



ACTIVITY REPORT

June – October 2024

1. Legislative / Parliamentary work

1.1 Bill C-20, *Public Complaints and Review Commission Act*

Bill C-20 would create a new, independent review agency for both the RCMP and CBSA. It would replace the current RCMP review body, and create the first ever independent review body for the CBSA. The creation of an independent review body for the CBSA has been a longstanding, key demand and advocacy priority of the ICLMG coalition.

Since the last assembly, ICLMG:

- Organized meetings with partner organizations and member groups to discuss the bill and coordinate strategy
- Sent a joint brief with colleagues including proposed amendments for the Senate committee study of the bill: <https://iclmg.ca/c-20-brief-senate/>
- On October 31, 2024, Bill C-20 received Royal Assent. ICLMG will continue to work on bringing improvements to the new review body throughout the regulation process and as the new review body is established

1.2 Bill C-27, *Digital Charter Implementation Act, 2022*

Bill C-27 is the government's proposed update to Canada's private sector privacy law, namely the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*. It will also increase powers granted to the Privacy Commissioner, create a new tribunal, and enact a new *Artificial Intelligence and Data Act* (AIDA). While our primary focus is not on the private sector, there are key aspects of this bill that have an impact on national security, surveillance and privacy rights. AIDA will have more direct repercussions on our work, given the growing use of AI in surveillance capitalism and government surveillance.

Since the last assembly, ICLMG:

- Continued to organize meetings with partner organizations and privacy experts to discuss advocacy strategy regarding the bill
- Monitored the bill's progress at committee

1.3 Bill C-41, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts

Humanitarian aid and international assistance generally is being hindered by Canada's anti-terrorism laws, particularly in Afghanistan – a risk ICLMG has long warned about. In Spring 2023, the government tabled Bill C-41 to ostensibly address the issue through amendments to the Criminal Code. Despite several remaining shortcomings, the bill received royal assent in June 2023. The authorization regime was finally launched in June 2024; as of September 2024, no application has been approved.

Since our last assembly, ICLMG:

- Continued to participate in the informal C-41 legal working group to discuss implementation of Bill C-41 and monitor the development of regulations
- Discussed advocacy strategies to raise concerns about the implementation of the authorization regime with ICLMG members

1.4 “Online harms” legislation: Bill C-63

The federal government introduced Bill C-63 in February 2024. Known as the “Online Harms Act,” it responds to many of our concerns with the government's original “online harms” proposal from 2021, but several aspects of the bill continue to raise serious concerns. Since our last assembly, ICLMG has:

- Continued participating in meetings of the “Online Harms Network”
- Presented at the Digital Justice Summit on Legal and Policy Solutions for Online Harms organized by NCCM and OpenMedia in September in Ottawa
- Met with NDP MP Peter Julian regarding concerns with the bill

1.5 Foreign Interference legislation: Bill C-70

Although the federal inquiry into foreign interference had yet to issue its final report, in May 2024 the federal government introduced new foreign interference legislation, Bill C-70. Much of it reflects proposals from a consultation held from December to February, but fails to respond to many of the concerns that we raised with the government. Following an extremely rushed parliamentary process, the bill was adopted in June 2024 with very little study, and minimal amendments. Since last assembly, we have:

- Thoroughly analyzed the bill and met with other Canadian & international groups to discuss concerns
- Wrote a letter to the House committee studying the bill, co-signed by several partner organizations, to urge MPs to extend the study of C-70: <https://iclmg.ca/joint-statement-c-70/>
- Appeared at both the House of Commons Public Safety committee and the Senate National Security committee to present our concerns and warn that the bill will violate Charter rights if

not heavily amended: <https://iclmg.ca/secu-foreign-interference-bill/> & <https://iclmg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/C-70-BRIEF-PROPOSED-AMENDMENTS-ICLMG.pdf>

