



Reply to Issues 7 & 8:

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the Occasion of the Committee's Eighth and Ninth Periodic Review of Canada

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Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC) and
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA)

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Executive Summary

This report on Canada's compliance with the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* has been prepared by the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC).

FAFIA is an alliance of more than sixty women's equality seeking organizations dedicated to making international human rights commitments a reality in women's everyday lives in Canada.

CASAC is a pan-Canadian association of sexual assault centres that have come together to work for the legal, social and attitudinal changes necessary to prevent, and ultimately eradicate, rape and sexual assault.

During past reviews, the CEDAW Committee has expressed serious concerns about Canada's compliance with women's political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights and issued recommendations for better observance of those rights. Canada has not implemented many of these recommendations. This submission draws the Committee's attention to the particular issue of violence against women and its consequences for the women of Canada.

Violence Against Women

Trends in Violence Against Women

Many women in Canada continue to be affected by male violence, including sexual assault, severe forms of intimate partner violence, and criminal harassment.¹ The current system in Canada fails to adequately address violence against women and support female victims of violence. Services are underfunded and lack coordination nationally.² Additionally, many women do not have confidence in the justice system to help stop violence against them³ and the vast majority do not report violence to the police.⁴

The realities of women experiencing violence remain dire in Canada:

- Women are murdered by a current or previous spouse, dating partner or other intimate relation at a rate four times higher than men;⁵
- 67 women were victims of intimate partner homicide in 2014, compared to 58 in the previous year.⁶
- In 2014, less than one fifth of all victims of spousal violence contacted the police for help;⁷
- The percentage of sexual assaults reported to the police by women declined from 8% in 2004, to 5% in 2014.⁸
- Hundreds of women fleeing violence are turned away from shelters on a single day due to a lack of capacity;⁹

¹ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends* (2013) at 23, online: <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.htm>> [Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*]; Statistics Canada, *Criminal victimization in Canada, 2014* (2015) at 23, online: <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14241-eng.htm>> [Statistics Canada, *Criminal victimization in Canada*].

² Ending Violence, “Safety planning across culture and community: A guide for front line violence against women responders” (Vancouver: Ending Violence, 2014) at 16.

³ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 98-99.

⁴ *Ibid* at 98.

⁵ Statistics Canada, *Homicide in Canada, 2014* (2015) at 11, online: <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14244-eng.htm>> [Statistics Canada, *Homicide in Canada*].

⁶ *Ibid* at 34.

⁷ Statistics Canada, *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014* (2016) at 10, online: <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14303-eng.htm>> [Statistics Canada, *Family violence in Canada*].

⁸ Statistics Canada, *Criminal victimization in Canada*, *supra* note 1 at 25.

⁹ Canadian Network of Women’s Shelters and Transition House, *Shelter Voices* (2016), online: <<http://endvaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/ShelterVoices-2016-WEB.pdf>> [Canadian Network of Women’s Shelters and Transition Houses, *Shelter Voices*]; Statistics Canada, *Shelters for abused women in Canada, 2014* (2015), online: <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14207-eng.htm>> [Statistics Canada, *Shelters for abused women in Canada*].

- Women in the territories, where access to services are limited, face the highest levels of violent victimization;¹⁰
- Sexual harassment of female officers continues to be an issue in the Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF);¹¹ and
- Women, particularly Indigenous women, remain vulnerable to sexual exploitation, sexual assault, and violence by police officers.¹²

Limitations of Statistical Data

Much of the data relied on in this report comes from Statistics Canada databases. Although the data gathered and analyzed by Statistics Canada is useful in monitoring trends in violence against women, it has several limitations.

For example, data collected for the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey is restricted to *Criminal Code* offences that have been both reported and substantiated by the police. This excludes many forms of violence that women experience, as defined by international standards, those that are not reported, as well as incidents that are deemed unsubstantiated by law enforcement.¹³ The number of violent incidents experienced by women is significantly higher than the number of incidents they report to the police. Women do not report the vast majority of male violence to the police, in part, due to stigma, shame, and fear.¹⁴

Every five years Statistics Canada interviews a random sample of the population about their experiences with crime, including sexual assault and intimate partner violence. This survey is conducted too infrequently to track change over time. In addition, without a dedicated survey on violence against women, only partial data is collected about women's experiences of violence.

¹⁰ Gathy Gulli & Patricia Treble, "Canada's shame", *Maclean's* (14 October 2010), online: <<http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/canadas-shame/>>; Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 13.

¹¹ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Report on allegations of harassment and sexual misconduct at the RCMP's Canadian police college explosives training unit* (2016), online: <<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/report-allegations-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-the-rcmps-canadian-police-college-explosives>>; Marie Deschamps, *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces*, External Review Authority, National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (27 March 2015) at i, online: <<http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-support-services/external-review-sexual-mh-2015/summary.page>> [Deschamps, *External Review*].

¹² Human Rights Watch, *Those Who Take Us Away: Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2013) at 52, online: <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/canada0213webwcover_0.pdf> [HRW, *Those Who Take Us Away*]; Amnesty International, *Civilian oversight needed in Val d'Or investigation of Sûreté du Québec* (2015), online: <<http://www.amnesty.ca/blog/civilian-oversight-needed-val-d%E2%80%99or-investigation-s%C3%BBret%C3%A9-du-qu%C3%A9bec>>.

¹³ Statistics Canada, *Criminal victimization in Canada*, *supra* note 1 at 7; Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid* at 98.

