

## Canada targeting organized car thieves

*by UPI*

WINNIPEG, Manitoba -- Canada's laws governing car theft and organized crime are being toughened, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced Wednesday. He made the announcement in Winnipeg, Manitoba, which has the highest per-capita rate of car thefts in the country, the Winnipeg Free Press reported. Harper said at least 20 percent of vehicles stolen are taken by organized rings that remove vehicle identification numbers, and that many of the altered cars and trucks end up resold elsewhere in Canada or in another country. He said "police and prosecutors haven't had all the tools they need" under the criminal code, so various laws were being redrafted to be introduced in Parliament by his minority Conservative government. "First, we're making it a crime to alter, destroy or remove a vehicle identification number," Harper said. "Second, we're expanding the criminal definition of trafficking and stolen property, including stolen cars and car parts."

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