



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDES IN CANADA**

**Report of the Standing Committee on the Status  
of Women**

**Marilyn Gladu, Chair**

**DECEMBER 2025  
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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**Report of the Standing Committee on  
the Status of Women**

**Marilyn Gladu  
Chair**

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### **Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons**

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

has the honour to present its

## **SECOND REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied gender-based violence and femicides against women, girls and gender-diverse people and has agreed to report the following:



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## SUMMARY

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**Content warning: Please note that this report discusses topics that can be disturbing to some readers, including abuse, discrimination, and gender-based violence.**

In Canada, various federal initiatives, such as the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*, aim to prevent and address gender-based violence. To contribute to these efforts, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (the Committee) conducted a study from 28 October to 2 December 2024 on gender-based violence and femicide against women, girls and gender-diverse people. This report outlines the evidence heard and briefs received by the Committee and includes 19 recommendations for the Government of Canada and one observation.

The Committee heard evidence about the causes and consequences of gender-based violence and femicide in Canada. Over the course of the study, various recommendations were proposed regarding reforms and measures to address these forms of violence. This report provides an overview of the key considerations raised by witnesses. Such topics include the following:

- criminalizing coercive control<sup>1</sup> and creating a separate offence for femicide;
- reforming the legal system, particularly with regard to stays of proceedings due to unreasonable delays, the wearing of electronic monitoring devices and legal support for victims;
- supporting prevention efforts to address hate speech, misogyny and violent behaviour;
- conducting public awareness campaigns and training sessions on the various forms of violence for actors in the legal system; and

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1 Sgt Lisa Harris, a Non-Commissioned Officer with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary's Criminal Investigation Division, defined "coercive control" as the following: "Coercive control is a serious and pervasive form of domestic violence that impacts the victim's safety, well-being and mental health. It involves a repeated pattern of behaviour used by an abuser to establish and maintain power over the victim, often through tactics such as intimidation, threats, manipulation and isolation, making it extremely difficult for the victims to escape the cycle of abuse." Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.

- providing survivor-focused, trauma-informed wraparound services.

The Committee recognizes the profoundly harmful effects of gender-based violence and femicide on women, girls and gender-diverse people. It wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to those who shared their stories throughout this study. In releasing this report, the Committee hopes to contribute to ongoing efforts to combat gender-based violence and femicide in Canada.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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*As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.*

### **Recommendation 1**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, declare gender-based violence, which includes intimate partner violence, sexual assault and femicide, as a national crisis and prioritize coordination with all stakeholders to address its prevention, response and supports.**

18

### **Recommendation 2**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples and governments, support efforts to criminalize femicide and the killing of an intimate partner and include it in the *Criminal Code* with the following considerations:**

- **create separate offences for femicide and the killing of an intimate partner in the *Criminal Code*;**
- **classify the offence of femicide and the killing of an intimate partner as first-degree murder in the *Criminal Code*, except in circumstances involving self-defence, coercive control and other mitigating factors relating to a history of violence or abuse; and**
- **that the definition of femicide should include murder–suicide, the murder of transgender women and girls, as well as deaths related to domestic or sexual violence.**

21

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples and governments, introduce legislation to criminalize coercive control. 25**

### **Recommendation 4**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, work with federal and provincial child protection agencies to develop policies and protocols that recognize the increased risk of filicide in cases of domestic violence. 25**

### **Recommendation 5**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples and governments, eliminate gaps in the justice system that delay legal proceedings by providing sufficient resources to provide protection for survivors of gender-based violence. 29**

### **Recommendation 6**

**That the Government of Canada legislate the application of the stays of proceedings in criminal cases pursuant to the Supreme Court of Canada ruling in *R. v. Jordan*, to ensure it cannot be applied for offences such as murder between intimate partners and sexual assault, in order to promote the protection of the victim and provide justice. 30**

### **Recommendation 7**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, enact legislation to ban subpoenas of personal information pursuant to sections 278.1 to 278.91 of the *Criminal Code*, to be used against a survivor so as to protect survivors' privacy. 30**

### **Recommendation 8**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous**

Peoples and governments, reform bail by holding violent offenders in custody or under strict supervision, including through the use of ankle monitors, enforcing zero-tolerance for bail breaches, ending reliance on restraining orders, undertakings or peace bonds alone to protect victims and survivors of crimes involving deadly force, scaling bail to income, and requiring sureties to pay upfront with forfeited funds redirected to survivor supports.

36

### Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, provide free or funded legal counsel and court support for all victims of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and femicide, with special attention to avoiding retraumatization and victim-blaming.

37

### Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories and of Indigenous Peoples and governments, and in consultation and collaboration with them, take steps to support survivors of gender-based violence and their families by:

- continuing to provide funding through the *National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence* to community organizations and service providers to address gender-based violence and femicide by ensuring access to culturally relevant, trauma-informed and integrated services; and
- creating prevention strategies and initiatives to address sexist attitudes that drive violence.

43

### Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, provide funding to support culturally relevant, safe and trauma-informed services guided by Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, as well as programs and supports for women experiencing homelessness, substance use, or complex trauma.