Statistics Canada has acknowledged that the Homicide Survey has historically under-identified Indigenous homicides. The Indigenous identity of around half of the victims and persons accused of homicide was categorized as “unknown” due to police practices that fail to record the racial identity of the victims and the accused.¹⁵ This is further compounded by the suppression of racialized data on crime collected by police.¹⁶

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence remains one of the greatest risks of violence for women. It has consistently been identified as one of the most common forms of violence against women.¹⁷

The gendered aspect of intimate partner violence in Canada is stark. In 2011, eight out of ten police-reported incidents of intimate partner violence were assaults and other forms of violence directed at women.¹⁸ Intimate partners are the most common perpetrators of police-reported violence against women, accounting for 45% of all accused persons in these cases.¹⁹

However, spousal violence is persistently underreported. Only 30% of partner assaults on women are reported to the police, a figure that has declined in recent years.²⁰ Many victims did not report out of fear of retaliation by their spouse, a lack of confidence in the justice system, or a belief that the police could not do anything or would not help.²¹ The low numbers of reporting suggest that current police practices are not sufficiently protecting women.

Police are only one aspect of the response to violence against women. Women are more likely to access social services such as crisis lines, shelters and women’s centres than the police when abused by a partner.²² Yet these services remain critically underfunded. In 2011, a federal government survey found that more shelters were relying on funding from municipal governments, charitable donations, and user fees, than on funding from federal or provincial governments.²³ This is particularly true for shelters that regularly turn away women, who are fleeing violence, due to a lack of capacity.²⁴

¹⁵ Statistics Canada, *Homicide in Canada*, *supra* note 5 at 16.

¹⁶ Paul Millar & Akwasi Owusu-Bempah, “Whitewashing criminal justice in Canada: Preventing research through data suppression” (2011) 26 *Can JL & Soc* 653 at 660 [Miller, *Whitewashing*].

¹⁷ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 20.

¹⁸ *Ibid* at 20.

¹⁹ Statistics Canada, *Family violence in Canada*, *supra* note 7 at 23.

²⁰ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 94.

²¹ *Ibid* at 98.

²² *Ibid* at 100.

²³ *Ibid* at 105.

²⁴ Canadian Network of Women’s Shelters and Transition House, *Shelter Voices*, *supra* note 9.

Services for women experiencing violence are critical. Substantial numbers of female victims of violent partners experience severe violence²⁵, physical injury,²⁶ emotional trauma, and fear for their lives.²⁷

Women are more likely than men to be killed by their intimate partners. In 2014, women were murdered by a current or previous spouse, dating partner or other intimate at a rate four times greater than men.²⁸ Sixty-seven women were victims of intimate partner homicide in 2014, compared to 58 in the previous year.²⁹ In 2011, spousal homicide rates were consistently higher for women than men in all age categories.³⁰

The magnitude and severity of violence against women, and prevalence of spousal femicide, indicates that support systems and interventions have not been sufficient to protect women from male partner violence. Without adequate social assistance and supports, women are often forced to stay in abusive relationships because they are unable to support themselves or their children.³¹ Poverty, race, language barriers,³² disability,³³ and inadequate social assistance also contribute to violence against women.³⁴ Prime Minister Trudeau has acknowledged that poverty in Canada is sexist.³⁵ Women remain at greater risk of violence due to a lack of affordable housing in Canada; this has been cited by advocates as the number one reason women stay in violent relationships.³⁶

Child protection authorities can hold women responsible for their partners' violence.³⁷ When violence against women occurs in families with children, it is often considered abuse or neglect under provincial child welfare legislation.³⁸ Authorities in these jurisdictions have the mandate

²⁵ Statistics Canada, *Family violence in Canada*, *supra* note 7 at 7.

²⁶ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 83.

²⁷ *Ibid* at 9.

²⁸ Statistics Canada, *Homicide in Canada*, *supra* note 5 at 11.

²⁹ *Ibid* at 34.

³⁰ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 56.

³¹ Janet Mosher, Margaret Little, Eileen Morrow, Jo-Anne Boulding & Nancy VanderPlaats, *Walking on Eggshells: Abused women's experiences of Ontario's welfare system* (Toronto: Women Abuse and Welfare Research Project, 2004) at 16 [Mosher et al, *Walking on Eggshells*].

³² Wellesley Institute, *Violence against women: Why race matters* (2013), online:

<<http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/healthy-communities/violence-against-women-why-race-matters/>>.

³³ Vecova, *Violence against women with disabilities – violence prevention review* (2011), online:

<http://www.canadianwomen.org/sites/canadianwomen.org/files/PDF%20-%20VP%20Resources%20-%20Vecova_CWF_%20Women%20with%20Disabilities_%202011.pdf>.

³⁴ Mosher et al, *Walking on Eggshells*, *supra* note 31 at 13.

³⁵ Justin Trudeau, "A letter from Justin Trudeau", *One* (August 2016), online: <<https://www.one.org/canada/blog/i-wholeheartedly-agree-poverty-is-sexist/>>.

³⁶ Sidrah Ahmad, "How women facing violence struggle to access safe housing", *Torontoist* (18 July 2016), online: <<http://torontoist.com/2016/07/how-women-facing-violence-struggle-to-access-safe-housing/>>.

³⁷ Mosher et al, *Walking on Eggshells*, *supra* note 31 at 66.

