



THE Watchdog

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Ombudsman to investigate use of force in jails

Ontario Ombudsman André Marin recently [announced a systemic investigation](#) into how the province deals with the use of excessive force against inmates by Ontario jail guards, sparked by numerous complaints that such incidents are being covered up or ignored.

The investigation, conducted by the Special Ombudsman Response Team, will look at the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' response to inmate complaints, including how it conducts investigations and enforces policies on the use of force.

"We had more than 100 complaints in the last year from inmates who say correctional officers assaulted them, and more than 25 since this April alone," said Mr. Marin, who earlier raised concerns about this issue in his Annual Report, released in June. "Even more disturbing are the allegations that violence has been covered up – and that they come from several different institutions."

Anyone who has relevant information that could be useful to the investigation is asked to call 1-800-263-1830 during office hours or submit a complaint form at www.ombudsman.on.ca.



Sharpen your teeth this November



The Ontario Ombudsman's office will be holding its fifth annual course for administrative investigators, [Sharpening Your Teeth](#) (SYT), from November 28-30 at the Sutton Place Hotel in Toronto.

The course has welcomed colleagues from across Canada and around the world, including from Australia, Bermuda, Scotland, South Korea, Israel, Brazil, Ireland, Holland, the Caribbean, and the U.S. It covers advanced approaches to administrative investigations, with a focus on systemic issues, and features the expertise of the Ombudsman of Ontario's Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT). This year's keynote speaker will be Shelly Jamieson, head of the Ontario Public Service and Secretary of Cabinet.

The **Public Protector of South Africa, Adv. Thuli Madonesla**, was in Toronto for SYT last fall and invited Ombudsman Marin and staff to Pretoria this month to conduct a version of the course for 85 of her staff. "In Canada, Mr. Marin has an unsurpassed reputation for fair, thorough and objective systemic investigations. His SORT model has resulted in major government reforms that improved the lives of the people of Ontario," her office said in a [press release](#).

The course is filling up quickly. Contact Sue Mason at smason@ombudsman.on.ca or 416-586-3453 to reserve your spot. Please note that SYT is currently offered in English only.

Ombudsman to debut web app

Soon you'll be able to file a complaint right from your smartphone. This fall, the Ontario Ombudsman will be launching a mobile version of its website in the form of a web app - one of the only ombudsman offices in the world to go mobile.

Mr. Marin has long been a champion of social media and earlier this month, the Law Times featured Ombudsman Ontario and the office's use of social media in the public sector.

"There's a whole demographic in society that just lives in social media and on their cellphones, and it's a segment that is growing all the time," Marin says. "They tap into Wi-Fi wherever they are and they've cancelled their home phones. We're an avenue of last resort for people, and they need to know how to access us and get information about our office."

-'Ombud opens door to complainants via social media', Law Times, August 22, 2011

[\[Read the full article here\]](#)



The Ombudsman's Office oversees and investigates close to 500 provincial ministries, agencies, tribunals, and Crown corporations.

[File a complaint online](#)

Phone: 1-800-263-1830, Fax: 416-586-3485 / TTY 1-866-411-4211

Email: info@ombudsman.on.ca

Ombudsman Ontario
Bell Trinity Square
483 Bay St., 10th Floor, South Tower
Toronto, ON
M5G 2C9



NEW WEBSITE

We'd love to hear your feedback about our new site.

We unveiled our redesigned site this past June. If you had a chance to visit us at www.ombudsman.on.ca, we'd welcome your comments and critiques! Drop us a line at info@ombudsman.on.ca and let us know what you think.

CONNECTING ONLINE

The Ombudsman now has more than **5,100** Twitter followers and more than **1,500** Facebook fans.

Thanks for your comments, conversation, and feedback!

Please continue to reach out to us on social media, or drop us a line at thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca.

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