provide the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with the necessary budget to reimburse the costs of operational support for search and rescue operations conducted by emergency services in border municipalities conducted at the request of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. 71



CANADA–UNITED STATES BORDER MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Serving both as a line of protection and a vital corridor for trade and mobility, the Canada–United States border is a strategic element of national security and economic activities. This report summarizes the principal concerns raised during the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (the committee) study on border management and presents recommendations to strengthen the border.

Study Background and Committee Mandate

On 18 September 2025, the committee adopted a [motion](#) to undertake a study on Canada–United States border management. Between 23 September 2025 and 27 November 2025, the committee held four public meetings and one in camera meeting (with testimony made public pursuant to a [motion](#) adopted on 27 November 2025), hearing 25 witnesses and receiving two briefs.

During the same period, between 4 November 2025 and 25 November 2025, the committee also [considered](#) Bill C-12, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada’s borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures, over five meetings, hearing 35 witnesses and receiving 18 briefs. Some of the testimony gathered during that study is included in this report, as it provides relevant insights into border security and fluidity, particularly with respect to interagency coordination and countering transnational threats.

Structure of the Report

The report is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 examines the operational challenges faced by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), including the limitations of their mandate, recruitment and training, and governance issues. Chapter 2 addresses technological and infrastructure issues at the border, including technological gaps affecting day-to-day border management. Chapter 3 deals with cross-border crime, identifying how fentanyl and its precursors enter Canada, as well as the activities of transnational criminal organizations. Chapter 4 addresses the issue of irregular migration, describing the refugee application process, the CBSA’s role



in this area, and the CBSA's removal process. Finally, Chapter 5 focuses on Canada's international cooperation and the legal constraints that hinder information sharing, highlighting the reforms needed to strengthen trust among allies and improve border security.

Context and Status of the Canada–United States Border

The Canada–United States border is the longest continuous, non-militarized land border in the world. Every day, billions of dollars in trade and hundreds of thousands of people cross it, requiring close collaboration among the various stakeholders responsible for its management and security.¹ As noted by the [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#), Minister of Public Safety, the challenge lies in balancing the free movement of people and goods with measures to ensure border security. He said that both countries are dealing with significant challenges, including “irregular migration, human smuggling, and illegal drug and firearms trafficking. All these are compounded by the involvement of transnational organized criminal groups.”

To counter these threats, the Minister underscored the importance of close and constant engagement between Canada and the United States. This cooperation includes daily intelligence- and information-sharing among Public Safety Canada, the CBSA, the RCMP, and their United States counterparts, as well as regular meetings between political leaders and senior officials from both countries. These joint efforts, supported by ongoing dialogue and bilateral operational initiatives, aim to enhance the effectiveness of responses on both sides of the border and ensure a coordinated approach to border security.

While highlighting the progress made through bilateral cooperation, the [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) acknowledged that further efforts are still needed to strengthen border security. In this regard, the Government of Canada announced its [Border Plan](#) on 17 December 2024.

The [Hon. Ruby Sahota](#), Secretary of State for Combatting Crime, stated that the Border Plan is underpinned by an investment of \$1.3 billion over a six-year period. This investment includes “\$667.5M for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, \$355.4M for the Canada Border Services Agency [and] \$180M ... for the Communications Security Establishment,” to be allocated over that six-year period. The Border Plan also includes

1 Government of Canada, [Canada-United States relations](#).

\$77.7 million over six years for Health Canada and \$20 million over five years for Public Safety Canada.²

The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) said that the Border Plan calls for increased resources and new technologies, as well as enhanced cooperation with the United States, including the creation of a North American joint strike force to target transnational organized crime and drug trafficking such as fentanyl. It also includes domestic measures to improve operational coordination, expand the CBSA's removal capacity and strengthen the integrity of the immigration system. Bill C-12 forms part of this approach by providing additional legislative tools to support bilateral cooperation, combat organized crime, and protect the Canada–United States border.

Many witnesses expressed favourable views of the Border Plan. [Shannon Grainger](#), Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of Portfolio Affairs and Communications at the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, said that the Border Plan has already produced concrete results, citing a 99% decrease in southbound irregular migration since last summer.³ [She](#) added that United States data shows that less than 1% of fentanyl seized in the United States originates from Canada, as shown by Figure 2 and the testimonies summarized in Chapter 3. [Mr. Peets](#) echoed this view, noting that Canada is not the source of the fentanyl crisis in the United States. [Aaron McCrorie](#), Vice-President of Intelligence and Enforcement at the CBSA, highlighted the Border Plan's investment to train new officers at the Canada Border Services College (CBSA College), hire other officers and modernize tools over the next six years. [Gerard Peets](#), Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Canada's Fight Against Fentanyl at the Privy Council Office, noted that the measures set out in the Border Plan have been welcomed by United States partners, particularly the introduction of Bill C-12 and investments in border services.

Other witnesses, including [Christian Leuprecht](#), a professor at the Royal Military College of Canada, was of the opinion that Canada is not currently structured to effectively counter transnational threats such as organized crime, despite major operations (e.g., dismantling superlabs). Mr. Leuprecht argued that minor adjustments or additional personnel will not suffice: political commitment is needed to restructure the national

2 Government of Canada, [The Government of Canada's Border Plan: significant investments to strengthen border security and our immigration system](#).

3 The number of irregular crossings from Canada to the United States was down by 99% in summer 2025 from peak levels in June 2024. See Government of Canada, National Security and Defence, [Strengthening Canada's Border Security: Actions Taken to Date](#), 22 September 2025.



security posture, comparable to reforms undertaken in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

CHAPTER 1: OPERATIONAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING FEDERAL BORDER AGENCIES

Mandates and Responsibilities

The RCMP and the CBSA jointly protect Canada's borders. The CBSA is responsible for the control of people and goods at official ports of entry, while the RCMP is responsible for security between official ports of entry.⁴

The CBSA carries out its duties under the [Canada Border Services Agency Act](#), which sets out its mandate and powers. It also administers several key statutes, including the [Customs Act](#), the [Customs Tariff](#), and the [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#) (IRPA), which govern the control of people and goods at ports of entry.

The RCMP's powers related to border security are set out in the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act](#), the [Customs Act](#), and the IRPA. Within this framework, the RCMP investigates a range of cross-border offences, including irregular entry and the trafficking of humans, drugs, and firearms.⁵

Witnesses, including [Mr. Leuprecht](#), said that this structure is "on too broad a spectrum," noting that having a specialized agency (the CBSA) for official ports of entry and a generalist agency (the RCMP) with an overly broad mandate creates inefficiencies in border security. In Mr. Leuprecht's view, improving the situation requires political will and a clearer recognition of security as a government priority. The following sections examine the factors driving the need for mandate reform and assess how adjustments could strengthen Canada's overall border security framework.

Mandate of the Canada Border Services Agency

[Mark Weber](#), National President of the Customs and Immigration Union, said that several irregular crossings are observed in rural areas near official ports of entry along the

4 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security [SECU], [Evidence](#), 23 September 2025, 1125 (Sean McGillis, Assistant Deputy Minister, Federal Policing Strategy and Business Management) and [Evidence](#), 23 September 2025, 1145 (Aaron McCrorie, Vice-President, Intelligence and Enforcement, Canada Border Services Agency).

5 SECU, [Evidence](#), 23 September 2025, 1125 (Mr. McGillis).

Canada–United States border. He noted that, despite its legislative mandate to ensure border security, the CBSA is not authorized to intervene between official ports of entry. Even if officers see an individual cross over near a port of entry, they are required to seek assistance from the RCMP. Mr. Weber said this reliance on the RCMP leads to intervention delays of several hours and, in some cases, refusals to intervene, a situation he characterized as regrettable and easily rectifiable by empowering the CBSA to act directly.

Moreover, [he](#) explained that, from a legal perspective, only the CBSA and the RCMP have interception powers under the IRPA and the *Customs Act*. As a result, when police officers from a provincial police service intercept individuals between official ports of entry, they must bring them to the nearest CBSA official port of entry. For this reason, Mr. Weber recommended expanding the responsibilities of CBSA officers to address operational gaps and enable them to intervene themselves between ports of entry—a measure he described as essential.

[Kenneth Bieger](#), Chief Executive Officer of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, similarly identified jurisdictional challenges. He noted that, although CBSA officers are armed, they cannot intervene directly in the event of an incident on the bridge and must call in regional police or the RCMP, leading to delays in resolving situations.

[Mr. Bieger](#) suggested granting CBSA officers expanded powers, comparable to those exercised by their United States counterparts, enabling them to intervene directly without having to systematically call on the RCMP. He cited the example of the Whirlpool Bridge, where attempts to cross irregularly using the railroad tracks require the involvement of multiple agencies despite an advanced security system. In his view, affording CBSA officers greater latitude would reduce delays and operational complexity associated with multi-agency coordination during emergencies.

[Brian Sauvé](#), President of the National Police Federation, expressed reservations regarding the expansion of the CBSA powers between ports of entry. He pointed to a shortfall of approximately 3,000 officers needed to fulfill the CBSA's existing mandate and cautioned against duplicating mandates. Mr. Sauvé instead recommended reinforcing the RCMP's federal policing program, which is already structured to provide border security between ports of entry.

[Mr. McCrorie](#) reported that the CBSA employs approximately 8,500 frontline officers, supported by specialized intelligence and targeting teams, who continuously analyze global trends and concealment techniques. The CBSA also employs criminal investigators responsible for laying charges for serious border offences and maintains a presence abroad, with officers posted at 42 missions in 36 countries, to help extend border controls beyond Canada's physical boundaries.



Mr. Weber said that a secure border requires decisions to invest in personnel, enhance training, and enable officers to fully carry out their legal mandate. He criticized the CBSA for taking a backseat when it comes to border security. For example, when the federal Border Plan was launched, border officers were not mobilized to support the RCMP in ensuring security between ports of entry, leaving this responsibility to provincial police services that lack the authority to enforce federal legislation. In his view, this situation should be addressed through amendments to the CBSA's mandate.

Mandate of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Respecting Border Issues and Conflicting Priorities

Mr. Sauvé said that the RCMP is the backbone of Canada's national security framework. Its mandate includes monitoring areas between official ports of entry, enforcing laws, and investigating cross-border activities such as human, drugs, and firearms trafficking. RCMP members have key expertise in investigation, intelligence, and international cooperation, particularly with the United States, to respond to emerging threats.

Sean McGillis, Assistant Deputy Minister of Federal Policing Strategy and Business Management, said that collaboration remains essential to fulfilling this mandate. The RCMP relies on the Joint Operational Intelligence Cell (JOIC)⁶ to facilitate the sharing of sensitive information among security partners. The RCMP also works closely with the CBSA, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC) and other agencies to combat money laundering and financial crimes. He highlighted the increased sharing of intelligence with the private sector, notably with financial institutions, in order to better detect and prevent money laundering and financial crime, a form of collaboration that was previously not possible.

Mr. McGillis outlined several key initiatives under the Border Plan, including:

- an aerial intelligence force consisting of helicopters, drones, and surveillance towers to monitor areas between ports of entry and enable rapid incident response;
- a joint task force with the United States to target organized crime and the trafficking of illegal substances, including fentanyl;

6 The Joint Operational Intelligence Cell (JOIC) brings together Canadian security departments and agencies and law enforcement partners to better protect Canada's border. The JOIC was created on 3 March 2025 in response to Canada's Border Plan. See Public Safety Canada, [Launch of the Joint Operational Intelligence Cell](#), News release, 3 March 2025.

- the Integrated Money Laundering Intelligence Partnership, which facilitates intelligence sharing between the RCMP and Canada’s big banks; and
- the JOIC, which brings together security agencies and law enforcement partners to strengthen intelligence flows related to transnational organized crime and fentanyl.

Despite these initiatives, challenges persist. [Lucas Bédard](#), Director of the Atlantic Central Region at the National Police Federation, said that national security investigations and protective services take precedence, followed by efforts to combat fentanyl, organized crime, and border-related issues. However, staffing shortages are leading to operational gaps and vulnerabilities in certain detachments, such as Rainy River and Valleyfield. [He](#) cited the example of the Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu detachment, where only 12 officers are assigned per shift instead of 24, resulting in a “game of musical chairs” between units that undermines investigations. To address these challenges, he recommended increased investment in technology, particularly drones and modern tools. [Mr. Sauv ](#) similarly stressed the need for sustained investment, especially in human resources, technology, and interagency cooperation, to enable the RCMP to effectively address cross-border threats.

However, [Mr. Leuprecht](#) argued that the issue extends beyond funding to the overall structure of federal policing, which requires systemic reform. He also identified administrative barriers that hinder international cooperation, particularly with the United States, and recommended reducing these constraints while strengthening intelligence-sharing mechanisms. [Mr. Leuprecht](#) said that a detailed analysis of resources for each point of entry is essential but must be part of a comprehensive strategic framework that clearly distinguishes national security priorities from other priorities.

[Mr. Leuprecht](#) further underscored the complexity of Canada–United States cooperation and the importance of preserving Canada’s sovereignty while improving the effectiveness of its national security practices. He advocated for the creation of a separate agency dedicated to criminal intelligence and called for a review of the RCMP’s role in provincial contracts.

Recruitment, Training and Structural Issues

The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) said that, as part of the comprehensive expenditure review, a 2% budget reduction is planned for both the CBSA and the RCMP but these reductions will not affect the hiring of 1,000 CBSA officers and 1,000 RCMP officers. [He](#)



said that this staffing increase will have a significant and positive impact on the ability of law enforcement to carry out their border-related responsibilities.

Recruitment and Training of Canada Border Services Agency Officers

The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) confirmed plans to hire and deploy 1,000 new CBSA officers, with the first cohort beginning training in November 2025. However, [Mr. Weber](#), the National President of the Customs and Immigration Union, said that the CBSA's actual needs range between 2,000 and 3,000 officers. He stressed the need to move quickly on this hiring.

[Mr. McCrorie](#) confirmed that, despite the CBSA's plan to hire 1,000 border officers, no hires had been made as of 23 September 2025. [He](#) explained that the initiative is a long-term effort expected to take two to three years to complete. [Jennifer Lutfallah](#), Vice-President of the Commercial and Trade Branch at the CBSA, added that these hires form part of the Border Plan and that regular recruitment continues, citing as an example the 36 new officers currently in training to handle removals, who are not included in the announced 1,000 positions.

Regarding the 1,000 new hires, [Erin O'Gorman](#), President of the CBSA, specified that 80% will be armed officers and 20% operational employees responsible primarily for targeting and training.⁷ In a written response to the committee, the CBSA confirmed that these 200 officers "will be recruited to work in specialized operational roles across trade, international operations, inland enforcement, criminal investigations, intelligence, targeting and recourse."⁸

[Ms. O'Gorman](#) said that the CBSA College in Rigaud can train 250 recruits in the first two years and 300 the following year. She also highlighted the existence of a pool of 300 qualified candidates who could begin training in six weeks, as well as the CBSA College's capacity to accommodate 400 students in 2025. She said she had no concerns about recruitment, as the CBSA is working with other departments to recruit operational staff.

