

Our File: 1555

March 20, 2014

**BY FACSIMILE - 613-990-5230**

Sylvie E Roussel, Senior Counsel  
Security Intelligence Review Committee  
PO Box 2430, Station "D"  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5W5

Dear Ms Roussel:

**Re: British Columbia Civil Liberties Association  
Complaint re CSIS Surveillance and Information Sharing with the NEB  
SIRC File No.: 1500-481**

We are writing further to your letter of March 18, 2014 regarding the complaint by the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association ("BCCLA") dated February 6, 2014.


As you know, BCCLA's February 6 complaint was copied to Michel Coulombe, Interim Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service ("CSIS") pursuant to section 41 of the *CSIS Act*. We have today received a response from CSIS in this matter [see attached].

As you will see from Mr Venner's letter, CSIS has provided no substantive response to the serious concerns raised by BCCLA's complaint. Rather, CSIS simply notes its statutory obligations and the oversight provided by SIRC, but declines to respond to the specific concerns raised in BCCLA's complaint. It is particularly troubling that Mr Venner's letter gives no indication that CSIS has conducted any inquiries or review of the matters referred to in BCCLA's complaint whatsoever.

In these circumstances, it is BCCLA's position that CSIS has failed to provide any substantive response to its complaint. Accordingly, we hereby ask the Review Committee to commence its investigation of BCCLA's complaint without further delay.

We look forward to hearing from you in the very near future regarding next steps in the complaint process, and remain available to address any questions or furnish any additional information which you may require in the course of your inquiry into this matter.

Yours truly,

*FOR*   
Paul Champ  
encl.

c: J. Paterson, Executive Director, BCCLA  
R. Mangat, BCCLA



Canadian Service  
Security canadien du  
Intelligence renseignement  
Service de sécurité

Paul Champ  
Champ & Associates  
Counsel, British Columbia Civil Liberties Association  
43 Florence Street  
Ottawa, ON K2P 0W6

MAR 14 2014

Dear Mr. Champ:

Thank you for your letter dated February 6, 2014, in which you raise concerns, on behalf of your client, the BC Civil Liberties Association, relating to the investigation of groups and individuals associated with environmental activism.

The activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) are governed by the *CSIS Act*. Our mandate includes, under section 12 of the Act, investigating and advising the Government of Canada on activities that may on reasonable grounds be suspected of constituting threats to national security, defined in section 2 of the act, as: a) espionage or sabotage; b) foreign interference; c) terrorism and extremism; and d) subversion. The *CSIS Act* also does not constrain the provision of advice to any particular department, agency, or Minister of the Crown.

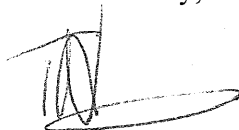
As you note, the *CSIS Act* expressly forbids the investigation of lawful advocacy, protest, or dissent. Such activities can only be investigated when they are carried out in conjunction with the threat-related activities cited above, again as stipulated by *the Act*. The Service's adherence to the *Act*, which is of course thoroughly reviewed annually by the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), is very well-established. In that regard I would encourage you to examine SIRC's most recent annual report and in particular its review of CSIS activities related to domestic investigations and emerging issues. In that review, SIRC found that the Service adhered to the law and internal policy, that the Service did not investigate "activities related only to legitimate protest and dissent," and that the Service was quick to terminate investigations when individuals were no longer involved in threat-related activity. The above referenced report can be found at [www.sirc-csars.gc.ca](http://www.sirc-csars.gc.ca).

In response to your concerns, as articulated in the four bullets outlined on pages 2 to 3 of your letter, it is difficult to respond insofar as credible specifics of any wrongdoing or improper conduct by the Service were not provided. The information and observations are largely speculative and based on third-party information. The Service can, however, assure you that that we conduct ourselves according to the law, policy, and Ministerial Direction.

I understand your concerns that Canadians engaged in peaceful advocacy and protest would be targeted illegitimately by a Government agency. In fact, the employees of CSIS are devoted to protecting Canada's national security and ensuring that the very rights of privacy and free speech which you refer to are indeed protected from individuals and groups who would reject peaceful democratic processes to attain their goals.

I trust that the foregoing has been of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Venner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Venner  
Assistant Director  
Policy and Strategic Partnerships