

# Crime reported by police serving areas with majority Indigenous populations, 2018

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Self-reported data have repeatedly shown high rates of victimization in Canada among First Nations people, Métis and Inuit. In the criminal justice system, Indigenous peoples are notably over-represented, particularly among offenders in correctional services. There has been much discussion of the ongoing impact of colonization on First Nations people, Métis and Inuit in Canada. Many communities are dealing with the effects of socioeconomic marginalization, violence and intergenerational trauma that can be factors in crime. A *Juristat* article released today examines "Crime reported by police serving areas where the majority of the population is Indigenous, 2018."

## **Representing 21% of Canada's Indigenous population, the Indigenous communities in the study were often rural, relatively small and remote**

This study uses police-reported data from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR) to examine the nature of crime experienced in areas served by the 182 police services in Canada identified as serving majority Indigenous populations. It is important to note that the communities identified as Indigenous in this study are not representative of Indigenous populations in general. Rather, they are a small set of communities, including villages and reserves that are rural, relatively small and often remote, and they represent a relatively small proportion (21%) of the total Indigenous population of Canada.

## **Mischief, common assault and disturbing the peace represent more than half of police-reported crime in Indigenous communities studied and less than one-quarter in non-Indigenous communities**

In 2018, rates of crime reported by police serving majority Indigenous populations were almost six times higher than crime rates reported by police services that served primarily non-Indigenous populations. The higher crime rate reported by police serving Indigenous communities in this study can be mainly attributed to greater levels of mischief, common assault, and disturbing the peace. These three types of offences accounted for less than one-quarter of police-reported crime in non-Indigenous communities (23%), but for more than half (58%) of crime reported in Indigenous communities. Of note, the reporting of mischief and disturbing the peace may be affected by differences in police practices, for example with respect to the use of provincial violations and municipal by-laws for these types of behaviour.

Levels of police-reported crime in these Indigenous communities were higher than in non-Indigenous communities for almost all types of offences, however.

## **About half of police-reported violent crime in Indigenous communities studied committed by a family member or intimate partner**

The rate of violence at the hands of family members other than a current or former spouse was 16 times higher in the Indigenous communities in the study compared with elsewhere, with the largest differences observed for major assault and common assault. In particular, individuals in Indigenous communities were proportionally more likely than those in non-Indigenous communities to be victimized by extended family members. Furthermore, the rate of intimate partner violence reported by police serving majority Indigenous populations was 10 times higher than in non-Indigenous communities. This includes violence where the perpetrator was a current or former spouse, or another intimate partner.

The connection between high rates of victimization and colonization, the residential school system and intergenerational trauma has been the topic of much research and discussion. Overall, violent crime rates reported within Indigenous communities in this study were almost nine times higher than those reported by police in non-Indigenous communities. Most of this difference can be attributed to higher rates of common assault in Indigenous communities.



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## Relatively high rate of individuals accused of crime among older populations in Indigenous communities

In non-Indigenous communities, the highest rates of individuals accused of crime were among youth and young adults. In contrast, rates of accused in Indigenous communities in this study were generally higher among adults than youth, and were notably high among older adults. While rates of youth accused reported by police serving majority Indigenous populations were 6 times higher than in non-Indigenous communities, rates for adult age groups were over 10 times higher. Moreover, rates of accused in Indigenous communities were still higher even among 45 to 54-year olds than among youth. This may be related to higher levels of risk factors among the older Indigenous population, including childhood trauma, residential school experiences, and associated effects such as mental health and substance use issues. For example, previous research on Indigenous populations generally found that while there were large differences in rates of experiencing child maltreatment among older Indigenous people relative to their non-Indigenous counterparts, this difference was not present among the younger population.

### Note to readers

*The Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collects detailed information on all criminal incidents reported by all police services in Canada, meaning all municipal, provincial and First Nations police services, as well as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). For provincial police and the RCMP, data are provided at the detachment level. In order to examine crime affecting Indigenous communities, this study identified police services where more than half of the population they served was Indigenous. For ease of readability, these are often referred to as "Indigenous communities" in this study. It is important to note that the populations served by these police services do not represent all Indigenous communities in Canada.*

*Nationally, an estimated 88% of the population served by these 182 police services were Indigenous (that identified as First Nations, Métis or Inuit in the 2016 Census of Population, or that lived on reserve). The median population served by these 182 police services was fewer than 1,500 individuals each. Most of the populations served lived in a rural area (91%) and 71% lived in the northern regions of the provinces or in the Territories. Over two-thirds (72%) of the population in these Indigenous communities lived in remote areas. Overall, the police services identified as serving majority Indigenous populations in this study served 70% of the total population living on reserve in Canada.*

*Information about the specific location of incidents (such as on-reserve) or the Indigenous identity of accused and victims is not consistently reported to the UCR. Going forward, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and Statistics Canada are committed to working with the policing community and key organizations to enable police to report statistics on Indigenous and ethno-cultural groups in police-reported crime statistics on victims and accused persons.*

### Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3302](#) and [3315](#).

The article "[Crime reported by police serving areas where the majority of the population is Indigenous, 2018](#)" is now available as part of the publication *Juristat* ([85-002-X](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).