7 During her appearance, [Ms. O'Gorman](#) made a distinction between uniformed officers stationed at official ports of entry—who are trained in Rigaud for 18 weeks and are authorized to carry weapons—and investigators from non-border offices, who support these officers by handling firearm interception cases, executing warrants, and pursuing prosecutions.

8 Government of Canada, Written response to the committee to a question from 23 October 2025 (1225) on the training of operational officers, received by the committee on 11 December 2025.

[Mr. Weber](#) said that the CBSA College in Rigaud is the only training institution for border services officers in Canada. [He](#) confirmed that training lasts 18 weeks and that its capacity is approximately 572 students per year.⁹ Based on these figures, [he](#) questioned the CBSA’s ability to rapidly expand its workforce.

According to [him](#), the CBSA lacks the capacity to train an additional 300 officers per year in order to meet its commitment to hire 1,000 officers over three years—an objective that would require approximately 330 new officers per year in addition to the 572 already trained annually. The CBSA College has never trained more than 600 officers in a single year, a number [he](#) said is equivalent to the annual attrition rate, making an increase of 1,000 officers unrealistic.

In light of these constraints, [Mr. Weber](#) suggested that the stated objective does not reflect the CBSA’s actual intentions. In his view, the CBSA is instead seeking to create administrative positions (FB-1) to reassign certain responsibilities currently performed by border officers, a move that concerns the union.

In this respect, [Mr. McCrorie](#) confirmed that, while there are no plans to create a new category of border services officer, the possibility of increasing the CBSA College’s capacity remains. He added that “not all of the people we will be hiring are necessarily going to go through the [CBSA College].” [Ms. O’Gorman](#) noted that certain positions, particularly within criminal investigation units in non-border offices and responsible for matters such as firearms, warrants, and prosecutions, could be filled by officers from other services, such as the RCMP.

In a written response to the committee, the CBSA said that it had established national training standards for frontline and operational positions, which define job-specific training requirements. Training requirements vary

based on the role and tasks, but include common training such as First Aid, Preventing Racial Profiling at the Frontline, Processing of Indigenous Travellers and their Sacred Goods and job-specific training like Duty Firearm Annual Recertification and Incident Management Intervention Model for all armed officers and more.¹⁰

[Mr. Weber](#) said that several options could be explored to diversify training and increase the number of officers more quickly, although the CBSA continues to rely on the current 18-week training model. [He](#) said that proposals to expand facilities—notably in

9 [SECU, Evidence](#), 7 October 2025, 1230 (Mr. Weber).

10 Government of Canada, Written response to the committee to a question from 23 October 2025 (1225) on the training of operational officers, received by the committee on 11 December 2025.



Chilliwack,¹¹ as well as in Rigaud and Windsor—had previously been considered but not approved. Without an expanded network of training centres, he said it remains difficult to see how the CBSA will achieve its new objectives. [Mr. Weber](#) said the one thing that is clear is that border surveillance requires more border officers working directly at the border.

[Mr. McCrorie](#) said that the CBSA is currently examining all available options, though no final decisions have been made. [He](#) added that CBSA is working on a plan to increase enrollment beyond attrition levels.

Recruitment and Training of Royal Canadian Mounted Police Officers

[Mr. Sauvé](#) and [Mr. Bédard](#) both highlighted staffing challenges within the RCMP, which complicate its ability to respond to all of the government’s constantly evolving priorities. Governments “wind up making choices, and those choices wind up creating other gaps,” leading to understaffing in regions such as Rainy River, Valleyfield, and Saint-Georges-de-Beauce.

[Mr. Sauvé](#) said that the RCMP is only now beginning to return to normal recruitment levels after the pandemic, which had a major impact on training. The Depot Division training academy was closed for six months, interrupting the training of 24 of the 32 troops underway at the time, all of whom were required to restart their program. He added that police officer training cannot be accelerated; it is a gradual process.

[Mr. Sauvé](#) indicated that the RCMP’s attrition rate has remained stable, even decreasing slightly, from approximately 800 departures per year to 775. [He](#) contrasted this with the current training levels of nearly 40 troops of 32 recruits per year, or approximately 1,000 graduates. The RCMP plans to increase this figure to 50 troops next year, in line with the government’s commitment to hire 1,000 new members, which [he](#) argued will help alleviate pressures.

[Mr. Sauvé](#) also pointed out that the increase in the cadet recruitment allowance—a long requested initiative—has had a positive impact on application numbers. The RCMP received a record number of applicants in 2024 and anticipates another record in 2025.

In addition to new recruits, [Mr. Sauvé](#) said that 450 to 500 members currently assigned to provincial contract services wish to transfer to federal positions, particularly in national security, border enforcement, and VIP protection. He expressed hope that

11 The witness is referring to a joint CBSA and RCMP training facility in Chilliwack, British Columbia.

upcoming contract negotiations will facilitate these transfers. According to him, the arrival of new cadets, combined with the recruitment of experienced police officers, will strengthen staffing in regions experiencing shortages, including Rainy River.

Mr. Sauvé explained that difficulties in deploying additional officers to regions such as northwestern Ontario stem from a limited pool of personnel and shifting government priorities. He noted that the RCMP is frequently required to reallocate resources based on priority issues, such as cybercrime or money laundering, at the expense of border security and other mandates.

Regarding contract policing, Mr. Sauvé said that he does not recommend withdrawing the RCMP from these arrangements. However, he noted that contractual obligations limit the RCMP’s ability to reassign personnel to reinforce federal functions. He added that these constraints have been compounded by the lingering effects of the pandemic, including the six-month closure of the Depot Division training academy.

Mr. Leuprecht underscored the importance of investing in local policing by requiring clear strategic plans, measurable metrics, and public accountability for those investments.

Cultural and Structural Issues

The committee heard that operational issues within the CBSA, particularly related to management practices, resource allocation, and working conditions, are contributing to structural and operational challenges that undermine the CBSA’s ability to adequately support frontline services.

Structural Imbalances and Effects on Operations at the Canada Border Services Agency

Mr. Weber highlighted “critical insufficiencies affecting Canada’s border services, the majority of which can be linked to issues of mismanagement.” He described a problematic structural and cultural environment within the CBSA, characterized by insufficient training infrastructure, increased reliance on frontline students, an expansion of management positions at the expense of operational officers, and toxic local management. He called for better internal management and investment in adequate resources to address these issues.

He stated that significant change is needed. In particular, the CBSA needs resources, a focus on security, and a reduction in the number of middle managers. He denounced the



toxic culture, noting that the CBSA ranked last in public service employee surveys and that the policies being implemented threaten employees with dismissal.

Mr. Weber emphasized that building confidence in the CBSA would first require the Agency to properly staff its officer positions. He explained that border officers are the ones who directly interact with travellers and perform essential border functions, whereas higher levels of management do not perform these operational duties. In a context of frontline understaffing, Mr. Weber found it incomprehensible and frustrating that resources allocated to management were not instead redirected toward officer positions capable of performing frontline work.

Mr. Weber reported widespread exhaustion among operational staff, noting that at some ports of entry overtime is almost unlimited. He attributed this situation to staffing distribution, noting that it has become common for ports of entry to have as many middle managers as frontline officers, a trend he said continues to worsen.

Mr. Weber also said that the number of students working in frontline roles at airports has more than doubled over the past 15 years, while the number of fully trained border officers remains insufficient. He emphasized the distinction between “trained” and “efficient” officers, estimating that four to five years of field experience is required before an officer reaches a fully satisfactory level of competence.

In this respect, the Hon. Gary Anandasangaree said that students are critical to the CBSA’s operations. He added that students at ports of entry “are exceptionally good people who are well trained and well supported. They do not make decisions on high-threat environments.” In carrying out their duties, they receive support from personnel with varying levels of expertise.

Mr. Weber said that expertise is lost when the CBSA fills middle management positions by recruiting externally rather than promoting internal candidates. Individuals with no prior border experience are making operational decisions. “You often have to explain to upper management how borders work,” adding that this disconnect fuels employee frustration. According to him, this situation has seriously eroded officers’ trust in CBSA management.

Mr. Weber described the organizational culture within the CBSA as sometimes heavy-handed and toxic, focused on formal fact-finding investigations, involving suspension, disciplinary action, or dismissal, which limits dialogue and discourages employees.

He also criticized the review of accommodation measures for officers who cannot be armed, including those injured on the job, noting that the CBSA had reportedly offered

them self-demotion or early retirement. He stated that this approach, perceived as being driven by budgetary considerations, reinforced distrust in senior management, and demonstrated that the CBSA does not sufficiently value its injured or disabled officers.¹²

With respect to accommodation measures, Ms. O’Gorman said:

CBSA has a duty to accommodate officers who cannot do the full range of their duties. Those individuals would have the opportunity to apply for and be put into funded positions, absolutely. The fact that they might not be able to do the full range of their duties makes them no less of an asset to public safety generally and to CBSA specifically.

There are processes around that. You mentioned that we need to make sure we have properly funded positions and that there is a process that’s fair for everybody. Those individuals have skills and experience that we absolutely want to retain.

Ms. O’Gorman further noted that the CBSA has a large workforce that often operates in difficult and stressful circumstances. She said that the CBSA has high professional standards and a large labour relations group, providing employees with multiple avenues to raise concerns. She stressed the importance of ensuring that staff know where to turn and that decisions can be made quickly. Lastly, she noted that the CBSA works closely with the union to reduce the number of grievances.

Improved Culture Within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP Commissioner Michael Duheme said that the integrity and professionalism of the RCMP are grounded in its recruitment processes, which are designed to ensure that selected candidates fully embrace the agency’s core values. He explained that this rigour is reflected across all RCMP mandates, including “frontline policing, the contract work we’re doing and special policing services,” as well as community-based work. He added that public trust and respect serve as clear indicators of this professionalism.

With respect to the evolution of organizational culture, Mr. Sauvé acknowledged that the RCMP has faced challenges but noted that significant progress has been made under the four most recent commissioners. In his view, the agency is now in a much better place, although there is still room for improvement.

Regarding the fair treatment of employees, particularly women in uniform, Mr. Sauvé said that the RCMP has a policy to protect the health of pregnant officers by removing them from dangerous situations, a practice he considers normal and expected. He said that he is not aware of any systematic demotions, but he acknowledged that isolated

12 SECU, Evidence, 7 October 2025, 1205 (Mr. Weber).



cases may exist. He also mentioned ongoing grievances concerning unpaid salary increases for probationary members who took parental leave and expressed hope that these matters would be resolved soon.

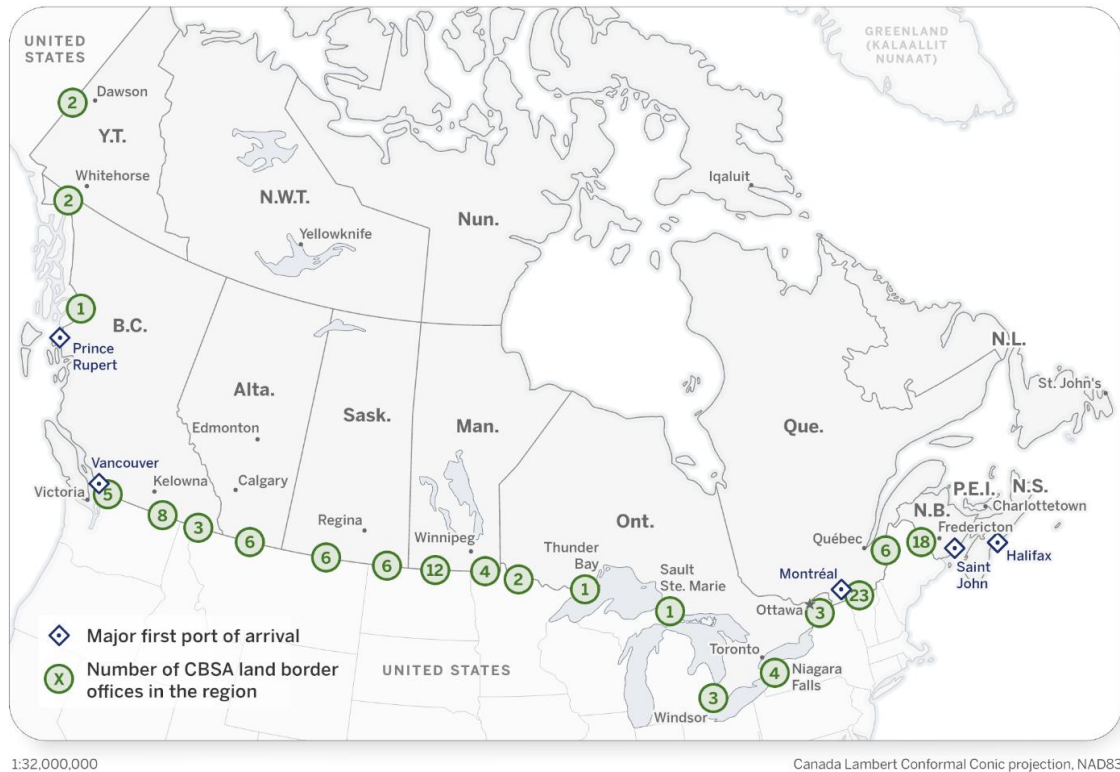
The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) acknowledged that challenges related to organizational culture persist within the RCMP, citing systemic racism in particular. He said that these issues continue to be discussed with the Commissioner and stressed the importance of continually strengthening the agency's independence, while reiterating his confidence in the RCMP and its ability to effectively fulfill its mandate.

CHAPTER 2: ISSUES AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES RELATED TO BORDER MANAGEMENT

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the current issues and operational challenges affecting the management of the Canada–United States border. It outlines the responsibilities of federal agencies and associated governance challenges, while examining the operational realities and challenges at different ports of entry: land, sea, and rail. Figure 1 illustrates the location of these ports of entry, as well as first ports of arrival.¹³ Overall, witnesses emphasized the importance of investing in marine surveillance technologies and improving interagency collaboration.

13 A first port of arrival is the port of entry in Canada where a commercial conveyance first arrives from a foreign country.

Figure 1—CBSA Land Border Offices on the Canada–United States Border and First Ports of Arrival



Note: Currently, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) clears foreign shipping containers at five ports only: Vancouver and Prince Rupert in British Columbia, Montreal in Quebec, Saint John in New Brunswick, and Halifax in Nova Scotia.

Source: Map produced in 2026 using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), [Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features](#), 1:15M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, [Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features](#), 1:15M, 1 March 2019; Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), ["Directory of CBSA Offices and Services,"](#) Database, accessed 15 January 2026; Transport Canada, ["Marine and Port Dashboard | Transportation Data and Information Hub,"](#) Database, accessed 21 January 2026. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6. Contains information licensed under [Open Government Licence – Canada](#).