- Created a letter-writing campaign we updated three times in less than two weeks:
 - First, calling on Parliament to extend the study of the bill to protect rights: <https://iclmg.ca/action-foreign-interference-bill/>
 - Then, calling the Senate to extend the study of the bill
 - Finally, calling on the Senate to amend to bill to protect our rights
- Co-wrote an urgent public statement to Senators, signed by partner organizations, urging them to amend Bill C-70: “Charter Rights Under Threat if Senate Fails to Fix Foreign Interference Bill” <https://iclmg.ca/c-70-rights-under-threat/>
- Participated in two webinars on foreign interference:
 - “Understanding Bill C-70: Beyond a National Security State”, organized by Canadian Foreign Policy Institute: <https://youtu.be/b4UbbC48n78>
 - “What to do about foreign interference”, organized by the Centre for Free Expression: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4aooFMtHxo>
- Provided feedback on thematic document and questions for the Policy Phase of the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference (PIFI)
- In October 2024, submitted a brief for the Policy phase of the PIFI: <https://iclmg.ca/foreign-interference-inquiry-submission/>

1.6 Meetings with MPs & government officials and committee appearances

The ICLMG has continued to meet with various MPs, aids and government staff about the coalition’s policies and priorities, including:

- Met with Senator Yuen Pau Woo regarding Bill C-70
- Participated in NSIRA roundtable with academics and civil society
- Participated in CBSA & Digital Tools at the border roundtable consultation and follow-up
- Participated in the consultation on strengthening UN Counterterrorism Executive Directorate’s civil society engagement
- Participated in the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada’s Civil Society roundtable
- Met with NDP House Leader Peter Julian regarding Bill C-63
- Met with Public Safety advisors regarding Bill C-20
- Meeting with Amira Elghawaby, Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia of Canada

2. Accountability and oversight

2.1 National Security and Intelligence Review Agency

As part of its work on accountability and review, the ICLMG continues to monitor and react to the work of the NSIRA. Since the last assembly this has included following up with NSIRA for details regarding their review of the CRA’s anti-terrorism activities and recent review of CSIS’ dataset regime.

2.2 Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada

ICLMG continues to engage with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner as part of our work on oversight and accountability. Since the last assembly:

- We participated in the OPC’s quarterly civil society roundtable to discuss current privacy issues, including biometrics and Bill C-27

2.4 Review of national security legislation

Several pieces of national security legislation require mandatory review or renewal by Parliament. This year, three such pieces of legislation were supposed to be reviewed or renewed:

- National Security Act, 2017 (formerly Bill C-59) was meant to complete parliamentary review by June 2024
- National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (formerly Bill C-22) was also meant to be reviewed in 2023-24
- Section 83.3 of the Criminal Code which allows for preventative arrests if law enforcement suspect on reasonable grounds that it would prevent a terrorist activity, contains a sunset clause which expires in June 2024

ICLMG has continued to raise concerns about the lack of review with members of the Public Safety Committee. Our understanding is that no motion was passed to maintain s. 83.3 of the Criminal Code; its status remains uncertain.

3. Palestine and the right to dissent

The Israeli government, and its supporters, have attempted to justify their ongoing genocide against Gazans as “fighting terrorism,” a view echoed by Canadian officials. ICLMG has continued to monitor the situation and take action. Since the last assembly, we have:

- Shared news, analysis, and joint letters calling for a ceasefire, an arms embargo, for Palestinian refugees to be let into Canada, and for Canadian support for the ICC’s work with respect to Palestine/Israel
- We published a new statement to condemn one-year of genocide on October 7, 2024, as well as the smear campaigns, surveillance, harassment, fining and criminalizing of people, in Canada and abroad, expressing support for the rights of Palestinians: <https://iclmg.ca/one-year-of-genocide/>
- We have included concerns around the use of anti-terrorism as an excuse to stifle free expression and justify the Israeli military’s violence in our critique of various pieces of new legislation and during speaking engagements.

4. Canada’s terrorist entities list

Following the addition of Samidoun to Canada’s terrorist entities list on October 15, 2024:

- We published a statement reiterating our long-standing position that the list must be abolished: <https://iclmg.ca/iclmg-calls-for-end-to-terror-list/> - which garnered a lot of attention and engagement on social media

- We created an action calling of the abolition of the list and shared it widely: <https://iclmg.ca/abolish-terror-entities-list/>
- We participated in a webinar organized by Just Peace Advocates and Canadian Foreign Policy Institute entitled “Canada’s terror list enables Israeli terror”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liUUj4rqX9Q>