43

### **Recommendation 12**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, increase funding to implement Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls (MMIWG) specific initiatives and the Call for Justice 1.7.**

**44**

### **Recommendation 13**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories and of Indigenous peoples and governments, and in consultation and collaboration with them, provide funding for programs that raise public awareness of harmful attitudes and behaviours; encourage men and boys to contribute to ending gender-based violence and femicide; and promote healthy relationships.**

**45**

### **Recommendation 14**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, explicitly recognize senior women as a vulnerable group facing domestic, financial, institutional, and psychological violence, and fund awareness programs, caregiver training, and community support initiatives to prevent and detect abuse against them.**

**46**

### **Observation 1**

**Given that gender-based violence is a pressing nationwide issue, the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, should explore the possibilities of collaborating with the ministries to ensure that provinces and territories have support to address intimate partner violence, sexual assault and femicide.**

**46**

### **Recommendation 15**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, support trauma-informed training for judges, court staff, health professionals, law enforcement, and social service providers, and that training should include risk assessments and how to administer them; the**

warning signs that can lead to femicide, including but not limited to coercive and controlling behaviour, damage to property, harm to companion animals, verbal, physical and psychological abuse, strangulation or the presence of firearms; the importance of protective tools such as electronic monitoring devices and panic buttons; and updates on new legislation related to gender-based violence. 47

#### **Recommendation 16**

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, create a public intimate partner violence offender registry and mandate participation in in-person rehabilitation programs, for all convicted offenders of intimate partner violence and sexual assault. 49

#### **Recommendation 17**

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, and in collaboration with them, fund the creation and maintenance of specialized programs for men exhibiting violent or high-risk behaviours, focused on accountability, impulse management, and the development of healthy relationship skills. 49

#### **Recommendation 18**

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories and of Indigenous Peoples and governments, strengthen the collection and analysis of data on femicides, gender-based violence, and intimate partner homicides by integrating social, economic, and any or all structural factors (such as poverty, isolation, addictions, origin, age), in order to guide public policies toward solutions grounded in local and intersectional realities. 52

#### **Recommendation 19**

That the Government of Canada, respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, invest in research to collect Canadian data on the firearms used in femicides, including the type of weapon used and whether or not it was licensed, to better understand the risks. 52





# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDES IN CANADA

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## INTRODUCTION

On 25 September 2024, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (the Committee) agreed to the following:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee conduct a study, consisting of six meetings, on gender-based violence and femicides against women, girls, and gender-diverse people, and report its findings and any recommendations to the House, and that:

- a) Meetings shall begin after the study of the committee on coercive control and the study of breast cancer for women aged 40;
- b) Suggested witness lists be submitted to the committee clerk no later than Wednesday, October 9th, 2024; and
- c) Pursuant to Standing order 109, the committee request a government response to the report.

Throughout several recent studies, the Committee heard evidence highlighting the negative consequences of violence against women in Canada. This led to the Committee's decision to study gender-based violence and femicides against women, girls and gender-diverse people. Between 28 October 2024 and 27 November 2024, the Committee heard from 38 witnesses and received 29 briefs on this topic.

The Committee's report reflects the evidence and briefs submitted. It is divided into several sections, including background information on gender-based violence and femicides in Canada and various measures to address these issues, such as criminalizing femicide, instituting legal system reforms, access to services for survivors and improving education and awareness programs addressing violence.

The Committee provides 19 recommendations and one observation to the Government of Canada to address gender-based violence and femicides against women, girls and gender-diverse people and to support survivors in Canada. The Committee would like to acknowledge those who showed remarkable courage in sharing their stories as part of its study.



## SURVIVORS' STORIES

**“I myself have been a victim of domestic violence. ... This was way back to 2009. Nearly 20 years later, I am still making the same arguments and begging for change. That is not normal, it is immoral and unacceptable.”**

Diane Tremblay, Artist, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

**“I struggle daily with PTSD and anxiety disorder I developed due to an abusive relationship in my 20s. My abuser never laid a hand on me. He knew leaving any physical trace of violence meant he might be caught. ... [He] managed to emotionally and mentally destroy me to the point I was a shell of the person I once was. ... Nothing my abuser did was illegal. He has no remorse[.] ... There have been exactly zero consequences for his behaviour. ... My abuser does not know where I live. I am physically safe; I always was. Mentally, however, I still suffer from nightmares, insomnia, panic attacks, and a complete inability to trust men.”**

Anonymous Author 1, [Brief](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.

## BACKGROUND: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence is a systemic problem deeply rooted in structural gender inequality that still persists in Canada today.<sup>1</sup> Over the course of the Committee’s study, various witnesses discussed the causes and consequences of gender-based violence. This evidence is described in greater detail below.

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1 Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024; Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Susan Ann Crawford, [Brief](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.

The Committee heard that gender-based violence is “perhaps the most wide-spread and socially tolerated of human rights violations. It both reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women and compromises the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims.”<sup>2</sup>

Gender-based violence can take many forms, including physical, psychological, financial and sexual violence, as well as coercive control.<sup>3</sup> Gender-based violence stems from social patterns of misogyny and patriarchy, “reinforced by intersecting forms of oppression,” such as racism, transphobia or ableism.<sup>4</sup> Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer of White Ribbon, said the following:

Gender-based violence is perpetrated almost entirely by men, young men and boys who were taught, enabled and, in many cases, victimized, traumatized and moulded over countless generations to adhere to attitudes, behaviours and social norms of [toxic] masculinities.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, a number of witnesses highlighted that gender-based violence is systemic and that some groups are more vulnerable.<sup>6</sup> In particular, Indigenous, Black and racialized women, women with disabilities, members of the 2SLGBTQI+ communities,

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- 2 Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.
- 3 Sunder Singh, Executive Director, Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Tara Graham, [Brief](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.
- 4 Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024; Egale Canada, [Brief for the Standing Committee on the Status of Women \(FEWO\) for its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 19 November 2024.
- 5 Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.
- 6 Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.



and immigrant and refugee women are at higher risk of experiencing violence.<sup>7</sup> Women and girls who live in rural, Northern and remote regions are also more likely to experience gender-based violence.<sup>8</sup>

Some witnesses discussed the role of social media in the rise of online violence and gender-based violence. Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator at the CAVAC Network, said that “social media and the hate speech it spreads certainly contribute to violence against women.”<sup>9</sup> Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault, Policy Issues Advisor at the Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, mentioned that “[i]t’s important to understand that technology-based online violence can transform into real-life violence. It can lead to physical violence, even femicide.”<sup>10</sup> The Canadian Women’s Foundation launched a project to study how technology intersects with violence, hate and harassment. In its brief, the Foundation explained that a rise in technology-facilitated gender-based violence in Canada has occurred, and that digital harms have disproportionate impacts on “women, girls, Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary people, particularly from Black, Indigenous, racialized, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and others with intersecting identities.”<sup>11</sup>