Operational Challenges at Ports of Entry

[Laura Dawson](#), Executive Director of the Future Borders Coalition, said that security and efficiency are not mutually exclusive, as secure borders promote trade. She called for enhanced cooperation between Canada and the United States to modernize practices and respond to current threats, while cautioning against off-loading costs onto



businesses already weakened by the current economic climate. [Mr. Bieger](#) concurred, saying that border security is critical for the safety of Canadians, while border efficiency “fuels economic growth and trade, streamlines supply chains, enhances the travel experience, reduces environmental impact and strengthens bilateral relations.”

Flow of Border Traffic

The testimonies heard highlighted several significant challenges related to traffic flow at certain border crossings between Canada and the United States.

[Mr. Bieger](#) said that, for the past two years, Canada has had more border officers than the United States at certain locations because of the Gordie Howe Bridge training project. Despite adequate infrastructure (10 lanes for cars and 5 for trucks in Queenston), only 3 or 4 lanes are often open on the Canadian side, with sometimes only 2 or 3 lanes open on the United States side. This staffing shortage results in significant delays. Despite these challenges, [Thomas Boyle](#), Director of the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority, said that the CBSA and United States Customs generally provide advance notice of anticipated delays. [He](#) also raised concerns about future staffing in the Niagara region, explaining that the additional resources currently deployed are officers in training for the Gordie Howe Bridge, which is not yet operational. Once that bridge opens, those officers will be reassigned, potentially creating staffing shortages at the Niagara bridges and leading to traffic seen in the past.

[Mr. Bieger](#) suggested adopting more efficient approaches, such as limiting initial questioning at the primary inspection booth to a minute and directing problematic cases to an expedited secondary lane, allowing travellers to remain in their vehicles during additional checks. In his view, these relatively simple measures could reduce wait times and improve traffic flow.

In a similar vein, [Ms. Dawson](#) proposed making greater use of trusted trader and traveller programs to incentivize good behaviour and compliance. She pointed out that the majority of border crossings are risk-free but cautioned that high quality forged documentation can allow cargo to cross undetected if there is no other way to determine the risk. She insisted it is important for officers to have the information they need in advance to identify individuals and their associates.

[Mr. Bieger](#) noted that border crossing management has increasingly relied on quantitative data over the past nine years to monitor peak periods, representing a significant improvement over the past. He also mentioned tensions reported by the union between middle managers and employees. In his view, the most effective way to

improve efficiency remains increasing the number of officers assigned to primary inspection lanes.

Similarly, [Mr. Weber](#) said that the information now provided in advance by travellers corresponds to the declaration form previously presented to an officer. Under the former system, officers would examine the form, ask questions, and decide whether to allow entry or conduct a search. Travellers now complete declarations using machines, without human interaction. He added that roving teams responsible for random interviews and searches have largely disappeared due to staffing shortages, resulting in a system that relies heavily on self-declaration, which he considers less reliable.

Border Infrastructure Management

The binational bodies responsible for international bridges face a range of operational and regulatory challenges. Witnesses proposed possible solutions to enhance efficiency, security, and fairness in border crossing management.

[Mr. Bieger](#) said that the goal of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission—a binational, non-profit organization with the authority to build, acquire, and operate international bridges traversing the Niagara River at or near Niagara Falls, Canada—is to facilitate the movement of people and goods, while the goal of the CBSA is security. He said it is essential to partner on both border security and border efficiency, as these priorities are complementary.

As possible improvements, [Mr. Bieger](#) proposed hiring an additional 1,000 officers, modernizing the Nexus program and technologies, and reducing processing times.

[Mr. Bieger](#) emphasized the importance of optimizing existing infrastructure. For example, at Queenston Plaza, eight truck bays are available, yet rarely more than four are used at once. In his view, it is better to make use of these resources and consider pilot programs to test innovative approaches.

[Mr. Boyle](#) said that section 6 of the *Customs Act* requires operators of international bridges to provide facilities and services to the Canadian government free of charge, while still paying property taxes on those facilities. In contrast, United States operators receive rent from the government under leases with the General Services Administration and are exempt from property taxes. This disparity creates tensions within binational bodies like the Peace Bridge authority and the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, as it appears that the United States subsidizes Canadian operations.



Mr. Boyle added that, although section 6 applies to all international toll bridges and tunnels, several border crossings are currently operating in direct contravention of this section. For example, at the Gordie Howe Bridge, the Canadian government is paying a public-private partnership concession to build and maintain CBSA facilities. The Canadian government also supplies and maintains Canadian facilities at Ogdensburg. Other bridges, such as the Blue Water Bridge, the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge, the Thousand Islands International Bridge, and the Seaway International Bridge, receive government subsidies to cover their deficits and capital expenses.

By contrast, Mr. Boyle said that neither the Peace Bridge nor the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission receives government funding. As a result, they must absorb the full costs imposed by section 6, which forces them to increase tolls, directly affecting users, such as tourists, and cross-border trade. Section 6 creates an unfair administrative and financial framework, whereby tolls and the consumer represent the sole source of revenue when the infrastructure is not publicly owned.

In this context, [Mr. Boyle](#) recommended a review of Canada's funding model for border security. Currently, section 6 is based on the user-pay principle, a legacy of a time when the priority was the collection of duties and tariffs. Since the events of 11 September 2001, however, the focus has shifted to national security. He stipulated that Canada should adopt a model similar to that of the United States, where the government directly funds its own security initiatives rather than off-loading those costs to operators and consumers.

[Ms. Dawson](#) said that the most important part of Bill C-2¹⁴ is its provisions enabling effective information sharing across jurisdictions. She said that the challenge is determining who will pay, and that off-loading costs to private sector operators is the principal concern raised by her members.

[Ms. Dawson](#) also expressed concern about the onerous nature and uneven cost burdens imposed on border infrastructure operators (airports, ports and bridges) by Part 1 of

14 Parts 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13 of Bill C-2, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of the border between Canada and the United States and respecting other related security measures, aimed in particular at combating transnational organised crime, stopping the illegal flow of fentanyl, cracking down on money laundering, dismantling criminal networks, and improving the integrity of the immigration system, were incorporated into Bill C-12, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures, which received Royal Assent on 26 March 2026. Parts 14 and 15 of Bill C-2 were incorporated into Bill C-22, An Act respecting lawful access.

Bill C-2, later incorporated into Bill C-12. She, too, recommended centralized funding, consistent with the United States approach.

[Mr. Bieger](#) emphasized the importance of long-term planning for operators. For example, the commission he represents maintains a five-year capital project budget funded through revenues and rate adjustments. Like Ms. Dawson, he is concerned that the proposed amendment to section 6 in Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 would undermine this planning.

[Mr. Bieger](#) informed that the recent IT outage¹⁵ highlighted the vulnerability of existing systems and caused significant disruption to the trucking industry as well as hardships for local United States border communities. He said that modernizing infrastructure, strengthening system resilience, and improving cross-border data coordination are critical.

[Mr. Boyle](#) confirmed that multi-energy portal technology is a game changer for land border crossings, as well as for ports and airports. He added that this technology does not replace jobs but rather provides essential tools for officers, who must analyze the scans to identify anomalies. When combined with artificial intelligence (AI), it enables the rapid targeting of suspicious areas in cargo, significantly reducing inspection times and improving efficiency.

According to [Mr. Boyle](#), multi-energy portal technology can also help combat vehicle thefts, drug trafficking and human trafficking. When combined with facial recognition for drivers, it enables the creation of complete data packages that enhance both security and efficiency.

Given the importance of optimizing cross-border infrastructure and modernizing technological tools, security and efficiency are not mutually exclusive. The testimonies heard demonstrated that improved planning and appropriate technologies can both strengthen security, increase operational efficiency, and facilitate trade worth billions of dollars.

15 [Radio Canada, Le syndicat des agents frontaliers « préoccupé » par la récente panne informatique](#), 7 October 2025 [AVAILABLE ONLY IN FRENCH]; [Transport Routier, Le ministre de la Sécurité publique ordonne un examen de la panne informatique de l'ASFC](#), 10 October 2025 [AVAILABLE ONLY IN FRENCH]; and [La Presse, Panne informatique à l'Agence des services frontaliers | On l'a échappé belle avec les marchandises](#), 9 October 2025 [AVAILABLE ONLY IN FRENCH].



Improving Technological Tools at Ports of Entry

Many witnesses, including [Mr. Bieger](#) and [Mr. Boyle](#), emphasized the need to improve technological systems and IT tools to enhance the efficiency of border operations. Comparing Canadian systems with United States practices, [Mr. Boyle](#) highlighted Canada's lag in non-intrusive inspection capabilities. He said that the current use of mobile units slows operations, in contrast to the drive-through inspection systems used by United States Customs and Border Protection, which enable more effective detection of contraband and greater operational fluidity.

[Ms. Lutfallah](#) said that the Gordie Howe Bridge is currently the only crossing equipped with fixed, large-scale imaging. Most ports of entry continue to rely on mobile technology that is moved around based on operational needs. [She](#) noted, however, that other tools are already in use, including detector dog teams (including three new teams specializing in fentanyl), ion mobility spectrometry to detect narcotics and explosives residue, backscatter imaging using an RCMP vehicle to identify stolen vehicles in containers and various mobile scanning technologies.

[Mr. McCrorie](#) said that, with an estimated 1.5 million containers, 4.5 million trucks, and 1.5 million rail cars entering Canada annually, it is impossible to systematically inspect every shipment. As a result, the CBSA relies on a combination of technological tools, intelligence, and targeting to effectively manage risk.

[Ms. Dawson](#) also emphasized the need to equip officers with advanced technological tools, such as AI and machine learning for pattern detection, blockchain to prevent document fraud, and non-intrusive imaging to accelerate inspections of high-risk cargo. According to her, these tools would enable more effective risk assessment even before goods or people arrive.

Other witnesses, including [Mr. Boyle](#), mentioned the use of technologies such as facial recognition, which is already in use at some airports. He clarified that these tools are not intended to replace jobs, but rather to enable officers to focus on higher value-added tasks, while enhancing security and reducing delays.

[Mr. Weber](#) cautioned against overreliance on technology at the expense of human interaction. [He](#) reiterated that officer expertise remains essential to effectively intercepting illegal goods. He also cited recent automated system failures, which occurred a few days before his appearance and resulted in delays at airports and ports of entry. In his view, these incidents underscore the importance of maintaining adequate staffing levels to ensure both security and quality of service.

Lastly, [Mr. McCrorie](#) and [Ms. Lutfallah](#) emphasized that the government has already undertaken significant efforts to modernize the CBSA’s technological tools. They highlighted the \$300 million investment under the Border Plan to strengthen frontline staffing and modernize technological equipment. This investment is expected to increase CBSA’s technology inventory by 25% over the next five years, including the deployment of new imaging technologies starting in 2025.¹⁶

In this context, [Mr. McCrorie](#) specified that \$6 million will be allocated to the acquisition of large-scale imaging or X-ray systems, in addition to \$31 million for other equipment. He also highlighted the acquisition of tools to detect illegal drugs and precursor chemicals, as well as the planned delivery in 2026 of equipment totalling \$24 million. [Ms. Lutfallah](#) said that these backscatter imaging units will be deployed at ports of entry identified as high risk.

Rail and Maritime Operational Challenges

The security of the Canada-United States maritime border remains a major issue, particularly in the Great Lakes region and the Saint (St.) Lawrence Seaway. Witnesses noted that, despite close bilateral cooperation since 2001, the vast geographic area and diversity of maritime activity complicate surveillance efforts and require tools capable of effectively identifying threats.

[Tim Nohara](#), President and CEO of Accipiter Radar Technologies Inc. (Accipiter Radar), presented the 2,000-km long maritime border running through the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway as an attractive route for human trafficking and the smuggling of weapons and drugs.

[Mr. Nohara](#) said this area is particularly challenging to secure due to its scale and the presence of thousands of pleasure craft during the summer and vehicles travelling on ice during the winter. Effective surveillance therefore requires radar and systems capable of analyzing suspicious behaviour among a largely law-abiding population.

Rail and Maritime Surveillance

With respect to maritime security, [Ms. Lutfallah](#) explained that, following the attacks of 11 September 2001, Canada and the United States signed a memorandum of understanding requiring radiation screening of ships in ports. As a result, the CBSA

16 SECU, *Evidence*, 23 September 2025, 1215 (Jennifer Lutfallah, Vice-President, Commercial and Trade Branch, CBSA); and SECU, *Evidence*, 23 September 2025, 1215 (Ms. Lutfallah).



requires container ships to pass through ports designated as first ports of arrival into Canada, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Under this memorandum of understanding, all rail cars from the United States are also screened for radiation before entering Canada. For example, rail cars from Mexico transiting to Canada must pass through radiation detectors in the United States and Canadian intelligence officers collect information on rail cars bound for Canada to assess risk. Depending on the risk that is identified, CBSA officers perform targeting activities and determine appropriate actions. When illegal substances such as cocaine or fentanyl are detected, containers are subjected to thorough examination using imaging equipment.

[Mr. McCrorie](#) explained that at the Vancouver Port, commercial-level declarations are used to identify containers requiring further assessment. When a container is deemed to pose a risk, it is unloaded and passed through imaging equipment. [He](#) confirmed that every container arriving at the Port of Vancouver is assessed.

[Mr. Weber](#) said that he was not aware of any increase in the number of customs officers at the Port of Montreal, nor of any expansion of search facilities. He said that limited capacity to park inspected vehicles has led to significant delays, sometimes lasting days or weeks, before searches can proceed. He emphasized that resource constraints remain the principal challenge. [He](#) said that there are “ports with no X-rays and marine units with no boats. It’s pretty desperate in a lot of cases. Again, that adds to the low morale.”

In response to a question regarding rail networks, [Mr. Weber](#) confirmed that the CBSA is not responsible for searching railcars. [He](#) added that it would be naive to think that criminals are unaware of this blind spot.

With respect to the rail network, [Mr. Weber](#) said that there was a pilot project allowing officers to work on the United States side where they have the facilities at a couple of ports of entry to do those searches, but he added that this project had not gone forward. He said that Canada does not have the facilities to conduct these searches.

[Ranatiiotha Swamp](#), Acting Chief of Police for the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service, expressed support for aspects of Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 aimed at enhancing CBSA and Coast Guard powers, accelerating controls on drug precursors and expanding intelligence sharing. He recommended recognizing First Nations police services as essential partners; providing targeted funding for infrastructure, technology, staffing, and training; and formalizing cross-border coordination protocols.

Mr. Swamp identified three priority areas for addressing current challenges:

- Infrastructure: a permanent policing presence on Cornwall Island and improved maritime facilities.
- Technology and intelligence: modern surveillance systems, maritime radar, secure communications, and interoperability with partners.
- Personnel and sustainability: stable federal funding for staffing, specialized training, mental health resources, and recruitment.