³⁸ Gwen Brodsky et al, *Advancing the Rights of Poor Women: the Vicious Circle* (Vancouver: Poverty and Human Rights Centre, 2010), at 22 online: <http://povertyandhumanrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/The-Vicious-Circle-Report.pdf> [Brodsky, *Advancing Rights*].

to remove children who witness violence, from their mothers' care.³⁹ For women on social assistance, losing their children can mean that they also lose their housing because they no longer qualify for a family housing allowance.⁴⁰ Child protection services will not return children to their mothers unless they have safe and adequate housing to receive them.⁴¹

Sexual Assault

Women are disproportionately the victims of sexual assaults. In police reported sexual assaults, 92% of victims were women 15 years and older.⁴² It remains the most common offence against girls, with sexual offences accounting for 47% of all violent crimes against girls under the age of 12.⁴³

Police services in Canada have failed many victims of sexual assault. A study of sexual assaults reported to the Ottawa Police found that less than half of sexual assault victims reported having a positive experience with police officers or specialist sexual assault investigators.⁴⁴

Sexual assaults are under-reported and rarely result in convictions. Over 40% of reported sexual offences against women were unsolved by the police in 2011.⁴⁵ Even where police attend and charges are laid, conviction rates are unacceptably low: less than 1% of all sexual assaults result in a conviction.⁴⁶

Women's lack of faith in the justice system is reflected in a recent drop in reporting sexual assault to the police. Reports of sexual assaults to the police by women have declined from 8% in 2004, to 5% in 2014.⁴⁷ This is not due to a decrease in sexual assaults. While many other violent offences have decreased in number, sexual assault rates have remained stable between 2004 and 2014.⁴⁸

³⁹ Mosher et al, *Walking on Eggshells*, *supra* note 31 at 66.

⁴⁰ Brodsky, *Advancing Rights*, *supra* note 38 at 26.

⁴¹ *Ibid* at 26.

⁴² *Ibid* at 29.

⁴³ *Ibid* at 15.

⁴⁴ Holly Johnson, *Improving the police response to crimes of violence against women: Ottawa women have their say* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 2015) at 3, online:

https://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/criminology/sites/socialsciences.uottawa.ca/criminology/files/h.johnson_research_summary.pdf.

⁴⁵ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 102.

⁴⁶ Holly Johnson, "Limits of a criminal justice response: Trends in police and court processing of sexual assault" in E Sheehy, ed, *Sexual assault in Canada: Law, legal practice and women's activism* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2012) at 613.

⁴⁷ Statistics Canada, *Criminal victimization in Canada*, *supra* note 1 at 25.

⁴⁸ *Ibid* at 3; Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 13.

Homicide

Homicide rates against women have remained relatively constant over the last decade.⁴⁹ Efforts taken by police and government have not led to a reduction in the number of women murdered. This is particularly true for vulnerable groups of women, who remain at high risk of femicide, such as women who have experienced intimate partner violence,⁵⁰ Indigenous women,⁵¹ and women engaged in prostitution.⁵²

Between 2001 and 2011, six out of ten female homicide victims had a history of family violence.⁵³ Women are particularly vulnerable when they are ending a relationship with a violent spouse. Risk of spousal homicide was highest among separated women.⁵⁴ Between 2006 and 2011, women were six times more likely to be killed by an ex-partner than by a current married spouse.⁵⁵

Quantifying homicides against Indigenous women can be difficult, as racial data on victims and offenders are not consistently collected or documented.⁵⁶ Even with these difficulties, Indigenous women are still disproportionately represented as homicide victims.⁵⁷ They are six times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous females.⁵⁸ The disproportionate rate of disappeared and murdered Indigenous women has become a national issue.

The vast majority of people engaged in prostitution are female, and they are at high risk of being killed in Canada. Between 2004 and 2013, an average of 7 were killed each year and 12 were killed in 2013.⁵⁹

Violence Against Indigenous Women

Indigenous women remain one of the most vulnerable groups in Canada. The RCMP has documented over 1,180 disappeared or murdered Indigenous women since 1980.⁶⁰ Indigenous

⁴⁹ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 8.

⁵⁰ Statistics Canada, *Family violence in Canada*, *supra* note 7 at 24.

⁵¹ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 9.

⁵² Statistics Canada, *Homicide in Canada*, *supra* note 5 at 11.

⁵³ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 24.

⁵⁴ *Ibid* at 57 (this does not include women separated from common-law unions or non-live-in unions or women planning to separate).

⁵⁵ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 57.

⁵⁶ Miller, *Whitewashing*, *supra* note 16 at 660; Statistics Canada, *Homicide in Canada*, *supra* note 5 at 16.

⁵⁷ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 9.

⁵⁸ Statistics Canada, *Homicide in Canada*, *supra* note 5 at 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid* at 11.

⁶⁰ Royal Canadian Mounted Police “Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview”, (2014), online: <<http://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-national-operational-overview>>.

women make up 4% of the Canadian female population, but accounted for 16% of all women murdered between 1980 and 2012.⁶¹

Advocates have been gathering data on murdered and disappeared Indigenous women and girls for decades and have called on the federal government to implement a national inquiry on the issue.⁶² Indigenous families reported being regularly dismissed by police or having the cases of their disappeared and murdered family members neglected by law enforcement.⁶³

After over a decade of advocates calling for an Inquiry,⁶⁴ the federal government has finally launched a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (“Inquiry”), appointed five commissioners to lead the inquiry,⁶⁵ and dedicated \$53.8 million in funding for the Inquiry.⁶⁶ The Inquiry is a welcome act of leadership by the current federal government that will shed light on this on-going national tragedy and provide recommendations for concrete and effective action that can be taken.

However, advocates have concerns with the Inquiry as it currently stands: the terms of reference do not include an opportunity for families to reopen cases and there is no explicit mention of the need to work with the justice system to make recommendations about how it needs to change – which are critical issues for families and advocates.⁶⁷

In the immediate future, Indigenous women remain at risk, as levels of violent victimization are elevated among Indigenous women when compared to the non-Indigenous female population.⁶⁸ Indigenous women require more than an Inquiry, they need culturally relevant supports in their communities immediately.

⁶¹ Government of Canada, *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (2016), online: <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1449240606362/1449240634871>>.

⁶² NWAC, *Fact sheet: Missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls* (2015), online: <https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact_Sheet_Missing_and_Murdered_Aboriginal_Women_and_Girls.pdf>.