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service classifies ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) into four categories. One IMVE category is “gender identity-driven

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7 Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024; Egale Canada, [Brief for the Standing Committee on the Status of Women \(FEWO\) for its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 19 November 2024; Erin Griver, Co-chair, Woman Abuse Working Group, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024; Canadian Women’s Foundation, [Submission to the Standing Committee on Status of Women \(FEWO\) Study of Gender-based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024; Women’s Legal Education & Action Fund, [Submission to The Standing Committee on the Status of Women on its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 4 November 2024; Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

8 Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

9 Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

10 Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault, Policy Issues Advisor, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

11 Canadian Women’s Foundation, [Submission to the Standing Committee on Status of Women \(FEWO\) Study of Gender-based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

violence,” which includes “violent misogyny (including incel movement), anti-2SLGBTQIA+, and anti-gender driven ideology violence.”<sup>12</sup>

Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director of the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office at McMaster University’s Equity and Inclusion Office, explained that gender-based violence is also a serious concern on college and university campuses across Canada. Lenore Lukasik-Foss told the Committee that “[w]omen aged 15 to 24 are five times more likely than women over 25 to be physically or sexually assaulted by a non-intimate partner.”<sup>13</sup> Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer of YWCA Lethbridge and District, said that “[o]ver four in 10 women have endured some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetimes, and nearly one-third of women over the age of 15 report experiencing sexual assault.”<sup>14</sup>

Gender-based violence has a wide range of implications for survivors. The Committee heard that gender-based violence is among the most pervasive health risks to women and gender-diverse people in Canada.<sup>15</sup> Survivors of gender-based violence “often experience higher rates of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD.”<sup>16</sup> The risk of becoming suicidal is three to five times higher for women who have experienced gender-based violence than for women who have not.<sup>17</sup> Gender-based violence is also “a significant cause of disabilities, including traumatic brain injury,” as well as other injuries that hinder the social and economic participation of survivors.<sup>18</sup>

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12 Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024; Canadian Security Intelligence Service, [CSIS Public Report 2024](#), March 2025.

13 Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

14 Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

15 HIV Legal Network, [Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.

16 Children First Canada, [Study on Gender-based Violence & Femicides against Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 7 November 2024.

17 Aura Freedom International, [Brief Submission to the Standing Committee On The Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

18 DisAbleD Women’s Network, [Gender-based Violence and Femicides against Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People with Disabilities](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.



## BACKGROUND: FEMICIDE

Like gender-based violence, femicide is “deeply connected to gender inequality.”<sup>19</sup> It has been described as “the killing of a woman or girl because of their sex or gender, mostly by men.”<sup>20</sup> As such, it is a form of murder underscoring “how” and “why” women are killed. It differs from homicide in that the root causes are “intricately related to misogyny, the position of women in society, gender roles, unequal distributions of power based on gender, and other gender-based beliefs and misogynistic systems.”<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, femicide is recognized as “the most extreme form of violence against women, girls, and gender-diverse people.”<sup>22</sup>

The Committee heard that a broad and inclusive definition of femicide should be used. Some cases of “murder-suicide” are in fact femicide: “Over the past decade in Canada, 77% of murder-suicide incidents involve at least one victim related to the killer, most often their intimate partner.”<sup>23</sup> In addition, some mass killings in recent years in Canada fit the parameters for “mass femicides,” such as the “Montreal Massacre, Toronto Van Attack [and] Nova Scotia Mass Shooting.”<sup>24</sup>

According to some witnesses, femicide in Canada constitutes a “crisis.”<sup>25</sup> The Committee heard that one woman or girl is killed in Canada every other day, and that one woman is killed by her male partner once a week.<sup>26</sup>

A number of witnesses appearing before the Committee cited statistics to contextualize femicide in Canada. However, other witnesses emphasized that data on femicide is incomplete and quite limited. The Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and

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19 Aura Freedom International, *Brief Submission to the Standing Committee On The Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ending Violence Association of Canada, *Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024.

23 Aura Freedom International, *Brief Submission to the Standing Committee On The Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

24 Ibid.

25 Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Chair, National Family and Survivors Circle Inc., *Evidence*, 4 November 2024; Megan Walker, Advocate to End Male Violence Against Women, as an individual, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024.

26 Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024; Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, *Evidence*, 25 November 2024.

Accountability said that it had witnessed, every year between 2019 and 2023, “an increase in the number of women and girls murdered, primarily by men, with a total increase of 20% up to 2023.”<sup>27</sup>

The Committee heard that members of marginalized groups are more likely to experience femicide.<sup>28</sup> Indigenous women are particularly vulnerable.<sup>29</sup> In Ontario, the proportion of femicide victims who are Indigenous has increased from “5.4% in 2019–20 to 8.1% in 2022–23.”<sup>30</sup> Indigenous women “make up 21% of all gender-related homicides of women and girls in Canada, despite comprising only 5% of the female population.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, “[I]ndigenous women are killed at nearly seven times the rate of non-[I]ndigenous women.”<sup>32</sup> In the Yukon, between 2014 and 2021, six of the seven victims of femicide were Indigenous women, representing 86% of victims – “the highest rate of femicide against [I]ndigenous women in Canada.”<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, “half, if not sometimes more than half, of femicides in this country” take place in rural, remote or Northern communities, even though only 16% of Canadians live in these areas.<sup>34</sup> In addition to Indigenous women, other groups with multiple or overlapping identities – such as race,

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27 Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, *Evidence*, 25 November 2024.

28 Children First Canada, *Study on Gender-based Violence & Femicides against Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 7 November 2024.

29 HIV Legal Network, *Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.

30 Ontario Native Women’s Association, *Indigenous Women’s Experiences of Gender-Based Violence*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.