5. Canadians detained abroad, torture & redress

At least 17 Canadians, including 7 children, and three non-Canadian mothers remain indefinitely detained in camps and prisons in northeast Syria. On October 16, 2024, F.J., a Quebec mother of six who Canada refused to repatriate alongside her six children, was found dead in a Turkish deportation centre after having been acquitted of any criminal/terrorist allegations by a Turkish judge. As a result, we have:

- Sent a letter to Minister Joly urgently calling for an independent investigation into FJ’s death: <https://iclmg.ca/letter-investigation-fj/>
- Updated and promoted our letter-writing campaign in favour of repatriation of all to add a call for an independent investigation into FJ’s death: <https://iclmg.ca/repatriate-all-canadians/>

6. Security certificates & inadmissibility

ICLMG has continued to work to eliminate security certificates, and defend the rights of those who are placed under one.

Since our last assembly this work has included:

- Updated and continued to push the Moe Harkat letter-writing campaign on June 26th, the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
- Send another letter to the new Public Safety Minister for him to allow Moe to stay in Canada: <https://iclmg.ca/letter-harkat-2024/>

7. Anti-terrorism, national security and international bodies

7.1 Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Counterterrorism

The ICLMG continues to participate in the Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Counterterrorism. Since our last assembly this has included:

- Participation in quarterly coalition meetings to exchange information and strategize around impact of international counter-terrorism mechanisms on human rights in Canada and internationally
- Participation in quarterly working group meetings regarding impact of UN counter-terrorism activities on civil liberties and human rights

7.3 UN Counterterrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) Canada assessment

2023 year marked the second assessment of Canada's implementation of UN counterterrorism resolutions by CTED. Since then we have continued efforts for the public release of their report on Canada. To that end we have:

- Remained in contact with CTED regarding the status of the report;
- Followed up with Global Affairs Canada on the status of the report and urging its release.

8. ICLMG Twentieth Anniversary publication

We launched our 20th anniversary publication on September 11, 2024, the 23rd anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and the start of the so-called "War on Terror." We are grateful to all the contributors, translators, reviewers, and specifically Martine Éloy and Dominique Peschard from la Ligue des droits et libertés who helped so much during the editorial and publishing process.

- We sent out a press release announcing the launch and sent some advanced copies to key journalists
- We launched the publication with a webinar in English on Sept 11: <https://iclmg.ca/20-years-launch/>
- We had a second launch in person in Montreal, held in French organized by La Ligue des droits et libertés: <https://iclmg.ca/fr/lancement-montreal-20-ans/>
- We continue to share one article per week on our social media, and two texts per News Digest to increase visibility
- The publication is fully available online for free, but we are also sending physical copies to our top donors and all ICLMG members. The remainder are available for sale at <https://iclmg.ca/20years/>

9. Outreach, engagement and events

- Our social media accounts continue to increase in size and reach tens of thousands of people
- We have published 10 editions of the News Digest since the last assembly
- In June, we sent out our biannual "What we've been up to" email: <https://iclmg.ca/jan-june-2024/>
- We've been doing fundraising calls with every social media post related to the News Digest and the 20th anniversary publication
- Our campaign work continues to reach new audiences, and help with fundraising efforts. For example, we have received several donations following the statement calling for the abolition of the terrorist entities list – which has also seen some of our largest social media engagements ever – as well as several new email list subscribers
- We presented a guest lecture in a course on Privacy and Surveillance in the Masters of Public and International Affairs at York University

10. Media & publications

Select media coverage and ICLMG publications since our last assembly:

10.1 Media coverage & interviews

“Civil society groups urge to not rush the committee study of C-70: radio interview with ICLMG,” Shaye Ganam, 630 CHED in Edmonton and QR Calgary - 770 AM:

<https://cms.megaphone.fm/channel/CORU1475142703?selected=CORU7129096230>

“Don’t rush committee study of foreign interference bill, civil society groups urge,” Tim McSorley, The Canadian Press, June 6, 2024: <https://sasknow.com/2024/06/06/dont-rush-committee-study-of-foreign-interference-bill-civil-society-groups-urge/>

« Loi concernant la lutte contre l’ingérence étrangère: La précipitation est mauvaise conseillère », Tim McSorley, La Presse, 6 juin 2024 : <https://www.lapresse.ca/dialogue/opinions/2024-06-06/loi-concernant-la-lutte-contre-l-ingerence-etrangere/la-precipitation-est-mauvaise-conseillere.php>