⁶³ Lori Culbert, “Many missing, murdered aboriginal women from BC”, *Vancouver Sun* (3 November 2015), online: <<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/many+missing+murdered+aboriginal+women+from/11490141/story.html>>

⁶⁴ NWAC, “Press release: Government of Canada officially launches Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls” (3 August 2016), online: <<https://nwac.ca/2016/08/press-release-government-of-canada-officially-launches-national-inquiry-into-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-and-girls-mmwig/>> [NWAC, *Press Release*].

⁶⁵ Connie Walker, “Missing, murdered Indigenous women inquiry launch coming next week”, *CBC* (29 July 2016), online: <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mmig-women-inquiry-launch-coming-august-1.3698671>>.

⁶⁶ Dennis Ward, “National inquiry budget, terms of reference announced during opening ceremony”, *APTN* (3 August 2016), online: <<http://aptn.ca/news/2016/08/03/national-inquiry-budget-terms-of-reference-announced-during-opening-ceremony/>>.

⁶⁷ NWAC, *Press Release*, *supra* note 64 (see also NWAC/FAFIA Submission on Issue 17).

⁶⁸ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 6, 9.

Police and Children and Family Services are not protecting Indigenous girls, and in one case this failure led to the murder of a 15-year-old girl in the care of government.⁶⁹ Indigenous women experience higher rates of spousal violence,⁷⁰ sexual assault,⁷¹ childhood abuse,⁷² and severe forms of violence⁷³ than non-Indigenous women. The elevated risk of violence in intimate relationships remains true even after taking into account other contributing factors such as the relative youth of the Indigenous population, homelessness, unemployment, substance use, and mental health issues.⁷⁴

Merely being an Indigenous woman in Canada is an independent factor contributing to violent victimization.⁷⁵

There is a need for increased support for Indigenous women, particularly for those living in rural communities. A report by the Public Health Agency of Canada found that Indigenous women face a variety of obstacles when reporting violence or seeking help. Violence has to be very severe or close to fatal before Indigenous women would report it to the police or leave the home, in part because of a lack of trust in law enforcement.⁷⁶

Poor relationships with police, police cynicism, a fear of losing children to child welfare authorities, lack of resources and shame prevent women from reporting.⁷⁷ Many Indigenous women live hours away from the nearest police station or community services and have to leave their community to obtain support, in some cases having to hitchhike. Insufficient financial resources for women play a significant role in perpetuating violence against Indigenous women.⁷⁸

Several reports and inquiries by the Canadian government over the last two decades conclude that institutional racism, including the failure to properly investigate the murders and abuses of Indigenous women and girls, is behind the failures of the justice system to protect Indigenous women and prevent the violence perpetrated against them.⁷⁹

⁶⁹ “Raymond Cormier, 53, charged with murder in Tina Fontaine death”, *CBC* (11 December 2015), online: <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/tina-fontaine-homicide-arrest-winnipeg-1.3361103>>.

⁷⁰ Statistics Canada, *Family violence in Canada*, *supra* note 7 at 4.

⁷¹ Statistics Canada, *Criminal victimization in Canada*, *supra* note 1 at 17.

⁷² Statistics Canada, *Family violence in Canada*, *supra* note 7 at 16.

⁷³ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 19.

⁷⁴ *Ibid* at 19, 61; Statistics Canada, *Criminal victimization in Canada*, *supra* note 1 at 17.

⁷⁵ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 19, 61; Statistics Canada, *Criminal victimization in Canada*, *supra* note 1 at 17.

⁷⁶ Public Health Agency of Canada, *Aboriginal Women and Family Violence* (2006) online:

<<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sfv-avf/sources/abor/fem-abor/index-eng.php>>.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*.

⁷⁹ Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Vol 4 (Ottawa: Communication Group, 1996) at 434, online:

<https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/bitstream/1974/6874/2/RRCAP4_combined.pdf>; Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba, Ch 13 (Winnipeg: Province of

Cyber-Violence

Canada is one of the most 'wired' countries in the world, with nearly 87% of Canadian households connected to the Internet.⁸⁰ As Canadians' lives become more digitized, violence against women has also moved online. Common forms of cyber-violence include revenge porn, non-consensual sharing of intimate images among youth, child sexual exploitation, cyber stalking, and gender-based hate speech online.⁸¹ Indigenous women and girls⁸² and girls from sexual minorities⁸³ are at particular risk.

This type of violence limits women's participation in online spaces,⁸⁴ which are essential to participating in the modern world. Women commonly experience rape threats, hacking, doxing (nefariously publishing personal contact and identifying information online), and attacks on social media for a variety of reasons, but particularly when critiquing sexist media practices online.⁸⁵ Police responses have been inadequate to address cyber-harassment. This lack of response was brought to national attention following the suicides of two teenage girls due to the online harassment they experienced.⁸⁶

Manitoba, 29 June 2001), online: <<http://www.ajic.mb.ca/volumell/chapter1.html>>; Saskatchewan, Commission on First Nations and Metis Peoples and Justice Reform, Legacy of Hope: An Agenda for Change: Final Report from the Commission on First Nations and Metis Peoples and Justice Reform, Vol 1 (Regina: Ministry of Justice, 21 June 2004), Executive Summary at 5-6, online: <<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/justicereform/volume1.shtml>>; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, "Honouring the truth, reconciliation for the future: summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada" (2015) at 180, 395, online: <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf>.

⁸⁰ CIRA, *The Canadian Internet* (2014), online: <<https://cira.ca/factbook/2014/the-canadian-internet.html>>.

⁸¹ West Coast LEAF, *Cybermisogyny: Using and strengthening Canadian legal responses to gendered hate and harassment online* (2014) at 5, online: <<http://www.westcoastleaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2014-REPORT-CyberMisogyny.pdf>> [West Coast LEAF, *Cybermisogyny*].