In response to a question on radar, [Mr. Swamp](#) emphasized the need to reinstall advanced technologies, including modern radar systems, to provide real-time intelligence and enable effective joint responses. He said that limiting these capabilities would undermine the security of both Canada and the United States, and that technological advancement is essential to counter organized criminal activity.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s Need for New Technology

Witnesses said that surveillance of the border between official ports of entry increasingly relies on technological capabilities, as physical presence alone cannot effectively cover the entire territory. [Commr. Duheme](#) said that it is unrealistic to significantly increase staffing levels along the border, underscoring the need for technology to support targeted police operations.

The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) and the [Hon. Ruby Sahota](#) highlighted significant investments under the Border Plan, including the deployment of new technological tools such as helicopters, drones, surveillance towers, and additional canine teams to monitor the border between ports of entry.

With respect to the helicopters, [Mr. McGillis](#) said that the RCMP leases three Black Hawk helicopters from two companies due to the high cost of purchasing them. [He](#) explained that the RCMP defined its operational requirements in collaboration with Public Services and Procurement Canada through a national standing offer involving prequalified suppliers. According to [Jamie McGowan](#), Chief Superintendent of the RCMP, only the Black Hawks met these requirements. [C/Supt. McGowan](#) confirmed that their use is governed by a procurement agreement and that operations comply with the *Canadian Aviation Regulations*, which only allows the RCMP to operate and conduct its areal work.

From a union perspective, [Mr. Sauvé](#) said that RCMP members have no particular concerns about the safety of Black Hawk helicopters, noting that members are passengers rather than pilots. However, pilots and engineers represented by the National Police Federation are concerned about the longer-term implications should



these aircraft be integrated into the regular fleet, particularly in terms of training, deployment, and technical management.

Mr. Sauvé also raised concerns regarding the RCMP's ongoing difficulty in rapidly acquiring essential technologies—such as mobile command posts, drones, and maritime radars—due to a procurement system he characterized as slow and cumbersome. He recommended that border security be recognized as a matter of national security in order to enable expedited processes with trusted vendors.

Mr. Leuprecht said that Canada needs to shift from a procurement-based approach to an innovation-based approach, focused on the development of algorithms and AI.

In this context, Mr. Bédard said that he had no information confirming the replacement of existing drones, despite an ongoing study by many National Police Federation members in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu area. He expressed doubts that new drone models would be acquired given current budgetary constraints, while emphasizing the importance of drones for monitoring Quebec's extensive border, which stretches several hundred kilometres.

Mr. Bédard added that border detachments in Quebec, particularly in Beauce, Saint-Jean, Sherbrooke, and Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, have limited technological capabilities. Equipping drones with advanced features, like infrared imaging or mobile signal detection, would be essential for detecting human movement and countering criminal tactics. He also noted that some satellite posts already exist, including in Stanstead and Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, but that current tools, such as SD-card cameras, delay detection by several weeks, thereby undermining effectiveness.

Mr. Nohara explained that there are different types of radar and radar processing technologies for different targets, enabling the detection of vessels, drones, aircraft, or individuals crossing restricted areas. He mentioned that drones are a growing threat, but that effective technologies can detect those used for smuggling. For detecting individuals, he cited tools such as cameras and underground sensors capable of identifying movement in forested areas. Some frequency-based or camera-based systems integrate radar, counter-drones, and human-detection technologies. Several of these tools were incorporated into the Border Integrity Technology Enhancement Program, also known as the "Border Technology Program."¹⁷

17 The Border Technology Program is a national program that facilitates and coordinates the implementation of innovative technology solutions to support ongoing border security efforts by enhancing situational awareness and the ability to respond to illegal or suspicious activities. See RCMP, [Border Integrity defined](#).

Mr. Nohara said that, between 2004 and 2016, Accipiter Radar worked with various Canadian and United States agencies to develop and test surveillance technologies, demonstrating that securing the border using radar is both feasible and affordable. Data collected through these partnerships highlighted the need for increased radar coverage across the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway. He noted that a project approved in the 2014 budget provided for a persistent radar network expected to become operational in 2017–2018.

Mr. Nohara informed that deployed radars, cameras and drone-detection sensors between 2004 and 2016 offered persistent surveillance which enabled the detection of otherwise undetectable pleasure craft, real-time trajectory analysis, and automated alerts regarding suspicious activity. The data contributed to border security and marine traffic management, including through automated camera control for visual identification. In his view, a persistent radar network would significantly improve surveillance and interceptions in sensitive areas such as Lake Saint-François and the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Mr. Nohara said he did not know why the pilot program was dropped, suggesting that “priorities changed somewhere.” He hopes, however, that current discussions on border security will revive interest in the results demonstrated between 2004 and 2016.

He said that the United States has continued to expand its persistent radar surveillance capabilities, notably through the services of Accipiter Radar, creating an imbalance between the two countries. In his view, the solutions being considered in Canada—such as portable surveillance trailers and some helicopters—are insufficient to secure the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway. He argued that Canada could rapidly enhance its capabilities by reactivating existing radar stations to enable persistent surveillance, including the detection of vessels, low-flying aircraft, and drones involved in criminal activity.

Mr. Nohara further stated that persistent radar networks have previously supported major operations related to weapons, drugs, human trafficking, and search and rescue. These systems retain all data, improving traceability, and optimizing the efficiency of land, sea, and air resources. The original project aimed to cover the entire maritime border of the Great Lakes, an initiative he continues to view as both essential and affordable.

Mr. Nohara estimated that the cost of a network covering a substantial portion of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence Seaway would be approximately \$92 million—10% to 20% of the cost of the Gordie Howe Bridge. He said that, in a context of chronic staffing shortages, persistent radar surveillance would serve as a significant force multiplier.



Lastly, [Mr. Nohara](#) said that, while technology continues to evolve rapidly, priority should be given to expanding proven radar capabilities, which currently cover only a small fraction of the border. He stressed the importance of improving information sharing and interoperability between Canadian and United States partners to enable real-time sharing of sensor data and analytical intelligence.

Developing a National Strategy

[Mr. Leuprecht](#) said that Canada's border management framework, designed in a different era, no longer responds to current realities marked by increased flows of people, money, and transnational criminal activity. He explained that borders now function not only at ports of entry, but also before arrival through prescreening, within Canada through removal and in cyberspace, where much money laundering, fraud, and radicalization occur. Effective border management therefore requires a clear strategy and much closer collaboration among partners.

Mr. Leuprecht noted that Canada and the United States have shared a border strategy for over 85 years. While Canada adjusted rapidly following the attacks of 11 September 2001, United States authorities now view Canada as no longer fully meeting its commitments and as a potential vulnerability in North American security. [He](#) pointed out Canada's unique position—sharing a border with both the world's largest economy but also with the largest market for weapons and drugs—which creates criminogenic asymmetries, as illustrated by the fact that 88% of firearms seized in Toronto in 2024 originated in the United States.

[Mr. Leuprecht](#) explained that, in the absence of a clear strategy, decision-makers are limited to piecemeal responses, undermining security, partner confidence, and public trust. [He](#) noted that Canada has not had a national security strategy since 2004, reducing policy coherence. As a result, centralized decision-making does not adequately reflect the cultural, economic, and historical realities of different border regions.

[He](#) welcomed the prime minister's commitment to joint multi-functional teams, which reduce departmental silos and engage the right experts to develop targeted and measurable solutions. He added that it is now for the government to demonstrate its ability to deliver results.

To depoliticize border management, [Mr. Leuprecht](#) said that political action must meet three conditions: recognize the consequences of inaction, demonstrate the effectiveness of proposed measures, and ensure their success.

Lastly, [he](#) stated that a minister responsible for national security should establish three to five clear priorities, guide resource allocation, and provide clear guidelines. While not advocating for a “Minister of Borders,” [he](#) emphasized the need to strengthen ministerial responsibility, which has eroded over time, to ensure effective border management aligned with the government’s strategic objectives.

CHAPTER 3: BORDER CRIME

Although the Canada–United States border is recognized as one of the longest peaceful borders in the world, it remains vulnerable to various forms of cross-border crime, including drug and firearm trafficking, vehicle thefts, and the exploitation of border corridors by criminal organizations. For instance, [Mr. McCrorie](#) said that transnational organized crime exploits the border and that threats originate from both sides. He noted that Canada is both a market for drugs—including cocaine entering from the United States and elsewhere—and a source of drugs, particularly as an exporter of cannabis. Canada also serves as a transshipment point within trafficking networks. For these reasons, collaboration with national counterparts, such as the RCMP, and international counterparts, such as United States Customs and Border Protection and the Australian Border Force, is essential.

This chapter outlines witnesses’ observations on border crime and presents recommendations aimed at strengthening border security.

Transnational Organized Crime

Transnational organized crime is now one of the most serious and complex challenges to border security. These organizations operate across national borders through highly structured networks, considerable financial resources and the use of emerging technologies. It is important to note that such criminal organizations are active not only in Canada, but worldwide.

Several witnesses, including [Kevin Brosseau](#), Commissioner of Canada’s Fight Against Fentanyl, highlighted the growth in the number of criminal organizations and the rapid evolution of their methods, particularly in drug trafficking. In this regard, [Mr. McGillis](#) reported that approximately 350 active organized crime groups capable of manufacturing and trafficking fentanyl have been identified in Canada.¹⁸ [He](#) explained that monitoring these groups is a shared responsibility, with the RCMP working in collaboration with the

18 Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, [Public Report on Organized Crime in Canada](#), 28 October 2022, p. 11.



Canadian Integrated Response to Organized Crime (CIROC), which brings together 36 of Canada's largest police services.

Ms. Dawson noted that organized crime operates through sophisticated networks using advanced technologies. Smugglers exploit regulatory loopholes and take advantage of the lack of coordination among initiatives related to weapons, drugs, and human trafficking. According to her, the issue is not a lack of intelligence but rather the inability to share intelligence effectively.

With respect to the Akwesasne region, Mr. Swamp explained that addressing organized crime and complex transnational events requires formal frameworks to streamline and strengthen coordination. He noted that the solution lies in continuously improving formal frameworks and protocols to facilitate collaboration within integrated teams. He clarified that the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service has a specialized organized crime unit that includes RCMP and Sûreté du Québec officers to harmonize approaches and combat large-scale criminal networks.

Mr. Swamp added that, although working agreements exist with the RCMP and the Sûreté du Québec to combat organized crime, there remains a need to establish formal cross-border protocols. Such protocols would streamline operations and enhance coordination between Canadian and United States forces in responding effectively to security issues.

Mr. Brosseau underscored the importance of monitoring the evolution of transnational criminal organizations and strengthening collaboration with international partners, particularly the United States and the European Union. Similarly, Mr. McCrorie said that fighting transnational organized crime requires multi-jurisdictional cooperation, as no single agency or country can realistically neutralize these networks on its own.

Emerging Threats Related to Fentanyl Trafficking and Import Networks

Witnesses reported not only the high danger posed by fentanyl and its precursors (i.e., chemicals essential to the production of synthetic opioids), but also the complexity of the supply networks that enable their entry and manufacture in Canada. Due to its low manufacturing cost, fentanyl is a drug prized by criminal organizations. Together, these factors illustrate the magnitude of the challenge Canada faces in curbing the production, circulation, and devastating effects of fentanyl. Mr. Peets reported that:

Fentanyl is a deadlier drug than any that came before it. As a synthetic opioid, it can be made anywhere, and made cheaply. Because it is so potent—between 20 and 40 times as potent as heroin—it can be sold in small quantities and is therefore easy to ship. Its

potency also means that it is highly addictive and difficult to stop using. And of course, its potency means that even small quantities can be deadly.

Fentanyl is generally administered as a painkiller in hospital, but it can nevertheless enter the illegal market in various ways, including import, manufacture in illegal laboratories or diversion from medical products.¹⁹ [Mr. Brosseau](#) said that fentanyl has caused the deaths of 50,000 Canadians since 2016.

Ways of Illegally Importing Fentanyl and its Precursors into Canada

Analysis of the ways used to smuggle fentanyl and its precursors into Canada highlights the complexity and adaptability of the criminal networks involved in this illegal supply chain. [Mr. Peets](#) said that the fentanyl consumed in Canada comes from precursor chemicals imported mainly from China. Although these chemicals may have legitimate uses, they are diverted to produce illicit fentanyl on Canadian soil. The composition and substances used in its manufacture are frequently altered by criminal organizations, making detection by authorities more difficult.

According to [Mr. Cooper](#), the Non-Resident Importer program could allow non-Canadians to use temporary addresses and warehouses to receive precursors shipped from China, often via third-party destinations. This mechanism could create a major lack of visibility for the CBSA, potentially making these shipments virtually invisible and potentially facilitating the entry of fentanyl precursors into Canada.

[Mr. Sauvé](#) raised another way of importing fentanyl and its precursors, namely the use of shell companies by criminal organizations to import chemical precursors while circumventing current controls, which poses a major challenge to public safety.

[Mr. McCrorie](#) added that large quantities of fentanyl are shipped by mail and courier services because they are easy to conceal. A new trend has also been identified: the export of small quantities of fentanyl to the south by microtraffickers, as well as fentanyl entering the country with travellers.

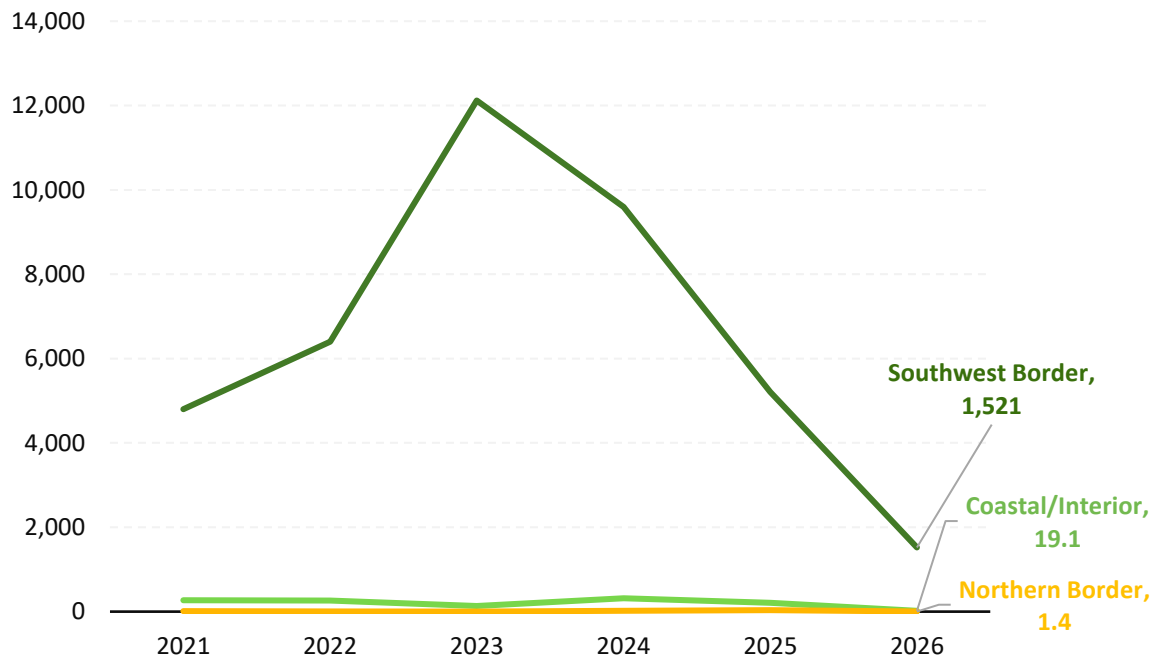
The [Hon. Ruby Sahota](#) said that 81% of the fentanyl seized in Canada comes from the United States. [Mr. Peets](#) clarified that, although Canada and the United States are currently experiencing a fentanyl crisis, Canada is not the source of their fentanyl crisis. [He](#) said that, according to data reported by United States Customs and Border Protection, since 2022, less than 1% of seized fentanyl comes from the United States's

19 Government of Canada, [Fentanyl](#).



northern border region, i.e., the border between Canada and the United States, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2—Total Number of Fentanyl Seizures by United States Customs and Border Protection, in Kilograms, by Region and by Fiscal Year, from 2021 to 2025



Note: It is important to note that the data for 2026 covers only the first quarter of the fiscal year, from October 2025 to December 2025.

