

Canada stops sharing intel over privacy breach

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Canadian Minister of National Defence Harjit Sajjan, seen on December 21, 2015, said the illegally collected information did not contain names or enough information to identify individuals

Canada's ultra-secret eavesdropping agency said Thursday it has stopped sharing intelligence with international partners after revealing it had illegally collected Canadians' metadata in sweeps of foreign communications.

In a report to parliament, the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) said the breach was unintentional and had been discovered internally in 2013.

A CSE official blamed a software flaw that resulted in sharing of metadata, used to identify, manage or route communications over networks that could identify Canadians.

The agency said the likelihood of this leading to any abuses was "low."

But as a precaution, the CSE suspended its sharing of metadata with its Five Eyes intelligence partners—Australia, Britain, New Zealand, and the United States—until it finds a fix to the problem.

Canadian Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan said he was satisfied that any data that had already been shared with the intelligence alliance before the software glitch was discovered "did not contain names or enough information on its own to identify individuals."

He also said he accepted an investigation's conclusion that the breach of Canadian privacy and national security laws was "unintentional."

It was unclear what, if any, impact the metadata sharing stoppage has had on Five Eyes intelligence gathering.

Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale said Canada's allies have been "very supportive" while the CSE told AFP it continues to have "strong and collaborative relationships" with its allies in other areas.

In another report also released Thursday, Canada's spy agency watchdog raised concerns about efforts by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to counter "insider threats."

The Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC) said it identified "a number of deficiencies" in the way CSIS prevents and investigates classified document leaks, following the high-profile leaks by Edward Snowden in the United States and the 2012 arrest of Canadian navy officer Jeffrey Paul Delisle for selling state secrets to Russia.

It highlighted "one situation in particular (in which) SIRC found that CSIS had failed to give a case the appropriate level of attention and to take follow-up action," but provided no details.

CSIS rejected its recommendations, it noted.

SIRC also raised a potential legal concern with respect to CSIS's use of paid Al-Qaeda or Taliban informants, saying it was in conflict with United Nations Al-Qaeda and Taliban Regulations that prohibit association with or funding of these two jihadist groups.

The release of both reports was delayed by October's legislative elections, and comes as the new Liberal government undertakes a complete review of Canada's [security intelligence](#) framework.

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