⁸² Bailey, J. and Sara Shayan, "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Crisis: Technological Dimensions" (2016) 28:2 *CJWL* 321, online: <<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/629379>>.

⁸³ Taylor, C et al, *Every class in every school: The first national climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools. Final report* (Toronto, ON: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2011), online: <<http://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/EgaleFinalReport-web.pdf>>.

⁸⁴ *Ibid* at 8.

⁸⁵ Lauren O'Neil, "#StopGamerGate2014 hashtag suggests internet is growing tired of GamerGate", *CBC* (15 October 2014), online: <<http://www.cbc.ca/newsblogs/yourcommunity/2014/10/stopgamerGate2014-the-internet-has-had-enough-of-gamergate.html>>.

⁸⁶ Bailey, J. "A Perfect Storm: How the Online Environment, Social Norms and Law Constrain Girls' Online Lives", *eGirls, eCitizens*, Jane Bailey and Valerie Steeves, eds. (Ottawa: uOttawa Press, 2015), online: <<http://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/handle/10393/32376>>.

Prior to 2013, some protection from online hate speech was provided by section 13 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which prohibited communications over the Internet if they are likely to expose a person to hatred or contempt on the basis of a prohibited ground, including sex. However, this section was repealed and is no longer in force as of June 2014.⁸⁷

Canada has implemented provisions in the Criminal Code to penalize the non-consensual distribution of intimate images. However, this law has been criticized for unnecessarily increasing police surveillance powers.⁸⁸

National Action Plan on Violence Against Women

In January 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that called on all states to develop National Action Plans on Violence Against Women.⁸⁹

Canada does not currently have a National Action Plan.⁹⁰ The federal government has formed an Advisory Council to help shape a Federal Strategy against Gender-based Violence, rather than a National Action Plan. Though the Strategy proposes to prevent gender-based violence through a “coordinated, collaborative and evidence-based approach”⁹¹ involving a broad range of experts, it falls short of a National Action Plan, as it is limited to federal jurisdiction. A failure to coordinate with services that fall within the provincial/territorial jurisdiction, such as policing, health, and social services, diminishes the usefulness of the Strategy and will not address the present state of piecemeal and uncoordinated delivery of services across the country.

The proposed Federal Strategy falls short of recommendations by UN Women in 2012 that countries use international human rights standards to ensure engagement across all levels of government in all aspects of a National Action Plan,⁹² support local organizations to ensure coordination across different geographical locations,⁹³ and require the collection of statistical and qualitative data on violence against women, disaggregated by sex, race, age, ethnicity and

⁸⁷ West Coast LEAF, *Cybermisogyny*, *supra* note 81 at 73.

⁸⁸ Susana Mas, “Cyberbullying victims’ parents divided over privacy concerns in online bill”, *CBC* (13 May 2014), online: <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/cyberbullying-victims-parents-divided-over-privacy-concerns-in-online-bill-1.2641104>>; Michael Geist, “The trouble with Bill C-13: My appearance before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights”, *Michael Geist* (29 May 2014), online: <<http://www.michaelgeist.ca/2014/05/c-13-appearance/>>.

⁸⁹ United Nations, *Handbook for national action plans on violence against women* (2012), online: <<http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/7/HandbookNationalActionPlansOnVAW-en%20pdf.pdf>> [United Nations, *Handbook*].

⁹⁰ Status of Women, *Status of Women Canada ministerial transition book: Federal gender violence strategy and action plan* (2015), online: <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/transition/tab_5-en.html>.

⁹¹ Status of Women Canada, *Newly formed advisory council to help shape federal strategy against gender-based violence* (2016), online: <<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1091279&tp=1>>.

⁹² United Nations, *Handbook*, *supra* note 89 at 22.

⁹³ *Ibid* at 25.

other relevant characteristics.⁹⁴ Overall, the UN model plan would enable a consistent and well-coordinated approach across all sectors. Unfortunately, to date, Canada has not adopted this model.⁹⁵

Shelters for Women

There is a substantial lack of affordable housing and shelters for women leaving abusive relationships in Canada. Women fleeing violence need access to affordable housing in the long-term.⁹⁶ A lack of affordable housing was the second most common reason for women to seek out a shelter.⁹⁷ Currently, most shelters in Canada provide emergency shelter spaces and some offer limited moderate-term transition spaces.⁹⁸

Data collected from 2013 and 2014 indicated 60,341 women were admitted to one of the 627 shelters operating across Canada in one year.⁹⁹ Considering the geographical size of Canada, there are relatively few shelters accessible to women, particularly for rural women and women living on reserve. Only 28 shelters served rural populations specifically and only 32 shelters were located on a reserve.¹⁰⁰

The Canadian Network of Women's Shelter's & Transition Houses conducts a national survey of transition houses and shelters across Canada. Its 2016 report found that on a single day, 1,760 women and 1,915 children were housed in the 234 transition houses surveyed. Three hundred women were turned away due to lack of space and 38% of shelters were full on the day of the survey.¹⁰¹

Nearly half of the shelters surveyed reported that a lack of government funding was one of the top three challenges they faced in the past year.¹⁰² Funding also lacked stability: over half of the shelters reported having to renew their funding contracts on an annual basis.¹⁰³ In 2011, a federal government survey found that more shelters were relying on funding from municipal governments, charitable donations and user fees than on funding from federal or provincial/territorial governments.¹⁰⁴ Most funding for operational costs had not increased,

⁹⁴ *Ibid* at 29.

⁹⁵ *Ibid* at 1.