Source: Figure prepared by the Library of Parliament using data obtained from the United States Customs and Border Protection, [Drug Seizure Statistics](#). Source accessed in January 2026.

Provinces and Regions Conducive to Trafficking in Fentanyl and Its Precursors

Several witnesses said that some Canadian provinces and regions appear to be more conducive to fentanyl production. [Mr. McGillis](#) pointed to the presence of superlabs, particularly in British Columbia and, to a lesser extent, in Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec. [He](#) said that approximately 50 labs producing large quantities of fentanyl have been dismantled across Canada since 2018.

[Mr. Cooper](#) said that, since the early 2000s, Vancouver has been a hub for the production and transnational trafficking of fentanyl, methamphetamine, and ecstasy. He added that the discovery of the Falkland lab, which contained several drugs, illustrates the poly-drug crisis affecting the region. On 25 October 2024, in Falkland and Surrey, British Columbia, the RCMP dismantled what is considered to be the largest, most sophisticated clandestine fentanyl and methamphetamine superlab ever discovered in Canada. The operation was part of an investigation targeting a transnational organized crime group involved in the large-scale production and distribution of fentanyl and methamphetamine, both in Canada and abroad.²⁰ Investigators reported that the quantity of fentanyl and precursors seized at the site could have amounted to over 95.5 million potentially lethal doses, which could have ended up in Canadian communities or abroad.²¹

Searches led to the seizure of 54 kg of fentanyl, several tons of precursor chemicals, 390 kg of methamphetamine, 35 kg of cocaine, 15 kg of MDMA (ecstasy), and 6 kg of cannabis.²² In addition to the drugs, investigators discovered a large arsenal of 89 firearms, including 45 handguns, 21 Ar-15-style rifles and submachine guns, as well as explosive devices, silencers, high-capacity magazines, body armour, large quantities of ammunition, and \$500,000 in cash. Nine of the seized weapons were identified as stolen.²³

Another Canadian region prone to fentanyl trafficking is Akwesasne, a First Nations community located in a unique and complex geographical area that spans two countries, two provinces and New York State, explained [Mr. Swamp](#). He said that this geography creates unparalleled operational challenges, as borders sometimes run through neighbourhoods and homes.

[He](#) explained that criminal organizations exploit this complexity, forcing a small First Nations police service to operate at a transnational level with limited resources. He pointed out that the community faces significant pressures such as trafficking in fentanyl and other opioids, firearms trafficking, irregular immigration, and land- and marine-based smuggling along the St. Lawrence River.

[Mr. Swamp](#) noted that the Akwesasne community is sometimes perceived as a corridor for smuggling and organized crime, which casts it in a negative light internationally. He

20 RCMP, [Federal Investigators take down the largest, most sophisticated drug superlab in Canada](#), News release, 31 October 2024.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.



explained that this reputation stems from its complex geography and accessibility by water but emphasized that the majority of community members are law-abiding. He said that criminal organizations exploit the community because of these features.

Current Approach to Combatting Border Crime

In response to the rise in organized crime, fentanyl trafficking, and other border crimes, the federal government has implemented several measures to combat transnational crime and strengthen border security in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, federal departments and municipal, provincial, and international partners. Nevertheless, as several witnesses pointed out, additional action is needed to fully address these issues.

In this respect, [Mr. Sauvé](#) responded to a question about the lack of action to combat the smuggling of precursor chemicals and the production of fentanyl by suggesting that Canada's port police, which was disbanded several years ago, be reinstated. He said that Canada, with its vast coastline and strategic ports, does not focus adequately enough on maritime and port security, and that it would be appropriate to revisit this decision to strengthen surveillance and the fight against transnational organized crime.

Listing Drug Cartels as Terrorist Entities

Transnational criminal organizations, particularly drug cartels, play a significant role in the production of fentanyl and other illegal substances. In order to curb the reach of these organizations, the committee was told that seven drug cartels have been listed as terrorist entities²⁴ under the *Criminal Code*.

Listing is “a public process for identifying, without the need for charge, trial and conviction, an entity so as to dissuade others from dealing with it.”²⁵ From a legal standpoint, publicly designating a group as a terrorist entity has several immediate advantages. First, listing an organization automatically freezes its assets held by banks and financial institutions, since it becomes a criminal offence to knowingly manage these funds.²⁶ Second, the listing clarifies the government's position with regard to the entity and sends a clear signal to the public: anyone who associates with or supports it is

24 The definition of an entity includes a person, group, trust, partnership or fund, or an unincorporated association or organization. Public Safety Canada, [Listed Terrorist Entities](#).

25 Stanley A. Cohen, *Privacy, Crime and Terror: Legal Rights and Security in a Time of Peril*, 1 January 2005, p. 277.

26 Public Safety Canada, [Government of Canada lists seven transnational criminal organizations as terrorist entities](#), News release, 20 February 2025.

liable to criminal prosecution.²⁷ Third, the listing destroys the ability of an individual or criminal organization to cloak their dealings in anonymity.²⁸

[Commr. Duheme](#) reported that adding six Mexican cartels and one Venezuelan cartel to the list of terrorist entities gives law enforcement more tools to lay charges when their investigations have sufficient evidence. Commr. Duheme suggested that, since several Canadian criminal organizations obtain supplies from these cartels, listing the cartels as terrorist entities could lead to terrorism charges against the Canadian criminals who support them. A terrorist listing enables law enforcement to prosecute terrorist offences, including those related to financing and recruitment.²⁹

Creation of the Office of the Commissioner of Canada’s Fight Against Fentanyl

In February 2025, the Office of the Commissioner of Canada’s Fight Against Fentanyl was created to coordinate Canada’s efforts in the fight against fentanyl. [Mr. Peets](#) said that the United States Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), which coordinates the efforts of 19 federal agencies in the fight against drug abuse, is a key partner of the Commissioner of Canada’s Fight Against Fentanyl. The Commissioner regularly engages with the ONDCP and other counterparts in the United States, Mexico, and other countries to better understand their priorities, identify opportunities for collaboration, and advocate for Canada’s interests.

[Mr. Peets](#) said that the Office of the Commissioner of Canada’s Fight Against Fentanyl reviews the performance indicators of federal sectors. Similarly, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) analyzes federal agencies and aspects related to the fight against fentanyl, such as help, demand, law enforcement, and money laundering. Canadian and United States methodologies are compared to ensure a common understanding and harmonize data.

Intelligence Sharing

The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) explained that his predecessors, the Minister responsible for Canada–United States Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy and the Minister of National Defence, held extensive discussions

27 Ibid., pp. 277–287.

28 Ibid.

29 Public Safety Canada, [Government of Canada lists seven transnational criminal organizations as terrorist entities](#), News release, 20 February 2025.



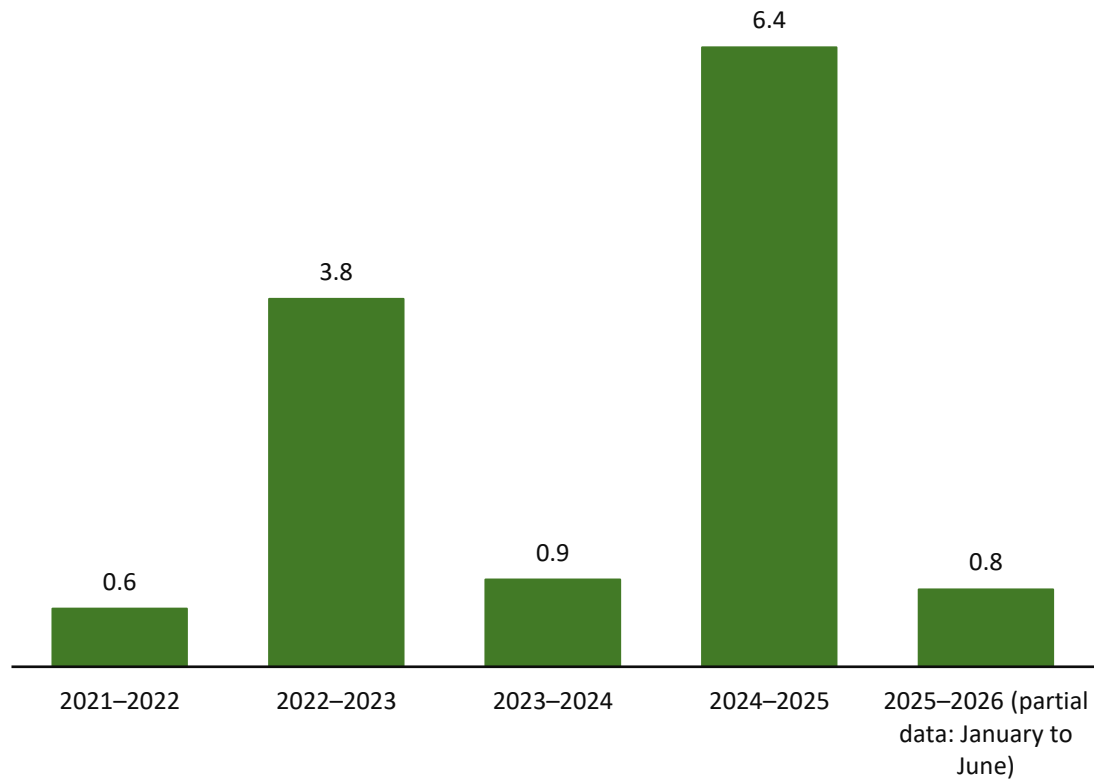
with United States officials, including border czar Tom Homan. The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) resumed these discussions upon his appointment in May 2025 as well as over the summer. These meetings were in addition to regular exchanges among operational partners, including the Commissioner of Canada's Fight Against Fentanyl, the CBSA President, and the Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). According to the [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#), the relationship between Canada and the United States is strong. Despite some irritations, both countries have identified fentanyl as a shared issue that requires collaboration. [Mr. Brosseau](#) added that discussions with United States counterparts have been productive and that collaboration with the United States is based on trust and cooperation.

As part of the Border Plan, [Mr. Peets](#) mentioned a number of investments to implement law enforcement measures, such as intelligence sharing and cooperation among law enforcement and intelligence agencies. [Mr. McGillis](#) added that the RCMP is actively investigating organized crime and that teams across Canada are monitoring the illegal drug trade.

Policing Operations Leading to the Seizure of Illegal Goods

The [Hon. Ruby Sahota](#) gave an overview of the CBSA's efforts to combat drug trafficking. She reported that, last year alone, the CBSA seized more than 50,000 kg of prohibited drugs, cannabis, narcotics and chemicals, and more than 900 firearms. In 2024, the CBSA seized more than 34,000 kg of illegal drugs, including nearly 5 kg of fentanyl. Figure 3 shows the total quantities seized by the CBSA between 2021 and 2026.

Figure 3 — Total Fentanyl Seizures by the Canada Border Services Agency by Fiscal Year, 2021–2026 (kg)



Source: Figure prepared by the Library of Parliament using data obtained from the CBSA, [Canada Border Services Agency enforcement action statistics](#).

[Mr. McCrorie](#) mentioned that CBSA has strengthened its enforcement capabilities through targeted investigations, such as Operation Blizzard, a nationwide operation to intercept fentanyl and other substances at the border. The operation resulted in the seizure of over 2,600 narcotics and precursors. More specifically, [Mr. McCrorie](#) said that, as of 23 September 2025, 2.50 kg of fentanyl had been seized, of which 1.73 kg came from this operation. In addition, [Ms. O’Gorman](#) noted that, as part of this operation, 691,000 packages shipped by air, marine, and mail were examined. Of those, 67% came from the United States, while 17% were destined for the United States. However, only a small portion of those packages resulted in seizures and contained drugs, most of which originated in the United States. In order to identify the senders and recipients of these packages, the CBSA worked with the RCMP and United States Customs and Border Protection.



Decline in Vehicle Thefts

In addition to drug trafficking, other forms of crime are also observed at the border, including vehicle thefts, the prevalence of which is exacerbated by the involvement of transnational criminal organizations. These organizations use the profits generated by the resale of stolen vehicles to finance various criminal activities, such as money laundering and drug trafficking, as highlighted by the committee in its report on the growing phenomenon of vehicle thefts.³⁰ Providing an update on this form of crime, the [Hon. Ruby Sahota](#) reported that, since the launch of the National Action Plan on Combatting Auto Theft in 2024, vehicle thefts declined by 17% in 2024 and by 19% in the first half of 2025 compared with the same period in 2024, according to a report by the Équité Association.³¹ [She](#) also noted that the CBSA intercepted 2,277 stolen vehicles in 2024 and 1,252 stolen vehicles since the beginning of 2025.

Health Canada: Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy

[Mr. Peets](#) said that Health Canada leads the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy, which guides Canada's approach to reduce the supply of illegal substances, including fentanyl, through "prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement." The Commissioner of Canada's Fight Against Fentanyl works closely with Health Canada and the provinces and territories to achieve this goal. Discussions also take place with frontline and community workers and national law enforcement agencies to draw on their experience with the illegal opioid crisis.

[Mr. Peets](#) added that, to be more responsive to the fight against crime, Health Canada invested in a Canadian drug analysis centre that will be able to produce forensic evidence. He added that the amendments proposed in Bill C-2, which deals with the regulation of controlled substances, would add flexibility to respond quickly to the emergence of new substances.

In a similar vein, [Commr. Duheme](#) said that Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 will enable Health Canada to expedite the classification of certain precursors as illegal substances. [Mr. Sauvé](#) expressed his support for expediting the identification and tracking of precursor chemicals imported into Canada to ensure they reach their intended-end users.

30 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security [SECU or the committee], [Fighting the Phenomenon of Vehicle Thefts in Canada](#), Sixteenth Report, December 2024.