“Opposition to stampeding Bill C-70 through Parliament grows,” John Price, Canadian Dimension, June 10, 2024: <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/opposition-to-stampeding-bill-c-70-through-parliament-grows>

“Civil-liberties groups raise alarm as Ottawa votes on foreign-interference bill,” Marieke Walsh & Kristy Kirkup, The Globe and Mail, June 12, 2024: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-house-of-commons-expected-to-pass-bill-creating-foreign-interference/>

“Bill C-70: Trudeau's latest assault on free speech,” Dimitri Lascaris’s blog, June 17, 2024: <https://dimitrilascaris.org/2024/06/17/bill-c-70-trudeaus-latest-assault-on-free-speech/>

“Civil society groups argue ‘mad dash’ leaves no time for proper study of foreign influence registry bill,” Jesse Cnockaert, The Hill Times, June 17, 2024: <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2024/06/17/civil-society-groups-argue-mad-dash-leaves-no-time-for-proper-study-of-foreign-influence-registry-bill/425347/>

“Senators approve bill to fight foreign interference after voting down amendment,” Jim Bronskill, The Canadian Press, June 20, 2024: https://www.thecanadianpressnews.ca/national/senators-approve-bill-to-fight-foreign-interference-after-voting-down-amendment/article_19d86e23-1f62-5b6a-942c-b64cba81d1a8.html

“Commentary: The International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group at 20 w/ Tim McSorley,” FIPA podcast: Access and Privacy online, September 25, 2024: <https://fipanews.podbean.com/e/commentary-the-international-civil-liberties-monitoring-group-at-20-w-tim-mcsorley/>

“Criminalization of Samidoun is an attack on the Palestine solidarity movement – Press release,” CJPME, October 24, 2024: https://www.cjpme.org/pr_2024_10_24_criminalization_of_samidoun

“The Israel Lobby Wants You Suspended, Fired Or In Prison,” Davide Mastracci, The Maple, October 30, 2024: <https://www.readthemaple.com/the-israel-lobby-wants-you-suspended-fired-or-in-prison/>

“RCMP plans to go undercover online to trap violent extremists,” Elizabeth Thompson, CBC News, Nov. 3, 2024: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/violent-extremism-online-surveillance-1.7371494>

Check out all coverage of ICLMG in the media at <https://iclmg.ca/about-us/iclmg-in-the-media-2/>

10.2 Press releases and statements

- Co-wrote a letter to the House committee studying the bill with several partner organizations to urge MPs to extend the study of C-70: <https://iclmg.ca/joint-statement-c-70/>
- Co-wrote an urgent public statement to Senators, signed by partner organizations, urging them to amend Bill C-70: “Charter Rights Under Threat if Senate Fails to Fix Foreign Interference Bill”: <https://iclmg.ca/c-70-rights-under-threat/>
- We published a new statement to condemn one-year of genocide on Oct. 7, 2024, as well as the smear campaigns, surveillance, harassment, fining and criminalizing of people, in Canada and abroad, expressing support for the rights of Palestinians: <https://iclmg.ca/one-year-of-genocide/>
- We published a statement reiterating our long-lasting position that the terrorist entities list must be abolished: <https://iclmg.ca/iclmg-calls-for-end-to-terror-list/> - which garnered a lot of attention and engagement on social media
- We sent a letter to Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly urgently calling for an independent investigation into FJ’s death: <https://iclmg.ca/letter-investigation-fj/>
- We sent a letter to the Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc urging that he drop Mohamed Harkat’s security certificate and allow him to remain in Canada: <https://iclmg.ca/letter-harkat-2024/>
- We sent out a press release announcing the launch of the 20th anniversary publication and sent some advanced copies to key journalists

11. Institutional and Governance matters

Since our last Assembly, ICLMG:

- Held two Steering Committee meetings in June and September
- Carried out annual membership fundraising activities
- Continued to develop and implement our new fundraising strategy
- Met with several ICLMG members to provide updates and discuss strategy
- Worked to identify and recruit new coalition members
- Worked with the co-chairs and Diana Martin to update staff contracts