⁹⁶ United Steelworkers, *Budget 2016 invests an unprecedented \$89.9 million in Canada's shelters and transition homes* (2016), online: <<http://www.usw.ca/news/media-centre/releases/2016/budget-2016-invests-in-womens-shelters>>.

⁹⁷ Statistics Canada, *Shelters for abused women in Canada*, *supra* note 9.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*.

¹⁰¹ Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses, *Shelter Voices*, *supra* note 9.

¹⁰² *Ibid* at 4.

¹⁰³ *Ibid* at 4.

¹⁰⁴ Statistics Canada, *Measuring violence against women*, *supra* note 1 at 105.

whereas the costs of electricity, insurance and other household costs have increased.¹⁰⁵

The current federal government has committed \$89.9 million¹⁰⁶ to improving existing shelter spaces and constructing new shelters.¹⁰⁷ It is expected that the funding will renovate or build 3,000 shelter beds over two years.¹⁰⁸ An additional \$10.4 million was committed over three years to fund shelters in First Nations communities¹⁰⁹ and additional funding was committed for operating shelters for First Nations.¹¹⁰

There are concerns that the funding will be distributed based on population, which will leave the territories underfunded. Communities in the northern territories are already under serviced with fewer than 10 shelters providing services over vast areas in each territory.¹¹¹ Many abused women in the territories live in communities where they would have to drive for hours or fly to another community to access a shelter.¹¹² A population-based distribution provides little funding to improve these already underserved communities. Additionally, governments tend to not provide sufficient operating funds for shelters, which often have to rely on food banks in order to feed their vulnerable clientele.¹¹³

Finally, sexual assault centres, which provide crisis lines and advocacy to support women who are raped or sexually assaulted, are grossly underfunded, with many receiving no core funding for their services. This is an essential front-line service for women who experience male violence, and core funding is needed to support rape crisis centres in all parts of the country, including rural and remote areas.

Access to Justice

According to the Canadian Bar Association and West Coast LEAF, legal aid for low-income women is grossly underfunded. Female victims of violence require timely, affordable access to

¹⁰⁵ Jordan Press, "Liberal budget raises hopes of creating more spaces in women's shelters", *Huffington Post* (3 March 2015), online: <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/03/28/budget-could-add-many-more-spaces-in-domestic-violence-shelters_n_9558608.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Department of Finance, *Budget 2016: Growing the middle class* (2016) at 98, online: <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2016/docs/plan/ch3-en.html#_Toc446106733> [Department of Finance, *Budget 2016*].

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid* at 98.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid* at 101.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid* at 103.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid* at 140.

¹¹¹ Statistics Canada, *Transition homes in Canada: National, Provincial and Territorial fact sheets, 2009/2010* (2010), online: <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-404-x/2011000/part-partie1-eng.htm>>.

¹¹² Gathy Gulli & Patricia Treble, "Canada's shame", *Maclean's* (14 October 2010), online: <<http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/canadas-shame/>>.

¹¹³ Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses, *Shelter Voices*, *supra* note 9.

legal advice and representation.¹¹⁴ Vulnerable individuals with serious legal problems have been forced to represent themselves when they are denied legal aid.¹¹⁵ Women attempting to leave an abusive relationship require a lawyer's help to get protection orders, to navigate separation or divorce, and to assist with custody and access applications. As women are often economically disadvantaged when leaving a violent relationship, they are likely to experience a lack of access to justice and are in need of legal support.¹¹⁶

The Canadian Bar Association notes that inadequate legal aid services force many women to rely on shelters when they cannot get legal protection from a violent partner.¹¹⁷ The lack of legal aid denies women access to justice and adds an additional burden to the already overburdened shelter system.

Violence and Harassment Against Women by the Police and Military

Police Violence Against Women and Girls

Women have reported violence, harassment and sexual exploitation by police officers in Canada. The abuse of women by police officers has led to distrust in police and a lack of reporting, particularly in Indigenous communities.¹¹⁸

Human Rights Watch investigated police violence against Indigenous women in northern British Columbia and documented stories of excessive force against girls,¹¹⁹ forcible confinement,¹²⁰ and death threats¹²¹ by police officers. Women and girls stated that they had their arms broken,¹²² were raped,¹²³ and were released in the middle of the night by police without appropriate clothing in arctic temperatures.¹²⁴

Examples of police brutality against Indigenous women are not limited to Northern British Columbia.¹²⁵ Sexual exploitation and unnecessary strip-searching by law enforcement have also been reported across Canada:

¹¹⁴ West Coast LEAF, *Putting justice back on the map* (2014) at 10, online: <http://www.westcoastleaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2014-REPORT-Putting-Justice-Back-on-the-Map.pdf> [West Coast LEAF, *Putting Justice back on the map*].

¹¹⁵ Canadian Bar Association, *Legal aid in Canada* (2015), online: <<http://www.cba.org/Sections/Legal-Aid-Liaison/Resources/Resources/Legal-Aid-in-Canada>>.

¹¹⁶ West Coast Leaf, *Putting Justice back on the map*, *supra* note 114 at 10.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ HRW, *Those Who Take Us Away*, *supra* note 12.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid* at 53-54.

¹²⁰ *Ibid* at 61.

¹²¹ *Ibid* at 8.

¹²² *Ibid* at 52.

¹²³ *Ibid* at 59-62.

¹²⁴ *Ibid* at 58.

¹²⁵ Pamela Palamater, "Shining Light on the Dark Places: Addressing Police Racism and Sexualized Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls in the National Inquiry" (2016) 28 *CJWL* 253.