31 Ibid.

32 Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, *Evidence*, 30 October 2024. See also: Children First Canada, *Study on Gender-based Violence & Femicides against Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 7 November 2024.

33 Amanda Buffalo, Advisor, Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society, *Evidence*, 6 November 2024. In 2021, the Indigenous population accounted for 22.3% of the Yukon population: Statistics Canada, *Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population*, “Yukon, Territory.”

34 Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, *Evidence*, 30 October 2024; Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, *Evidence*, 25 November 2024.



social class, age, sexuality or disability – are also at higher risk of femicide.<sup>35</sup> Although femicide may be committed by someone who is not known to the victim, the Committee heard that women are also at risk of being killed by their current or former intimate partners.<sup>36</sup> Women and girls “face the greatest danger in their own homes, and are most likely to be killed by men that they know well (intimate partners, husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, etc.)”<sup>37</sup> In fact, “four out of five women and girls in Canada are killed by a male they should have been able to trust.”<sup>38</sup>

Physical violence was identified as a potential precursor to femicide. A woman who is strangled is 750% more likely to be killed by that man.<sup>39</sup> Firearms were also identified as a significant risk factor of femicide. The Committee heard that firearms-related intimate partner violence is five times more likely to be lethal than instances of intimate partner violence not involving a firearm, and furthermore, that “firearms are the most common method used to kill an intimate partner or child in rural areas.”<sup>40</sup> Firearms will be discussed in further detail later in this report. Other risk factors for femicide include coercive control and criminal harassment.<sup>41</sup>

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35     Aura Freedom International, [\*Brief Submission to the Standing Committee On The Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides\*](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024; DisAbleD Women’s Network, [\*Gender-based Violence and Femicides against Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People with Disabilities\*](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [\*Evidence\*](#), 20 November 2024.

36     Aura Freedom International, [\*Brief Submission to the Standing Committee On The Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides\*](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024; Erin Griver, Co-chair, Woman Abuse Working Group, [\*Evidence\*](#), 27 November 2024; Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, [\*Evidence\*](#), 28 October 2024.

37     Aura Freedom International, [\*Brief Submission to the Standing Committee On The Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides\*](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

38     Ibid.

39     Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, [\*Evidence\*](#), 28 October 2024.

40     Canadian Federation of University Women, [\*Brief for the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides in Canada\*](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 8 November 2024.

41     Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, [\*Evidence\*](#), 30 October 2024; Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, [\*Evidence\*](#), 4 November 2024.

Sexual violence is another indicator and risk factor for femicide.<sup>42</sup> One witness noted that 99% of perpetrators of sexual violence toward women and girls are men.<sup>43</sup> The Committee heard that young women and sex workers are “at higher risk” of sexual violence by perpetrators who are not intimate partners.<sup>44</sup> Other groups are also disproportionately vulnerable to sexual violence, including Indigenous women and girls, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and women with disabilities.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the risk factors for femicide, some witnesses discussed the implications of femicide for the children and family members of the victims. The Committee learned that children who witness violence or lose their mother as a result of femicide experience profound ripple effects “on their mental health, on their adjustment and on their ability to continue to reach their full potential.”<sup>46</sup> In its brief, Aura Freedom International stated that femicide creates “intergenerational trauma, which in turn contributes to intergenerational poverty, homelessness, substance use, unemployment, poor health outcomes, and more.”<sup>47</sup>

Yet, various witnesses told the Committee that femicide is foreseeable and preventable.<sup>48</sup> Suzanne Zaccour, Director of Legal Affairs at the National Association of Women and the Law, emphasized that “[f]emicide cannot be undone or repaired, so prevention really has

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42 Ending Violence Association of Canada, *Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, *Evidence*, 20 November 2024.

43 Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon, *Evidence*, 4 November 2024.

44 Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, *Evidence*, 20 November 2024.

45 DisAbled Women’s Network, *Gender-based Violence and Femicides against Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People with Disabilities*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, *Evidence*, 20 November 2024.

46 Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024.

47 Aura Freedom International, *Brief Submission to the Standing Committee On The Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

48 See for example: Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, *Evidence*, 4 November 2024; Megan Walker, Advocate to End Male Violence Against Women, as an individual, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024; Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024; Vancouver Rape Relief and Women’s Shelter, *Brief*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.



to be the key.”<sup>49</sup> Jill Young also mentioned that, “as a society, we have the power to prevent these tragedies if we commit to addressing their root causes through a multipronged, coordinated approach.”<sup>50</sup>

Some witnesses explained that recognizing and using the term “femicide” is an important step forward in addressing femicide.<sup>51</sup> Melanie Omeniho, President of Women of the Métis Nation, explained to the Committee that “Canada’s adoption of this term will highlight a shift in acknowledging gender-based violence as a systemic issue.”<sup>52</sup> According to Shelina Jeshani, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration at the Safe Centre of Peel, naming femicide takes away “the invisibility of the issue” and “makes us understand that women are at risk and especially at risk by their intimate partners.”<sup>53</sup>

As such, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 1**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, declare gender-based violence, which includes intimate partner violence, sexual assault and femicide, as a national crisis and prioritize coordination with all stakeholders to address its prevention, response and supports.**

## **Legal Framework Involving Femicide and Coercive Control**

Currently, femicide and coercive control are not explicitly mentioned in Canada’s *Criminal Code*. Femicides are considered homicides, without any distinction being made about the fact that the victim was killed due to their gender or sex. However, other factors are taken into consideration when the prosecution determines what charges will be laid for a homicide. For example, a murder involving sexual assault or criminal harassment is considered a first-degree murder. Otherwise, unless a murder is planned,

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49 Suzanne Zaccour, Director of Legal Affairs, National Association of Women and the Law, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

50 Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

51 Melanie Omeniho, President, Women of the Métis Nation, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024; Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

52 Melanie Omeniho, President, Women of the Métis Nation, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

53 Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024.

it is generally considered a second-degree murder.<sup>54</sup> In addition, at the sentencing phase, aggravating circumstances are taken into consideration, such as if the offence was motivated by hate based on sex, or gender identity or expression, and if, in committing the offence, the offender abused their intimate partner.<sup>55</sup>

As mentioned above, gender-based violence comes in many forms, including physical violence, sexual violence and coercive control. Physical violence and sexual violence are addressed in various forms in the *Criminal Code*,<sup>56</sup> but coercive control is not.<sup>57</sup>

As described in the sections below, various witnesses told the Committee in detail about challenges related to the criminalization of femicide and coercive control.

## ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE

The Committee heard a number of recommendations about how to address gender-based violence and femicide in Canada. Various proposed measures and solutions are discussed in the sections below.

### Criminalizing Femicide

Many witnesses appearing before the Committee proposed that femicide be added to the *Criminal Code*, while also acknowledging that it is one option among many needed to

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54 Although both first-degree and second-degree murder carry a sentence of life imprisonment, first-degree murder requires a minimum of 25 years in prison before eligibility for parole, whereas for second-degree murder, the court may determine that a prison term of between 10 and 25 years is sufficient before becoming eligible for parole. Unlike murder, manslaughter does not necessarily lead to life imprisonment: *Criminal Code*, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, ss. 231(2)(7), 234, 235, 236 and 745.

55 *Ibid.*, s. 718.2(a)(i)–(ii).

56 See for example the offences of assault, aggravated assault, sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon and aggravated sexual assault: *ibid.*, ss. 265–273.

57 During the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, Bill C-332, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (coercive control of intimate partner), sought to add an offence of coercive control to the *Criminal Code*. However, the bill died on the Order Paper. See [Bill C-332, An Act to amend the Criminal Code \(coercive control of intimate partner\)](#), 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> Session.



address the issue.<sup>58</sup> The Committee heard that criminalizing femicide would help families heal, raise awareness in the community and facilitate data collection.<sup>59</sup> The Honourable Pierre-Hughes Boisvenu, former Senator and Administrator of the Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, told the Committee that “[t]he *Criminal Code* must provide for harsher action on femicides. Today, murderers in such cases can be released after four or five years in prison.”<sup>60</sup>

However, some witnesses drew the Committee’s attention to the fact that “it is sometimes very hard to identify when it is the case that a woman is a victim of a femicide linked to [intimate partner violence].”<sup>61</sup> On this point, Stuart Betts, Chief of the Peterborough Police Service, explained that including femicide in the *Criminal Code* would mean asking the police to “address underlying motives when women are killed for no reason other than because they’re women.”<sup>62</sup>

The Committee heard about several possible ways that femicide could be included in the *Criminal Code*. The main reason that witnesses wanted femicide added as a separate offence was to send a “clear and unequivocal” message that it is “horrific” to kill a woman simply because she is a woman.<sup>63</sup> Some witnesses told the Committee that femicide should be considered first-degree murder so that the prosecution does not have the onus of proving premeditation.<sup>64</sup> The minimum punishment for first-degree

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58 Amanda Buffalo, Advisor, Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Cait Alexander, Founder, End Violence Everywhere, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Megan Walker, Advocate to End Male Violence Against Women, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Persons Against Non-State Torture, [Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women \(the Committee\) for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 1 November 2024; Stuart Betts, Chief of Police, Peterborough Police Service, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

59 Megan Walker, Advocate to End Male Violence Against Women, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024.

60 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

61 Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024.

62 Stuart Betts, Chief of Police, Peterborough Police Service, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

63 Ibid. See also: Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Aura Freedom International, [Brief Submission to the Standing Committee On The Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

64 Marie-Claude Richer, Director, Rebâtir, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024; the Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

murder is imprisonment for life, with no eligibility for parole until 25 years of the sentence have been served.<sup>65</sup>

The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu also wanted to see *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (formerly Bill C-5), which received Royal Assent in 2022, amended.<sup>66</sup> The Act repealed mandatory minimum sentences for certain offences, particularly for offences associated with firearms and those covered in the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.<sup>67</sup> Several of the mandatory minimum sentences repealed by this Act had previously been deemed unconstitutional and overturned by Canadian courts.<sup>68</sup> According to the Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, the Act “completely counteracts the efforts that most of the provinces have made to prevent every form of violence against women.”<sup>69</sup> On the topic of this Act, Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, told the Committee:

[The Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime] advocated very strongly around Bill C-5 that if there is going to be a greater reliance on house measures or home-based measures, there should be an increase in the safety measures for survivors, as well as structural reform to listen to what survivors might need if the person isn't incarcerated and is in their community.<sup>70</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

## Recommendation 2

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples and governments, support efforts to criminalize femicide and the killing of an intimate partner and include it in the *Criminal Code* with the following considerations:**

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65 Marie-Claude Richer, Director, Rebâtir, *Evidence*, 25 November 2024. See also: *Criminal Code*, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, ss. 231(2), 235 and 745(a).

66 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, *Evidence*, 20 November 2024; *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, S.C. 2022, c. 15.

67 *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, S.C. 1996, c. 19.

68 See in particular: *R. v. Nur*, 2015 SCC 15; *R. v. Lloyd*, 2016 SCC 13.

69 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, *Evidence*, 20 November 2024.

70 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.



- **create separate offences for femicide and the killing of an intimate partner in the *Criminal Code*;**
- **classify the offence of femicide and the killing of an intimate partner as first-degree murder in the *Criminal Code*, except in circumstances involving self-defence, coercive control and other mitigating factors relating to a history of violence or abuse; and**
- **that the definition of femicide should include murder–suicide, the murder of transgender women and girls, as well as deaths related to domestic or sexual violence.**

## Criminalizing Coercive Control

Coercive control was covered in this study, as it is a type of gender-based violence and a major risk factor for femicide. In addition, it is “a social problem linked to relationships of inequality that have long existed between men and women.”<sup>71</sup>

Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer with the Criminal Investigative Division at the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, described coercive control as follows:

Coercive control is a serious and pervasive form of domestic violence that impacts the victim’s safety, well-being and mental health. It involves a repeated pattern of behaviour used by an abuser to establish and maintain power over the victim, often through tactics such as intimidation, threats, manipulation and isolation, making it extremely difficult for the victims to escape the cycle of abuse.