31 Équité Association, [First Half of 2025: Auto Theft Trend Report](#), June 2025.

[Mr. Brosseau](#) said that, since fentanyl is highly addictive and that addiction is difficult to overcome, actions to reduce demand should be local and tailored to each community. He recommended carrying out prevention activities, particularly by raising awareness among young people, while targeting fentanyl suppliers through rigorous investigations.

CHAPTER 4: IRREGULAR IMMIGRATION

In Canada, a person can apply for asylum in the regular manner at an official port of entry upon arrival at a border crossing or online if they are in another country.³² The role of CBSA and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) officers is to determine whether the claim is eligible and can be referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) of Canada for a hearing.³³ However, each year, many migrants choose to enter the country irregularly between official ports of entry.

The enforcement of immigration law raises operational and organizational challenges that directly influence authorities' ability to ensure the integrity of the system and border security. The evidence gathered highlights a number of systemic constraints, including the reactive nature of criminal investigations, limitations of prescreening mechanisms, pressure created by the growing number of people in irregular situations, and persistent difficulties in sharing information among national and cross-border agencies.

Despite the efforts of the CBSA and its partners, witnesses said that available resources, workforce stability and the lack of formal coordination structures continue to limit the effectiveness of interventions. This chapter examines these issues, drawing on witness testimony to analyze current vulnerabilities in the system, and to propose recommendations.

Role of the Canada Border Services Agency and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in Immigration Matters

The mandate of IRCC derives from the [Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act](#), which gives it responsibility for selecting and welcoming immigrants, refugees, and temporary residents; facilitating their integration; reuniting families; granting citizenship; and managing the Canadian passport program.³⁴ The CBSA's immigration mandate is to ensure national security and the integrity of the immigration system by controlling the

32 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, [Claiming asylum in Canada – what happens?](#).

33 Ibid.

34 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, [Mandate](#).



entry of persons, arresting or detaining inadmissible persons, and enforcing removal measures under the IRPA.³⁵

[Ms. O’Gorman](#) said that 500 CBSA officers are dedicated to handling files and removal. Officers obtain travel documents, make travel arrangements, and sometimes have to wait until children finish their school year before proceeding with removal.

Refugee Applications and Irregular Migrant Crossings

Irregular crossings between official ports of entry along the Canada–United States border are dangerous and prohibited under the immigration and customs laws of both countries. The majority of irregular migration attempts at the Canada–United States border involves smugglers, who often charge thousands of dollars for their services. Migrants risk facing extreme weather conditions and exploitation by smugglers.³⁶

Regarding irregular crossings at the Canada–United States border, [Mr. McGillis](#) said that, according to RCMP observations, the corridor along the Quebec border has the highest number of irregular crossings in Canada. Most reported incidents do not involve drug and firearms trafficking, although these are present. Close collaboration with United States border patrol counterparts through integrated activities and the use of technology to detect and counter irregular migration at the border are necessary. [Mr. McGillis](#) has seen a decrease in the number of people crossing the border irregularly but does not necessarily see them as threats to national security. [He](#) said that “Haitian, Venezuelan and Colombian are the top three nationalities that are coming across the border [irregularly], seeking opportunities for asylum claims.” [Mr. McCrorie](#) also said that these asylum seekers do not pose national security threats, but that a security assessment is still carried out.

To counter these irregular crossings, [Mr. McCrorie](#) told the committee that the CBSA’s criminal investigations are reactive rather than preventive. He said that part of the immigration system, which falls under the jurisdiction of both the IRCC and the CBSA, collaborates on matters such as visa issuance. He said that several preventive measures are already in place, as individuals wishing to enter the country must meet a set of requirements. Once in Canada, however, CBSA interventions are primarily based on tips and investigations.

Nevertheless, [Mr. Leuprecht](#) reported that the Non-Resident Importer program has many vulnerabilities, amplified by political priorities on immigration that have outpaced the

35 CBSA, [Enforcing immigration laws in Canada](#).

36 IRCC, [CIMM – Irregular Southbound Migration – February 7, 2024](#).

ability of security agencies to conduct vetting, thereby exposing the system to large-scale exploitation. [He](#) added that, in a democracy, it is the prerogative of the government to establish its priorities, but that there is an opportunity to strike a better balance between these political priorities and public safety.

In response to a question regarding 47,000 people in an irregular situation with expired student visas, [Mr. Weber](#) responded that he was not surprised by the figure and did not consider it high. [He](#) estimated that approximately 300 inland officers are assigned to investigate these cases nationwide. [Mr. Weber](#) said that the work is endless and that there is a lack of resources to catch up. [He](#) added that locating these individuals is a priority despite the lack of staff. Lastly, [he](#) stated that the CBSA is aware of most of the individuals on the United States terrorism watch list who have tried to cross the border. According to [him](#), the number of officers has remained the same over the past decade but [he](#) mentioned that the workload has increased. [He](#) added that this has absolutely contributed to the lack of morale at the CBSA.

[Ms. Dawson](#) said her organization has seen an increase in refugee claims from people seeking to settle in North America, noting that, when the United States border is closed, these individuals turn to Canada. She stated that irregular crossings by Central Americans and Mexicans have decreased, while those by people from Africa, Asia, and India have increased. She explained that some individuals with resources have attempted to skirt the rules, which justified the reinstatement of the visa requirement for Mexico to counter its exploitation by wealthy criminals. She warned that Canada has become a conduit for bad actors, and [she](#) said that Bill C-2³⁷ is designed to distinguish legitimate applicants from those seeking to take undue advantage of humanitarian protections.

[Ms. Dawson](#) explained that, in the absence of formal mechanisms for information sharing, officers on both sides of the border rely on informal calls and personal relationships to exchange information. She pointed out that the loss of these contacts, particularly when officers retire, results in a significant loss of knowledge. Furthermore, the lack of formal mechanisms or institutions for communication limits the effectiveness

37 Parts 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13 of Bill C-2, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of the border between Canada and the United States and respecting other related security measures, aimed in particular at combating transnational organised crime, stopping the illegal flow of fentanyl, cracking down on money laundering, dismantling criminal networks, and improving the integrity of the immigration system, were incorporated into Bill C-12, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures, which received Royal Assent on 26 March 2026. Parts 14 and 15 of Bill C-2 were incorporated into Bill C-22, An Act respecting lawful access.



of cross-border forums. [She](#) concluded that this lack of formal structure, combined with legal blockages, forces the system to rely too heavily on informal conversations.

Removal Process

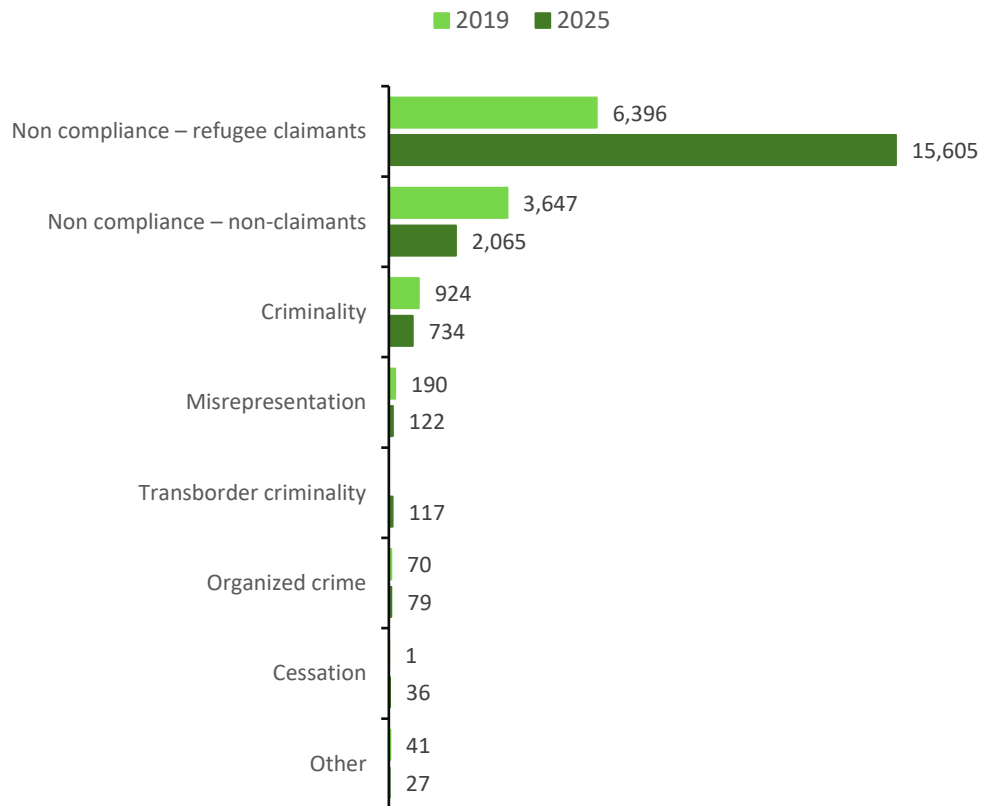
The CBSA has a removal program that allows it to carry out removal orders against individuals who are inadmissible to Canada.³⁸ The CBSA prioritizes its removal efforts on foreign nationals who pose a serious threat to the safety and security of Canadians for reasons including national security, serious criminal offences or involvement in organized crime, and international or human rights violations.³⁹ Priority is also given to the removal of asylum seekers who entered Canada irregularly between official ports of entry due to their impact on program integrity and on Canada's asylum system.⁴⁰ Figure 4 shows that the largest number of removals between 2019 and 2025 were due to asylum seekers' failure to comply with the conditions of the IRPA.

38 CBSA, [Enforcing removals from Canada](#).

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

Figure 4—Total Enforced Removals by the Canada Border Services Agency by Inadmissibility Type, 2019 and 2025



Note: Partial data for the latest available year as of 31 October 2025.

Source: Figure prepared by the Library of Parliament using data obtained from [Table 5.1: Total enforced removals by escorted or unescorted](#), Canada Border Services Agency, Database, accessed 14 January 2026.

During the committee’s consideration of Bill C-12, [Christopher Hamilton](#), Senior Director of the Asylum Policy, Performance and Governance Division at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, explained that the

pre-removal risk assessment is a robust review process that considers several factors to ensure that Canada does not remove individuals to a country where they could be at risk of persecution, danger, torture, threats to their life or cruel and unusual punishment.



Ms. O’Gorman said that many nationals leave the country without any engagement with the CBSA, while others who are subject to an arrest warrant abscond. She explained that the CBSA operates detention facilities, but ultimately the IRB determines whether continued detention is necessary. As a result, when the IRB ends detention, individuals may abscond, resulting in the issuance of an arrest warrant by the CBSA. The removal of these individuals is the priority for officers. Ms. O’Gorman added that administrative warrants are also issued for individuals serving sentences in correctional facilities, allowing the CBSA to be notified when their detention ends and thereby preventing them from absconding. When they are done serving their sentence, the CBSA assumes custody of them.

Ms. O’Gorman said that the removal inventory is constantly changing due to the addition of individuals following reconsideration by the Federal Court, when individuals leave the country, or when they are removed from Canada.

Table 1 shows that Quebec and the Greater Toronto Area have the highest numbers of wanted individuals, as well as the greatest number of removals in progress.

Table 1 — Canada Border Services Agency Removal Sub-Inventories by Region, 2019–2025⁴¹

Region	No Action Required	Removal Not Possible	Wanted	Removal in Progress	Total
Atlantic	464	124	56	138	782
Quebec	182,548	13,926	8,413	13,964	218,851
Northern Ontario	14,639	1,068	864	1,170	17,741
Greater Toronto Area	65,202	6,193	21,163	10,263	102,821
Southern Ontario	3,629	247	353	244	4,473
Prairies	15,446	1,688	941	1,534	19,609
Pacific	31,640	1,007	1,396	1,668	35,711
Not yet assigned to a region	155,060	1,077	4	561	156,702
Grand total	468,628	25,330	33,190	29,542	556,690

Note: Partial data for the latest available year as of 31 October 2025.

Source: Figure prepared by the Library of Parliament using data obtained from [Table 6.1: Removal sub-inventories by region](#), Canada Border Services Agency, Database, accessed 14 January 2026.

More specifically, Table 2 shows the CBSA's inventory of ongoing removals by inadmissibility type between 2019 and 2025 as of 31 October 2025, including individuals with an enforceable removal order.

41 **Not yet actionable inventory:** This inventory includes individuals that fall outside of the enforcement stream. These include, but are not limited to, individuals who have a pending refugee application or who have been recognized as a refugee in Canada.

Removal not possible inventory: This inventory includes individuals that cannot currently be removed. These include, but are not limited to, pending Federal Court appeals, criminal charges, or Pre-Removal Risk Assessments, and sentences of imprisonment.

Wanted inventory: This inventory includes individuals who failed to appear for removal proceedings and the CBSA is working to locate the foreign national.

Removals in progress inventory: This inventory includes individuals who can be processed for removal. At this stage, CBSA works with the individual and foreign countries to overcome challenges to removal, including but not limited to, the issuance of travel documents.



Table 2—Canada Border Services Agency Removal in Progress Inventory by Type, 2019–2025

Inadmissibility Type	Total
Security grounds (s. 34)	69
Human or international rights violations (s. 35)	21
Criminality (s. 36)	5
Transborder criminality (s. 36)	1,399
Organized crime (s. 37)	38
Misrepresentation (s. 40)	438
Cessation (s. 40.1)	72
Non compliance (s. 41)—non-claimants	1,399
Non compliance (s. 41)—refugee claimants	25,786
Section not captured in system	287
Others	28
Grand total	29,542

Source: Figure prepared by the Library of Parliament using data obtained from [Table 6.2: Removal in progress inventory - Inadmissibility types](#), Canada Border Services Agency, Database, accessed 14 January 2026.

On 19 January 2026, the CBSA provided a written response to the committee regarding questions raised during the meeting held on 6 November 2025 in relation to the review of Bill C-12, in which it outlined the role of officers in the removal process: “[i]dentify and triage cases for removal;” “[s]chedule and conduct removal interviews;” “[r]eview cases to determine eligibility for a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment, initiate applications and service decisions;” “[p]repare and submit travel document applications, and arrange interviews as required;” “[r]eview and respond to deferral of removal requests;” “[c]onduct risk assessments and escort cases to their destination, as required;” “[p]lan travel arrangements, obtain approvals from stakeholders, and serve Directions to Report for removal;” “[r]elease foreign nationals from detention center and transport to Port of Entries for removal;” “[c]onfirm departures at Port of Entries;” and “[c]ollect evidence to enforce removal orders administratively.”