- In Val-d'Or, Indigenous women reported being raped, abandoned far from town, and assaulted by Sûreté du Québec officers. Eight police officers were suspended in the wake of the allegations.¹²⁶
- In 2004, a provincial court judge, David Ramsay, pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting teenage girls involved in the justice system. It was alleged that as many as ten RCMP officers were also involved in the sexual exploitation of these girls.¹²⁷
- In 2008, Stacey Bond was arrested and abused by police. The officers held her down with a riot shield and used scissors to cut off her bra and shirt. They then left her topless with soiled pants in her cell for several hours.¹²⁸ Both the arrest and the strip search were found to be unlawful.¹²⁹ One of the officers involved, Sgt Steven Desjourdy, was docked 20 days pay for his role in the abuse.¹³⁰
- In 2011, RCMP Constable Kevin Theriault arrested an intoxicated Indigenous woman in Manitoba. In a gross abuse of power, he later took her out of her cell and drove her to his home intending to sexually exploit her. A senior officer at the detachment said it was not right for Theriault to do it, but later conceded and said: "You arrested her, you can do whatever the f—k you want to do." An internal RCMP adjudication process punished his act by docking Theriault's pay for seven days.¹³¹
- In 2015, Jessica Chater was forced to take off her shirt and remove her bra when taken into a police station for a breathalyzer. The Deputy Police Chief of Chatham-Kent stated that women were routinely ordered to remove their bras despite a 2013 Ontario Superior Court decision rejecting bra seizure as a blanket policy. A judge found the strip search unreasonable and dismissed the original charge against Chater.¹³²

These are only a few examples of violence against women at the hands of police officers. The actual number of police offences against women are difficult to track. Most women do not report violations by police because they do not believe the report will be investigated fairly. Complaints against the RCMP are not investigated by an independent body, but by the RCMP themselves. A report produced about the RCMP found that the inadequacies in the RCMP

¹²⁶ "Eight Quebec police officers suspended in wake of alleged sexual assaults on Aboriginal women", *APTN* (23 October 2015), online: <<http://aptn.ca/news/2015/10/23/eight-quebec-police-officers-suspended-in-wake-of-alleged-sexual-assaults-on-aboriginal-women/>>.

¹²⁷ HRW, *Those Who Take Us Away*, *supra* note 12 at 31-3

¹²⁸ Kirk Makin, "Strip-searched Ottawa woman sues police", *The Globe and Mail* (17 December 2010), online: <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/strip-searched-ottawa-woman-sues-police/article1320301/>>.

¹²⁹ *R v Bonds*, 2010 ONCJ 561, 79 CR (6th) 119 at 27, online: CanLII <<http://www.canlii.org/en/on/oncj/doc/2010/2010oncj561/2010oncj561.html>>.

¹³⁰ Shaamini Yogaretnam, "Ottawa police sergeant from infamous strip search loses 20 days' pay", *Ottawa Citizen* (21 October 2014), online: <<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/police-sergeant-docked-20-days-pay-but-not-demoted-over-cellblock-strip-search>>.

¹³¹ Holly Moore, "Mountie takes Aboriginal woman home from jail cell to pursue relationship", *CBC* (8 Jan 2015), online: <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/mountie-takes-woman-home-from-jail-to-pursue-a-personal-relationship-1.2893487>>.

¹³² Christopher Reynolds, "Bra removal sets woman free in court", *The Star* (16 July 2016), online: <<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2016/07/16/bra-removal-sets-woman-free-in-court.html>>.

investigating against their own officers were serious enough to create a perception of a cover up.¹³³ In other RCMP documents, it was found that around 90% of formal complaints against officers were dismissed.¹³⁴

RCMP Harassment and Discrimination Against Female Members

Police violence against women also occurs within the force. Hundreds of current and former female members of the RCMP have filed class action suits due to the high levels of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination against its female staff and officers.¹³⁵ Others have filed individual complaints against the RCMP.¹³⁶

A female officer, whose case was recently settled,¹³⁷ was given notice that she was being dismissed after filing harassment complaints, along with another complainant.¹³⁸ The current government has neither fully agreed to requests to protect women complainants from being dismissed before their complaints were addressed in the courts, nor withdrawn its opposition to the lawsuits.¹³⁹ The complainants in the meantime are left to deal with the damages caused by the harassment independently.

A 2012 gender-based harassment report was released by the RCMP. It concluded that though there were policies in place to prevent sexual harassment and gender-discrimination, a culture of complacency and normalization towards the sexual harassment and sexist treatment of female officers permeated the ranks, including senior officers. Women were subjected to degrading insults, unwanted sexual touching, unsolicited sexual invitations and biased promotional practices, among other things.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP, *Police investigating police – final public report* (2014), online: <<https://www.crc-cctp.gc.ca/en/police-investigating-police-final-public-report>>.

¹³⁴ Guiseppe Valiante, “RCMP rejects 90% of formal complaints”, *IF Press* (24 October 2014), online: <<http://www.lfpress.com/2014/10/27/rcmp-rejects-90-of-formal-complaints>>.

¹³⁵ *Janet Merlo vs The Attorney General of Canada and the Minister of Justice British Columbia*, [2012] BCSC, (Notice of civil claim), online: <<http://www.callkleinlawyers.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Notice-Civil-Claim-RCMP.pdf>>.

¹³⁶ Nancy Macdonald & Gharlie Gillis, “Inside the RCMP’s biggest crisis”, *Maclean’s* (17 February 2015), online: <<http://www.macleans.ca/society/inside-the-rmps-biggest-crisis/>>.

¹³⁷ Manjula Dufresne & Natalie Clancy, “RCMP settles sex harassment suit with Catherine Galliford”, *CBC* (3 May 2016), online: <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/investigates/rcmp-settles-with-former-spokesperson-catherine-galliford-1.3562708>>.

¹³⁸ Natalie Clancy, “BC woman suing RCMP ask Justin Trudeau for help”, *CBC* (7 November 2015), online: <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/women-suing-rcmp-plead-don-t-fire-us-1.3308567>>.