The effects of coercive control can be long-lasting, often leading to severe psychological trauma, depression, anxiety and, in some cases, physical harm. This pattern of abusive behaviour is not just an isolated incident of violence but an ongoing and calculated effort to dominate and harm the victim. Adding coercive control to the *Criminal Code* is necessary to hold the offender accountable and to protect the victim from further harm.<sup>72</sup>

Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of political affairs at the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, explained that coercive control is a “type of domineering relationship, which some men fundamentally subscribe to, that leads to

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71 Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, *Evidence*, 4 November 2024.

72 Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.

domestic violence and, ultimately, femicide.”<sup>73</sup> Coercive control includes behaviours such as “[s]urveillance through technology, harassment, isolation, jealousy and threats.”<sup>74</sup>

Several witnesses emphasized to the Committee that coercive control and femicide are closely linked: “femicide is often preceded by a pattern of coercive control and violence that impacts women and children.”<sup>75</sup> Marie-Claude Richer, Director of Rebâtir, told the Committee that, “[f]or most, if not all, of the victims we’ve met with, a form of coercive control was involved.”<sup>76</sup>

According to Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director of Women’s Shelters Canada, coercive violence as a risk factor for femicide is not always recognized as such “by all services.”<sup>77</sup> Similarly, the Committee heard about the importance of defining coercive control, so that the public and actors in the legal system have a better understanding of what it entails. Various witnesses suggested that criminalizing coercive control would be one way to raise societal awareness of this type of intimate-partner violence;<sup>78</sup> a number were in favour of this.<sup>79</sup> Karine Gagnon emphasized to the Committee that only the federal government has the power to include coercive control as an offence in the *Criminal Code*.<sup>80</sup> On the provincial side, Quebec has already issued directives to criminal

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73 Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

74 Ibid.

75 Children First Canada, [Study on Gender-based Violence & Femicides against Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 7 November 2024. See also: Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Aura Freedom International, [Brief Submission to the Standing Committee On The Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

76 Marie-Claude Richer, Director, Rebâtir, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

77 Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024.

78 Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024.

79 Jackie Huet, Director General, CAVAC, Estrie Region, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024; Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024; Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024; Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024; Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Tara Graham, [Brief](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.

80 Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.



and penal prosecuting attorneys to consider coercive control in assessing their cases.<sup>81</sup> However, Karine Gagnon noted that these directives are of limited scope, since coercive control cannot be admitted as evidence or used as the basis for a charge.

Witnesses identified a number of reasons that explain why criminalizing coercive control is important, including to:

- “help victims realize that what they’re experiencing is really domestic violence and that their partner isn’t just exercising control;”<sup>82</sup>
- “hold the offender accountable and to protect the victim from further harm;”<sup>83</sup>
- “[act] as a deterrent;”<sup>84</sup>
- “[give] authorities an additional tool to take into account the lived context and not just isolated events;”<sup>85</sup>
- give judges “a more accurate view of the situation” so they can “make informed decisions;”<sup>86</sup>
- “have better penalties for acts committed against women;”<sup>87</sup> and
- ensure “a better assessment of what they [victims] are experiencing and the risk that they are exposed to [when proceedings are initiated].”<sup>88</sup>

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81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024.

84 Marie-Claude Richer, Director, Rebâtir, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

85 Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

86 Marie-Claude Richer, Director, Rebâtir, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

87 Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

88 Ibid.

Criminalizing coercive control would also provide “an additional tool for charges to be laid.”<sup>89</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples and governments, introduce legislation to criminalize coercive control.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, work with federal and provincial child protection agencies to develop policies and protocols that recognize the increased risk of filicide in cases of domestic violence.**

## **Reforming the Legal System**

Many witnesses appearing before the Committee discussed various aspects of the legal system, particularly stays of proceedings due to unreasonable delays, firearms ownership restrictions, bail, electronic monitoring devices and legal support for victims. Witnesses identified gaps in the current legal system and shared their thoughts with the Committee about how to address gender-based violence and femicide while providing better protection for victims.

### **Stays of Proceedings Due to Unreasonable Delays Further to *R. v. Jordan***

Several witnesses discussed the 2016 Supreme Court of Canada ruling in *R. v. Jordan*<sup>90</sup> (“*Jordan*”) and how it applies to and affects criminal cases involving gender and femicide.

This ruling set out a new framework to be applied when an accused’s right to be tried within a reasonable time under section 11(b) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and*

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89 Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

90 [R. v. Jordan](#), [2016] 1 SCR 631.



*Freedoms* is infringed.<sup>91</sup> As a result, a criminal case may be dismissed if the court finds that the delay in proceedings was unreasonable.<sup>92</sup>

More specifically, the Supreme Court of Canada set ceilings beyond which any delay is presumptively unreasonable (from when charges are filed to the actual or anticipated end of the trial): for cases going to trial in a provincial court, the presumptive ceiling is 18 months, while for cases going to trial in a superior court (or cases going to trial in a provincial court after a preliminary inquiry), the ceiling is 30 months.<sup>93</sup> Delays caused by the defence do not count when calculating whether the presumptive ceiling has been reached.<sup>94</sup> The Crown can rebut the presumption that the delay is unreasonable by establishing the presence of exceptional circumstances.<sup>95</sup> Even if the ceiling is not reached, the accused can still demonstrate in some cases that the delay in criminal proceedings is unreasonable and they can therefore obtain a stay of proceedings.<sup>96</sup>

As heard by the Committee, applying the framework set out in *Jordan* led to stays of proceedings in approximately 60,000 criminal cases.<sup>97</sup> In fact, several witnesses told the Committee about their concerns regarding *Jordan* and its consequences. For example, Cait Alexander, Founder of End Violence Everywhere, told the Committee that *Jordan* “killed my case twice. I was never given a criminal trial against [the accused]” and recommended that criminal trials should be held within a 90-day period.<sup>98</sup>

The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu said: “It’s absolutely intolerable in Canadian society to send murderers home without being punished.” In his opinion, the Supreme Court “should have established guidelines for framing the most serious crimes, particularly sexual assault and murder.”<sup>99</sup>

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91 Ibid., para. 5; [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), Part I of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, c. 11 (U.K.).