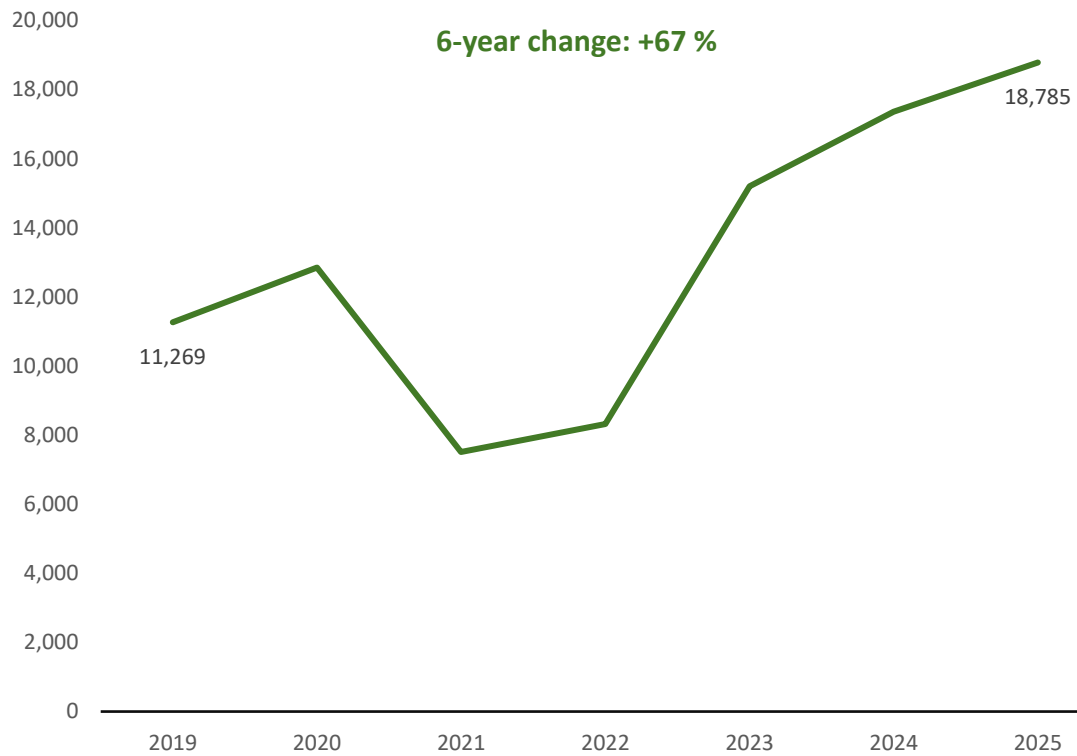
[Mr. McCrorie](#) added that, as part of the CBSA removals program, investigators search for individuals with active warrants listed in the wanted inventory, which contains about 30,000 people. When these individuals are located, they are generally placed in one of three detention centres if there is a high flight risk. [He](#) said that investigative techniques focus on understanding who these individuals are and identifying their behavioural patterns.

[Mr. McCrorie](#) stated that, between 1 April 2025 and 15 September 2025, 10,585 inadmissible individuals were removed. To meet its commitment to carry out 20,000 removals by 20 March 2026, the CBSA has taken measures such as hiring 30 additional frontline personnel.

The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) said that the CBSA removed 18,000 inadmissible individuals in 2024–2025, compared to 16,000 the previous year, as shown in Figure 5. [He](#) said that the CBSA removed nearly 20,000 individuals in 2025. [He](#) added that 30,000 individuals with known addresses are currently in the system awaiting removal.



Figure 5—Canada Border Services Agency Total Enforced Removals, from 2019 to 2025



Note: Partial data for the latest available year as of 31 October 2025.

Source: Figure prepared by the Library of Parliament using data obtained from [Table 5.1: Total enforced removals by escorted or unescorted](#), Canada Border Services Agency, Database, accessed 14 January 2026.

The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) said that many of the individuals subject to removal are not in detention centres but are required to report regularly to CBSA offices across Canada, sometimes by telephone.

Current Approach to Immigration

To reduce the volume of applications processed by the CBSA at the border, the government announced new measures affecting Canada's immigration and refugee system, as well as additional resources to support the work of the CBSA and the RCMP at

the border. These [actions](#) to reduce irregular migration at the Canada–United States border are intended to strengthen surveillance between official ports of entry.

Safe Third Country Agreement

[Mr. McCrorie](#) said that the new protocol for the Safe Third Country Agreement led to the closure of Roxham Road and caused a shift in the flow of people to the Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle border crossing. According to him, 6,000 individuals made asylum claims at the Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle border crossing in 2024, while that number rose to 13,000 in 2025. An increase in irregular crossings was observed at that crossing in the spring and summer of 2025.

[Mr. McCrorie](#) said that irregular border crossings have decreased following the conclusion of the Safe Third Country Agreement protocol. There was also a decrease of approximately 42% in asylum claims in Canada in 2025. He added that in 2024, 47,000 asylum claims were made to CBSA, compared to 27,000 in 2025 as of 23 September 2025. According to him, this decrease shows that the new protocol is deterring people from attempting to enter Canada irregularly between official ports of entry.

Selected Measures Under the Border Plan Regarding Immigration

The [Border Plan](#) provides for several actions to facilitate the management of regular immigration applications and preserve the integrity of the system. These include cancelling the public policy that allowed visitors to become workers, reforming the International Student Program to eliminate border crossings for post-graduation work permits, and tightening eligibility requirements for temporary foreign workers, spouses of international students, and post-graduation permit holders.

The new actions also include ending “flagpoling,”⁴² a practice that places excessive strain on border resources, as well as proposing legislative changes through Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 to better control immigration documents and limit claims in cases of risk or pressure on the immigration system.

42 “Flagpoling” refers to a practice whereby temporary residents briefly leave Canada (often to the United States) and then immediately return in order to access immigration services at the border, particularly to obtain or renew a work or study permit. See Canada Border Services Agency, [Ending flagpoling for work and study permits at the border](#), News release, 23 December 2024.



CHAPTER 5: ISSUES RELATED TO TRANSNATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SHARING AND CANADIAN LEGAL CONSTRAINTS

Investigations into transnational crimes, such as human trafficking, the proliferation of precursors and drugs, fraud, and money laundering, rely on rapid, reliable, and secure intelligence sharing among law enforcement agencies. This cooperation is essential for tracking complex criminal networks that operate across physical and digital borders. However, several witnesses pointed out that collaboration among jurisdictions remains difficult and requires harmonized legal and technical mechanisms as well as a high level of trust among partners.

This chapter presents the main obstacles identified by experts regarding legal and legislative barriers that limit the effectiveness of joint investigations. It examines their practical consequences, such as delays in investigations, the loss of evidence, declining trust among allies, and difficulties in tracking agile transnational networks. The chapter also highlights proposed reforms to modernize the Canadian legal framework and strengthen cross-border partnerships.

Legal and Jurisprudential Constraints and Lawful Access

[Mr. Cooper](#) discussed the “cultural, legal and political differences that have impeded cooperation between the United States and Canada.” He said several “outdated and inadequate” laws and court decisions have undermined Canada’s operational effectiveness, particularly in joint investigations with the DEA involving fentanyl trafficking and money laundering.

[Leah West](#), an associate professor at Carleton University appearing as an individual, also highlighted legal constraints, including access to communications content, interception, retention, and cross-border sharing, as well as the “intelligence-to-evidence” dilemma, which complicates legal proceedings.

[Mr. Cooper](#) and [Ms. West](#) both argued that legal constraints are major obstacles to international cooperation between Canada and its allies and that fundamental legislative reforms are needed.⁴³

According to [Mr. Cooper](#), the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) (the Charter), while essential, is sometimes used as a shield by highly sophisticated transnational

43 SECU, [Evidence](#), 7 October 2025, 1110 (Sam Cooper, Journalist).

criminal networks. For example, [he](#) cited the *Stinchcombe*⁴⁴ and *Jordan*⁴⁵ decisions as examples of major obstacles to complex investigations into transnational crime.

Stinchcombe requires the disclosure of virtually all evidence to the defence to uphold the right to make full answer and defence, under section 7 of the Charter, while *Jordan* sets strict time limits based on section 11(b) of the Charter against excessive pretrial detention, which he argued makes it difficult to handle large cases involving international networks. [He](#) cited cases involving Mexican cartels, such as Cobra in Alberta and Brisa in Ontario, which were both dropped due to these legal constraints.

[Mr. Cooper](#) said that the disclosure standards imposed by *Stinchcombe* complicate cooperation among intelligence services and law enforcement agencies, a challenge that is also familiar to Canada’s allies and illustrated by cases such as the Falkland fentanyl and methamphetamine superlab.

[Mr. Cooper](#) noted that

American and Australian police can collaborate effectively because the two nations are able to authorize wiretaps on dangerous and well-known transnational suspects in each of those countries within days, and in co-operative ways. In Canada, that speed is impossible.

[Ms. West](#) reiterated that “the intelligence-to-evidence dilemma remains unresolved and continues to undermine the RCMP’s ability to investigate and prosecute serious threats.” She pointed out that this issue has also been raised by the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP).⁴⁶

[Ms. West](#) also highlighted the lack of a legislative response to *Spencer*,⁴⁷ which she says impedes the ability to investigate national security threats. In that case, the Supreme Court of Canada held that there is a reasonable expectation of privacy in certain online activities. Thus, when police request information from an Internet service provider about a customer’s specific online activities without a warrant, it amounts to a “search or seizure” under section 8 of the *Charter* which protects against unreasonable search or seizure. She said that “Canadian law enforcement continues to operate under legal

44 [R. v. Stinchcombe](#), 1991, 3 SCR 326.

45 [R. v. Jordan](#), 2016, 1 SCR 631.

46 See the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP), [Special Report on the Lawful Access to Communications by Security and Intelligence Organizations](#), September 2025, pp. 56–57.

47 [R. v. Spencer](#), 2014, 2 SCR 212.



authorities that are outdated to the point of being dysfunctional. This is not a new problem, and that is precisely why it is so frustrating.”

Ms. West pointed out several additional shortcomings related to lawful access to information, such as

- persistent barriers to accessing communications content by the RCMP and CSIS;
- the lack of a statutory requirement for telecommunications service providers regarding lawful interception and data retention; and
- the lack of an agreement with the United States on access to data (the Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data Act or CLOUD Act, a United States law), which complicates obtaining judicial authorizations to access United States-based digital platforms.

According to her, these gaps undermine domestic security and cooperation with the United States on serious threats such as fentanyl, terrorism, human trafficking, and organized crime. They also undermine public confidence in the absence of reform.

Ms. West recommended an urgent update to the *Criminal Code*, including provisions allowing for orders directed at foreign companies and the establishment of clear rules on the sharing of basic subscriber information by telecommunications service providers to avoid uncertainty and errors with serious implications.

Ms. West said Canada must stop treating lawful access as a secondary issue and hold a transparent public debate on this necessary reform while ensuring that privacy concerns are addressed.

According to the Minister of Public Safety, Bill C-12 aims to improve information sharing with domestic and international partners in several areas, including strengthening the powers of authorities with respect to immigration documents and the sharing of information on sex offenders. It also strengthens Canada’s anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regime.

However, the Minister underscored the need to do more, adding that “Canada is the only country [among the Five Eyes] that does not have a lawful access regime.” He said that certain elements of Bill C-2 that were not included in Bill C-12 would give law enforcement “the necessary resources to deal with the complex and sophisticated crimes we are seeing today. We need to be in line with our Five Eyes partners.”

Erosion of Allies’ Trust

According to official sources cited by [Mr. Cooper](#), including a former United States Department of State senior investigator, the DEA and the Department of State have long been concerned about possible interference and corruption in Canada.

[He](#) confirmed that Five Eyes partners are worried that investigations are being blocked at the ministerial level or high within the bureaucracy. [He](#) added that other United States sources have expressed specific concerns about corruption within the RCMP, which have led to a reduction in the sharing of strategic intelligence with the national police.

[Mr. Cooper](#) said the case of Cameron Ortis, the former director general of intelligence at the RCMP who was convicted in November 2023 for communicating highly sensitive information without authority to unauthorized individuals,⁴⁸ exacerbated these concerns. The documents M. Ortis transmitted included information from the United States as well as Australia and concerned transnational criminal networks using technology capabilities based in Vancouver. Mr. Cooper said, “[y]ou can’t underestimate how much that angered our allies.” [Mr. Cooper](#) noted that the case also raised concerns about other high-level RCMP officials suspected of corruption by Mr. Ortis himself. [Mr. Cooper](#) raised that these concerns are not limited to the RCMP: Canada’s allies have similar concerns about the CBSA.

[Mr. Cooper](#) said the Ortis case has seriously compromised United States confidence in Canada, creating a “deep wall” in the sharing of sensitive information. [He](#) added that, according to his sources, this case raises major concerns about internal corruption and its impact on Canada’s ongoing cooperation with the United States and its other Five Eyes partners.

National and International Collaboration

Although issues related to transnational intelligence sharing exist in managing the Canada–United States border, it is important to note the coordination and collaboration among Canadian agencies and their international partners. According to the [Minister of Public Safety](#), coordination among Canadian agencies and their United States counterparts is already very effective. He highlighted the ongoing dialogue between border and police services, particularly in operational centres such as Detroit, as well as ongoing

48 SECU, [Evidence](#), 7 October 2025, 1120 (Sam Cooper, Journalist); See also Public Prosecution Service of Canada, [Jury Find Ortis Guilty](#), News release, 22 November 2023.



communication along the entire Canada–United States border, which is essential to protecting it.

With respect to information sharing, [Mr. McCrorie](#) explained that the CBSA receives administrative information from relevant law enforcement services, which is used for targeting purposes. However, information cannot be blanket-shared with these law enforcement services. For instance, when a stolen vehicle is recovered, the police can consult with the CBSA and request additional information. As of 23 September 2025, the CBSA had received approximately 2,400 requests for information from police services, enabling it to provide information on the shipper, the shipping container, and the destination. This information allows police services to pursue criminal investigations.

Canada–United States Cooperation: Depoliticizing Border Management

Several witnesses noted the strong cooperation between Canada and the United States, while others emphasized that this cooperation needs to be strengthened, as issues related to coordination and information sharing remain problematic. [Mr. McCrorie](#) noted that the CBSA and United States Customs and Border Protection have long-standing cooperation, exemplified by the ongoing exchange of information, the presence of embedded officers in their respective targeting centres, and regular meetings aimed at strengthening border security and aligning strategies.

This cooperation is evident in many ways, including pre-clearance operations, as [Ms. Grainger](#) pointed out. She explained that eight major Canadian airports host United States Customs and Border Protection officers who pre-clear Canadian travellers, allowing them to enter the United States as if they were domestic travellers. This arrangement provides significant economic and security benefits to both countries. Under this program, 400 officers are posted in Canada with their families. In addition, [Ms. Grainger](#) said that “while the United States may look to Canada to address issues related to migration and drugs, Canada is also looking to the United States to address challenges with illegal drugs and firearms coming north.”