¹³⁹ Matthew Behrens, “Trudeau continues Harper assault on human rights”, *Rabble* (29 July 2016), online: <<http://rabble.ca/columnists/2016/07/trudeau-continues-harper-assault-on-human-rights>>.

¹⁴⁰ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Summary Report on Gender Based Harassment and Respectful Workplace Consultations, “E” Division* (17 April 2012), online: <<http://www.cbc.ca/bc/news/bc-121107-rcmp-survey.pdf>>.

Harassment and sexual misconduct was reported at the Canadian Police College. Due to the failure of leadership to properly address the situation, a 2016 report recommended that the RCMP engage immediately in a national initiative to eradicate sexual misconduct in the force.¹⁴¹

The RCMP has failed to adequately address the abuse of female officers by male officers and the RCMP continues to be an unsafe working environment for many female officers.

Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces

In 2015, former Supreme Court Justice Marie Deschamps released a report on sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. It found that there was an “underlying sexualized culture in the CAF that is hostile to women and LGBTQ members, and conducive to more serious incidents of sexual harassment and assault.”¹⁴² The report found this culture existed through all ranks and divisions of the CAF. Degrading language about women’s bodies, sexualized jokes and unwanted sexual touching was common within the CAF.¹⁴³ Inappropriate conduct was normalized, even amongst higher-ranking officers, leading to a lack of reporting by victims.¹⁴⁴ A complaints process existed, but complainants were not taken seriously, including complaints of sexual assault. Many described their experiences of reporting as “atrocious”.¹⁴⁵

A broad-range culture reform was recommended to change this hostile environment for women. It was recommended that senior leaders in the CAF convey clear messages on the inappropriateness of sexual misconduct and that the integration of women into senior leadership positions was necessary for cultural reform.¹⁴⁶

However, of the ten recommendations made from the Deschamps report,¹⁴⁷ only the first two were accepted outright by the CAF:

1. Acknowledge that inappropriate sexual conduct is a serious problem that exists in the CAF and undertake to address it.
2. Establish a strategy to effect cultural change to eliminate the sexualized environment and to better integrate women, including by conducting a gender-based analysis of CAF policies.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Report on allegations of harassment and sexual misconduct at the RCMP’s Canadian police college explosives training unit* (2016), online: <<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/report-allegations-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-the-rcmps-canadian-police-college-explosives>>.

¹⁴² Deschamps, *External Review*, *supra* note 11.

¹⁴³ *Ibid* at ii.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid* at iii.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid* at v.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid* at vii.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid* at 27.

¹⁴⁸ Stephanie Levitz, “Military’s sexualized culture hostile to women, inquiry says”, *Global News* (30 April 2015), online: <<http://globalnews.ca/news/1971501/militarys-sexualized-culture-hostile-to-women-inquiry-says>>.

There are continued concerns about the CAF protecting its offending members rather than victims¹⁴⁹ and about high ranking officers holding inappropriate views about sexual assault. Shortly after the release of the report, Chief of Defence Staff General Tom Lawson stated that sexual harassment was still a problem in the CAF because people are “biologically wired in a certain way” to believe it is reasonable to sexually assault other officers.¹⁵⁰

Conclusion

While the recent election of a new federal government provides some hope for a change in the government’s orientation towards preventing violence against women and supporting victims, the level of male violence against women remains high. Increased funding for women’s shelters, a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and a Federal Strategy against Gender-based Violence are welcome, but are not sufficient. Women still suffer from high levels of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and harassment in all contexts, including the military and police forces. Furthermore, many women lack faith in the law enforcement institutions that are supposed to protect them from violence. Neither the criminal justice system, nor surrounding social policies, effectively prevent or remedy the male violence that women experience.

Recommendations

The Government of Canada should:

- **Provide an opportunity for cases of disappeared and murdered Indigenous women and girls to be re-opened and reviewed through an independent process, and ensure that policing and justice system failures are thoroughly examined by the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.**
- **Develop a coherent, coordinated, well-resourced National Action Plan on Violence against Women that meets international human rights standards, incorporates recommendations by treaty bodies and women’s non-governmental organizations, and takes into account the experiences and needs of diverse Canadian women.**
- **Take a holistic approach to violence against women which takes into account women’s poverty and social marginalization, and the impact of their socio-economic conditions on their capacity to avoid and escape violence.**
- **Review and change child welfare, housing, social assistance and legal aid policies and practices that penalize and fail to adequately support women who are victims of male violence, and their children.**

¹⁵⁰ James Cudmore, “Military sexual misconduct due to ‘biological wiring,’ Gen. Tom Lawson tells CBC News”, *CBC* (16 June 2015), online: <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/military-sexual-misconduct-due-to-biological-wiring-gen-tom-lawson-tells-cbc-news-1.3115993>>.

- Undertake a thorough review in all jurisdictions of the laws, procedures, practices and embedded assumptions which prevent policing agencies and the justice system from providing protection, support and appropriate remedies for women and girls who are victims of male violence, and institute appropriate changes.
- Increase operational funding for women’s shelters, longer-term transition homes, and rape crisis centres and ensure that shelters and rape crisis centres are provided in adequate numbers in rural and northern areas in particular.
- Establish human rights protection for victims of online hate speech and harassment.
- Ensure that procedures for addressing sexual harassment complaints within Canadian police forces are effective and provide protections, assistance and appropriate remedies to complainants; provide regular public reports on measures taken, including disciplinary measures, to eliminate sexism and racism from police culture and to address complaints of discrimination from members and the public.
- Establish independent bodies to investigate complaints against the police.
- Fully implement all recommendations of the Deschamps report within the Canadian Armed Forces.

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