

Canada unveils new cyber monitoring rules

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"New technologies provide new ways of committing crimes, making them more difficult to investigate," Justice Minister Rob Nicholson told a press conference in unveiling the measure.

"This legislation will enable authorities to keep pace with rapidly changing technology."

Opposition parties and civil liberties groups, however, said new police

powers contained in the bill could result in unreasonable searches and seizures.

Privacy Commissioner Jennifer Stoddart, whose office is independent from the government, said in a letter to Public Safety Minister Vic Toews last October she had "deep concerns" about the proposed changes, which she said could have "serious repercussions for privacy rights."

"I recognize that rapid developments in communication technologies are creating new challenges for [law enforcement](#) and national [security authorities](#) and that the Internet cannot be a lawless zone," Stoddart said.

But "by expanding the legal tools of the state to conduct surveillance and access private information, and by reducing the depth of judicial scrutiny... (the bill would allow the) government to subject more individuals to surveillance and scrutiny."

Further more it goes "far beyond simply maintaining investigative capacity or modernizing search powers. Rather, (it) added significant new capabilities for investigators to track, and search and seize digital information about individuals."

The legislation would require telecommunications service providers to set up systems that allow police or Canada's spy service to intercept communications as part of their investigations.

As well, they would be required to provide subscriber information to authorities and other data that would allow police to track suspects using a cell phone or a computer.

Toews in parliament insisted the newest draft of the bill balances law enforcement needs and privacy rights, but Stoddart's office told AFP her

concerns remain.

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