92 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024; [R. v. Jordan](#), [2016] 1 SCR 631, para. 47.

93 [R. v. Jordan](#), [2016] 1 SCR 631, para. 46.

94 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024; [R. v. Jordan](#), [2016] 1 SCR 631, para. 48.

95 [R. v. Jordan](#), [2016] 1 SCR 631, para. 47.

96 Ibid., para. 48.

97 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

98 Cait Alexander, Founder, End Violence Everywhere, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024.

99 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

Benjamin Roebuck said that “the *R. v. Jordan* decision was intended to address unreasonable delays but created unintended consequences.”<sup>100</sup> According to the Ombudsperson, stays in proceedings due to *Jordan* have had significant traumatic impacts on survivors. In some cases, victims appear at different hearings and testify against their attacker only to see the case collapse due to unreasonable delays.<sup>101</sup>

Some police services told the Committee about their concerns involving criminal cases that were dismissed due to *Jordan*.<sup>102</sup> Lisa Harris explained that police investigations today are more complex than they were when *Jordan* was first heard and gave the example of serious cases involving child sexual exploitation and human trafficking, which are automatically scheduled for trial within five or six weeks.<sup>103</sup>

Furthermore, now the prosecution may choose to delay laying charges in order to push back when the *Jordan* clock starts ticking, so that the presumptive ceiling for unreasonable delay is not reached.<sup>104</sup> According to Benjamin Roebuck, this strategy increases both risks for survivors and risks to public safety.<sup>105</sup> In addition, in some cases of sexual assault, the prosecution will file charges of simple assault instead of sexual assault because the proceedings are faster with charges of simple assault, so there is a lower chance that a stay of proceedings will be granted under *Jordan*.<sup>106</sup>

The Committee also heard that unnecessary motions filed in court are driving continued delays in the court system, increasing the risk that a stay of proceedings will be entered.<sup>107</sup> Benjamin Roebuck said that these motions include “applications for counselling records,

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100 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.

101 Ibid.

102 Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.; Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.

105 Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Submission to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) on Gender-based Violence and Femicides against Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.

106 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.

107 Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Submission to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) on Gender-based Violence and Femicides against Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.



contesting testimonial aids, and arguing whether the sexual history of human trafficking survivors is relevant to the case.”<sup>108</sup> Benjamin Roebuck also mentioned that, since *Jordan*, there has been an increase in defence motions contesting testimonial aids and requesting survivors’ private therapy records. Benjamin Roebuck further explained that safety measures requested by victims should not be contested and that “testimonial aids [should be] more presumptive.”<sup>109</sup> The Ombudsperson also added that “[g]reater protections for survivors would reduce delays and save money.”<sup>110</sup>

Despite the effects of *Jordan*, various witnesses told the Committee that timelines in criminal cases are very long. Martine Jeanson, President, Founder and Front-Line Worker at La Maison des Guerrières, mentioned that her organization’s clients can wait for two or three years before they are called to testify against their attacker. In the intervening time, “the women are living in constant fear.”<sup>111</sup> For that reason, Martine Jeanson called for cases involving domestic violence to be dealt with by the courts on a priority basis.<sup>112</sup>

According to the Honourable Pierre-Hughes Boisvenu, “[a]ny failure on our part to take a harder line and solve the problem that has been caused by the *Jordan* decision, as a result of which perpetrators are sent home, will clearly be a way to trivialize violence against women.”<sup>113</sup> To address the negative consequences stemming from *Jordan*, the Honourable Pierre-Hughes Boisvenu recommended that “the notwithstanding clause of

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108 Ibid.

109 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024; Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024.

110 Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, [Submission to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women \(FEWO\) on Gender-based Violence and Femicides against Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.

111 Martine Jeanson, President, Founder and Front-Line Worker, La Maison des Guerrières, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

112 Ibid.

113 The Honourable Pierre-Hughes Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* should be used to suspend the Supreme Court's decision in specific cases," such as murder and sexual assault.<sup>114</sup>

Benjamin Roebuck disagreed with this viewpoint and explained that the notwithstanding clause does not need to be used. Rather, the Ombudsperson called for "more emphasis on the section 7 [*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*] rights of survivors to life and security of the person." According to the Ombudsperson, focusing on these rights could be an effective challenge to the unreasonable delay ceilings in *Jordan*.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, on the topic of the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR), which is quasi-constitutional,<sup>116</sup> the Ombudsperson said that "[t]he CVBR says that every victim has the right to protection, and we have to interpret that at an individual level."<sup>117</sup> The Ombudsperson went on to add: "However, we can't assume that will happen. It has to be brought into the *Criminal Code* so that the CVBR has effect."<sup>118</sup> In addition, Benjamin Roebuck also explained that "[j]udges certainly need to be in place. I think there's been more recent progress to actually drive appointments."<sup>119</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

### Recommendation 5

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples and governments, eliminate gaps in the justice system that delay legal proceedings by providing sufficient resources to provide protection for survivors of gender-based violence.**

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114 Ibid. During the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, Bill C-392, An Act to amend the Criminal Code to address the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *R. v. Jordan*, sought to codify the analytical framework set out in *Jordan*, in addition to using the notwithstanding clause to outline exceptions to this framework for certain offences, including murders, assault with a weapon, aggravated assault and sexual assault. The bill died on the Order Paper: [Bill C-392, An Act to amend the Criminal Code to address the Supreme Court of Canada decision in R. v. Jordan](#), 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> Session.