However, [Mr. Bieger](#) stated that the priority is to strengthen collaboration and communication between United States Customs and Border Protection and the CBSA by coordinating efforts and harmonizing technologies to facilitate border crossings. [He](#) said that, even if complete software sharing is difficult, effective communication must be maintained and the adoption of common solutions accelerated. For his part, [Mr. Boyle](#) recommended a memorandum of understanding for the sharing of inspection data and stressed the importance of Canada investing in upgrading its IT systems to prevent the outages that have paralyzed border crossings in the past.

Like other witnesses, [Ms. Dawson](#) said that Canada and the United States collaborate very well on the border, despite perceptions to the contrary. She noted that the two countries have worked effectively together on many issues, such as pre-clearance and NEXUS. It is in Canada's interest to continue this collaborative work despite the current political climate, as the "crisis is stronger than ever because of the global migration and criminality challenge." Canada must be better equipped to respond to and deal with this crisis.

[Ms. Dawson](#) acknowledged that the CBSA has faced structural limitations. She reported that, according to the Americans, Canada takes half measures rather than comprehensive reforms. She recommended taking advantage of the crisis to make the necessary reforms and provide officers with the tools they need to deliver on their good intentions.

All the same, [Ms. Dawson](#) said that the military partnership between Canada and the United States, particularly with the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), is excellent and is the envy of the world. She described this model of joint command, interoperability, and communication as a model that could be adopted to strengthen border management.

According to [Mr. Leuprecht](#), Canada seeks to preserve its sovereignty by avoiding dependence on United States help, which requires a robust bilateral approach to border security. [He](#) proposed a "NORAD 2.0" aimed at depoliticizing border management by entrusting it, along with intelligence and law enforcement infrastructure, to professionals to better serve the interests of both countries.

From a relational standpoint, the [Minister of Public Safety](#) reiterated that Canada works closely with the United States to counter threats at the border. [He](#) has met with United States counterparts, including Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, United States Attorney General Pam Bondi, and other officials with whom he is in constant communication. The [Hon. Gary Anandasangaree](#) said there is also ongoing engagement between Public Safety Canada, the CBSA, the RCMP, the Fentanyl Commissioner, and United States counterparts, including the head of the DEA.

[Ms. Dawson](#) said that collaboration between the CBSA and United States Customs and Border Protection is a good first step, but that there are many other opportunities for cooperation with provincial police, state police, and local law enforcement, as well as with Indigenous people. She stated that, without effective communication among all of these jurisdictions, collaboration is not reliable. She acknowledged that officials in both countries get along well and put their best efforts forward but that, in the absence of leadership and resources, progress is difficult. She concluded that the existing bilateral teams work well and that it is better to strengthen and fund them rather than reinvent the wheel.



She added that, in the areas of business, travel, and trade, no one wants to see criminals compromising an efficient border and that enhanced border security allows for the smoother flow of goods and people.

Partnerships with Provinces, Municipalities, the Private Sector, and Indigenous Communities

Mr. Leuprecht emphasized that the RCMP's current structure does not adequately meet the needs of local communities, particularly in rural Quebec. He said that police officers, police associations, politicians, and the public will remain frustrated unless the agency is restructured.

With respect to coordination, Mr. Leuprecht considers federal coordination (Public Safety, CBSA, RCMP) to be relatively good, but highlighted a serious lack of coordination with provinces, municipalities, the private sector, and civil society.

Similarly, gaps in coordination have been noted with Indigenous communities, particularly in Akwesasne. Mr. Swamp said that police cooperation between Akwesasne and Canadian and United States agencies is essential but requires formal agreements to harmonize authorities and operations. He stressed the importance of recognizing First Nations police services as full partners, building on community trust and culturally informed approaches. Lastly, he said that any border strategy must respect First Nations rights under the Jay Treaty of 1794, including the free passage of members for cultural, family, and community activities. He insisted that strengthening border security must go hand in hand with approaches that respect Indigenous culture and rights.

Mr. Swamp added that one key measure is to improve communication capabilities among partners. He noted the need for encrypted communication systems, both federally and between Canada and the United States, to ensure rapid and secure coordination.

Mr. Swamp said that his police service must take on additional federal responsibilities, particularly with regard to human trafficking and smuggling, in addition to its frontline policing duties. He said that this versatility is necessary and that there is an ongoing collaboration with CBSA immigration services to manage these issues. Mr. Swamp gave the example of human trafficking, which occurs in both directions across the border. When information is received, in Cornwall, for example, it takes time to mobilize resources. During that time, individuals can cross the St. Lawrence River and reach Akwesasne territory, then cross into the southern portion within minutes, which complicates interventions.

Regarding long-term federal support, [Mr. Swamp](#) highlighted a recent four-party agreement between Akwesasne and the governments of Quebec, Ontario, and Canada.

[Mr. Swamp](#) explained that the lack of funding for the Mohawk Police Service in Saint Regis, on the United States side, complicates cross-border collaboration. He said that this service relies heavily on grants and that, when it lacks the resources or personnel to respond to a common target, this directly affects Akwesasne’s ability to work effectively with it.

However, [Mr. Swamp](#) said that, in his experience, United States authorities take a more proactive and stronghold approach to border security. He suggested that restrictions in place in Canada may limit progress, unlike the flexibility seen south of the border.

[Mr. Swamp](#) said that, despite improvements since 2017 with the installation of two operational teams and a boathouse, Akwesasne’s marine facilities have already outgrown their capacity. He said that the lack of equipment and resources prevents the rapid deployment of marine units, which limits the ability to respond to cross-border threats.

[Mr. Swamp](#) added that this operational weakness is compounded by counter-surveillance by criminal networks, which exploit the community’s small size and the location of infrastructure to monitor police activities. He stressed the need for resources to enable deployments in strategic areas and to strengthen cooperation with the RCMP, the CBSA, and United States authorities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Management of the Canada–United States border relies on a balance between national security, the free flow of legal goods, and bilateral cooperation. The division of responsibilities between the CBSA and the RCMP creates operational gray areas that slow down responses, while legal barriers continue to hinder the rapid exchange of information, which is essential to combatting transnational crime. The solutions being explored—whether a review of mandates, infrastructure improvements, legislative amendments, greater public awareness, or increased use of technology—will need to consider the sophistication of criminal networks. Strengthening border security will therefore require an integrated, consistent approach adapted to constantly evolving threats.

In light of the findings presented in this report and the testimony heard during the study, the committee considers it appropriate to put forward recommendations to strengthen Canada–United States border management. These recommendations aim to improve interagency coordination, address certain legal and operational barriers, and ensure that



existing resources and frameworks are adequately adapted to evolving cross-border threats.

Therefore, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada add to the mandate of Canada Border Services Agency officers the power to patrol and intervene in the event of urgent situations outside official ports of entry at the Canada–United States border.

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada provide dedicated funding to support Royal Canadian Mounted Police operations related to border security.

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada invest in modern surveillance and intelligence technologies to strengthen operational capacity of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the fight against transnational criminal activities.

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada ensure long-term training capacity for Canada Border Services Agency officers, including by:

- **investing in the expansion and modernization of training facilities, infrastructure, and equipment;**
- **providing the necessary funding to the Canada Border Services Agency so that its college in Rigaud can deliver training at full capacity year after year; and**
- **exploring alternative types of training, other than the traditional 18-week model, to maintain required professional standards.**

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada ensure that new positions within the Canada Border Services Agency primarily strengthen front-line operational functions at the border and that it report on the balance between operational and administrative positions created

as part of the new hires, and that it report to Parliament with a by-annual report until the completion of the hiring of the 1 000 jobs.

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada strengthen the Canada Border Services Agency's operational capacity by increasing the number of officers assigned to inspections to reduce excessive reliance on automated systems where possible and improve risk detection by:

- ensuring the fair and equitable representation of opportunities in recruitment, training, promotion and working conditions to reduce excessive reliance on automated systems and improve risk detection; and
- retaining officers who are injured or require accommodation in order to preserve operational expertise and stabilize frontline staffing levels.

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada mandate the Canada Border Services Agency to conduct a structural review of its organization to rebalance, in particular, the ratio of operational to administrative positions, where necessary, reducing the number of middle managers as necessary, and that this review include, among other things:

- an independent assessment of practices related to accommodating and retaining injured or disabled employees, conducted in collaboration with the union; and
- an independent assessment of inclusive practices that promote staff retention and ensure fair working conditions.

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada properly resource the Canada Border Services Agency to reduce its reliance on student border officers, who represent nearly 19% of the workforce at major locations like Trudeau airport, and only have three weeks of training before evaluating national security threats and drug smuggling at primary inspection points.



Recommendation 9

That the Canada Border Services Agency commit to exploring simplified processes, such as reducing the length of initial questioning and establishing secondary lanes for expedited processing for in-depth assessments, in order to improve the flow of traffic at border crossings.

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada strengthen its participation in and use of trusted traveller and trader programs—primarily administered by the United States—by enhancing cooperation with United States authorities to improve access and compatibility, and by offering incentives that promote proactive compliance and information sharing for risk assessment, thereby reducing reliance on controls at the time of crossing.

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada commit to investing in the modernization of technological tools and infrastructure related to border operations, including by improving scanning and surveillance tools, intelligence-sharing mechanisms and cross-border coordination; that it consider the adoption of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence; and that it strengthen system resilience to reduce vulnerabilities and minimize disruptions to industry and border communities.

Recommendation 12

That the Government of Canada deploy safe drive-through multi-energy portal technology at all major Canadian export seaports (such as Montreal, Vancouver and Halifax) to instantly screen 100% of the outgoing cargo for stolen vehicles and smuggled drugs without impeding the flow of trade.

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada examine funding options to support the effective, consistent, and proportionate application of border security obligations, in a manner that avoids imposing excessive financial burdens on operators of airports, ports, bridges, tunnels, and other critical infrastructure.

Recommendation 14

That the Government of Canada increase its funding to the Canada Border Services Agency for the modernization of the technology used at ports of entry and the implementation of a plan to maintain continuity of operations in the event of technological failure.

Recommendation 15

That the Government of Canada significantly strengthen the Canadian Border Services Agency's inspection capacity by:

- **increasing the number of inspections and controls of goods to exceed the current inspection rate of less than 1% and reduce vulnerabilities that compromise border security;**
- **increasing the number of border officers by hiring new frontline officers and deploying them to rail stations and seaports of all sizes;**
- **exploring the installation of infrastructure necessary to conduct inspections of rail transport; and**
- **increasing investments in modern surveillance systems and maritime radar.**

Recommendation 16

That the Government of Canada prioritize the procurement and use of Canadian-manufactured aircraft to support Royal Canadian Mounted Police border enforcement.

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada simplify and streamline the process, managed by Public Services and Procurement Canada, for procuring new equipment for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency.

Recommendation 18

That the Royal Canadian Mounted Police make its pilot project to establish satellite command posts in border municipalities permanent so that it can respond quickly and effectively during emergency operations by having all the necessary resources near the border.



Recommendation 19

That the Government of Canada establish and deploy where possible a permanent, integrated technological surveillance network along the Canada–United States border, including the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway, by increasing the use of radar, sensors, and drone detection and neutralization systems in order to strengthen the ability of border officials to detect, deter and respond to criminal activity and threats to national security.

Recommendation 20

That the Government of Canada develop and implement a national security strategy, including a clear border management framework, that establishes strategic priorities, clarifies the roles and responsibilities of federal institutions, strengthens interdepartmental coordination and international cooperation, and takes into account regional and local realities along the border in order to make border security a top national security priority.

Recommendation 21

That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with the Canada Border Services Agency, police services, provinces, municipalities, and international partners, continue to strengthen measures to prevent, detect, and intercept stolen vehicles to maintain the downward trend in theft.

Recommendation 22

That the Government of Canada conduct prevention activities in Canadian communities, including investing in prevention and awareness-raising initiatives targeting young people, in order to reduce the harms associated with illegal substance use.

Recommendation 23

That the Government of Canada establish a formal and sustainable framework for sharing information with national and international partners on immigration matters, including:

- **formal protocols for interagency communication;**
- **a secure platform for the ongoing exchange of relevant data;**

- **institutional mechanisms to preserve organizational memory, particularly in the event of retirements or staff changes;**
- **joint training and regular meetings to strengthen collaboration and reduce reliance on informal relationships; and**
- **explicit and robust privacy safeguards, including compliance with applicable Canadian legislation, adherence to the principles of necessity and proportionality, and consultation with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.**

Recommendation 24

That the Government of Canada dedicate immediate additional resources to locating and removing the 33 458 individuals with active deportation warrants and who, as of 29 January 2026, had not been located.

Recommendation 25

That the Government of Canada work with federal law enforcement to fortify and sustain collaboration mechanisms with United States border agencies to improve information sharing and cooperation.

Recommendation 26

That the Government of Canada continue to collaborate with First Nations police services, adopting a culturally informed approach, particularly with regard to marine surveillance in response to transnational crime.

Recommendation 27

That the Government of Canada provide the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with the necessary budget to reimburse the costs of operational support for search and rescue operations conducted by emergency services in border municipalities conducted at the request of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Canada Border Services Agency Jennifer Lutfallah, Vice-President, Commercial and Trade Branch Aaron McCrorie, Vice-President, Intelligence and Enforcement	2025/09/23	3
Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Shannon Grainger, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister Portfolio Affairs and Communications Mike McGuire, Director General, International and Border Policy	2025/09/23	3
Privy Council Office Gerard Peets, Assistant Deputy Minister, Canada’s Fight Against Fentanyl	2025/09/23	3
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Derek Santosuosso, Assistant Commissioner Jamie McGowan, Chief Superintendent Sean McGillis, Executive Director, Federal Policing	2025/09/23	3
Accipiter Radar Technologies Inc. Tim Nohara, President and Chief Executive Officer	2025/10/07	5
Customs and Immigration Union Mark Weber, National President	2025/10/07	5
Future Borders Coalition Laura Dawson, Executive Director	2025/10/07	5
The Bureau Samuel Cooper, Journalist	2025/10/07	5

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority Thomas Boyle, Chief Executive Officer	2025/10/21	7
Niagara Falls Bridge Commission Kenneth N. Bieger, Chief Executive Officer	2025/10/21	7
Royal Military College of Canada Christian Leuprecht, Professor	2025/10/21	7
Canada Border Services Agency Erin O'Gorman, President	2025/10/23	8
Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Hon. Gary Anandasangaree, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Safety Hon. Ruby Sahota, P.C., M.P., Secretary of State (Combatting Crime) Tricia Geddes, Deputy Minister	2025/10/23	8
Privy Council Office Kevin Brosseau, Commissioner of Canada's Fight Against Fentanyl	2025/10/23	8
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Michael Duheme, Commissioner	2025/10/23	8
As an individual Dr. Leah West, Associate Professor	2025/11/27	16
Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service Ranatiostha Swamp, Acting Chief of Police	2025/11/27	16
National Police Federation Brian Sauv�, President Lucas B�dard, Director, Atlantic Central Region	2025/11/27	16

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

National Police Federation

The Privileged Group Inc.

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 3, 5, 7, 8, 16, 31, 32 and 35](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos
Chair