115 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.

116 Ibid. See also: Lyne Casavant, Christine Morris and Julia Nicol, [Legislative Summary of Bill C-32: An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts](#), Publication No. 41-2-C32-E, Library of Parliament, 18 December 2014.

117 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024. See also: [Canadian Victims Bill of Rights](#), S.C. 2015, c. 13.

118 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.

119 Ibid.



## Recommendation 6

**That the Government of Canada legislate the application of the stays of proceedings in criminal cases pursuant to the Supreme Court of Canada ruling in *R. v. Jordan*, to ensure it cannot be applied for offences such as murder between intimate partners and sexual assault, in order to promote the protection of the victim and provide justice.**

## Recommendation 7

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, enact legislation to ban subpoenas of personal information pursuant to sections 278.1 to 278.91 of the *Criminal Code*, to be used against a survivor so as to protect survivors' privacy.**

## Restrictions on Firearms Ownership

Many witnesses said that gun ownership is a major risk factor for femicide. In fact, it is “the single greatest risk factor for domestic violence becoming fatal,” due to “its permanent presence in the home and immediate, lethal effect.”<sup>120</sup> The link between femicide and access to firearms in Canada has been documented in several studies and reports, including the Culleton, Kuzyk and Warmerdam inquest by the Renfrew County Coroner and the final report of the Mass Casualty Commission.<sup>121</sup> For intimate-partner violence, the use of a firearm is five times more likely to be lethal.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, between 2018 and 2022, “31% of femicide victims in Canada died by gunshot.”<sup>123</sup> Heidi Rathjen, Coordinator at PolySeSouvient, told the Committee that “[g]un control is a public safety issue, but it’s also a women’s issue” and added that “[w]hile guns on their own don’t kill, they make killing easier.”<sup>124</sup>

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120 Canadian Federation of University Women, [Brief for the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 8 November 2024.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.; Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns, [Committee’s Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides Against Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

123 Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns, [Committee’s Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides Against Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

124 Heidi Rathjen, Coordinator, PolySeSouvient, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

Some witnesses appearing before the Committee emphasized the importance of removing firearms from perpetrators of intimate-partner violence.<sup>125</sup> In addition, the organization Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns told the Committee that studies have shown that “efforts to reduce access to firearms are associated with significantly lower rates of firearm-related [intimate-partner homicide].”<sup>126</sup>

Various witnesses brought up *An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)*,<sup>127</sup> formerly Bill C-21, which received Royal Assent in 2023. Heidi Rathjen explained that:

in Canada, there’s no right to own guns, and if there’s a risk, police have the ability to remove guns and revoke the licence before anybody is technically a criminal. It is like a protection order. The person hasn’t been convicted yet, but the judge recognizes that there are enough risk factors to intervene and reduce the liberty of the individual.<sup>128</sup>

More specifically, sections 16 and 36 of the Act were mentioned, which amend sections 6.1, 70.1 and 70.2 of the *Firearms Act*.<sup>129</sup> The National Association of Women and the Law and PolySeSouvient described these sections as follows:

- subsection 6.1 of the *Firearms Act*, which renders an individual not eligible to hold a licence if they are subject to a protection order or have been convicted of an offence involving family violence;
- subsection 70.1 which obliges a Chief Firearms Officer who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a licensee may have engaged in domestic violence or stalking to revoke the licence within 24 hours; and

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125 Suzanne Zaccour, Director of Legal Affairs, National Association of Women and the Law, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

126 Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns, [Committee’s Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides Against Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

127 [An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments \(firearms\)](#), S.C. 2023, c. 32.

128 Heidi Rathjen, Coordinator, PolySeSouvient, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024. See also: [An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments \(firearms\)](#), S.C. 2023, c. 32, ss. 4, 5 and 36.

129 [Firearms Act](#), S.C. 1995, c. 39.



- subsection 70.2 which automatically revokes the licence of an individual who becomes subject to a protection order and requires them to deliver their guns to a peace officer within 24 hours.<sup>130</sup>

Furthermore, Anuradha Dugal told the Committee the following:

Firearm licenses can also be suspended if an officer suspects that this is happening, but as we know, women are very rarely believed, so the idea in some cases is that working on something that is a suspicion may not be the first priority of law enforcement officers.<sup>131</sup>

Although *An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)* passed in 2023, several of its provisions had not yet come into force when the Committee was conducting its study in the fall of 2024. Various witnesses were looking forward to these provisions coming into force. Since the study concluded, most of these provisions have now come into force, including sections 16 and 36.<sup>132</sup>

Similarly, the National Association of Women and the Law and PolySeSouvient recommended that the term “protection order” used in the Act be defined in regulations “as soon as possible.”<sup>133</sup> After the Committee’s study was concluded, section 45 of the Act came into force and gave the government the authority to make regulations defining the term “protection order” in the *Firearms Act*.<sup>134</sup> Regulations have been drafted to that effect and are scheduled to come into force in the fall of 2025.<sup>135</sup>

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130 National Association of Women and the Law and PolySeSouvient, [Recommendations to prevent gun-related intimate threats, femicides and familicides](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

131 Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024.

132 See for example: [Order Fixing April 4, 2025 as the Day on Which Sections 16 and 36 of An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments \(firearms\) Come into Force](#), 5 March 2025, in the *Canada Gazette*, Part II, 26 March 2025.

133 National Association of Women and the Law and PolySeSouvient, [Recommendations to prevent gun-related intimate threats, femicides and familicides](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024.

134 [Order Fixing September 1, 2024 as the Day on Which Sections 21.2, 26 and 45 of An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments \(firearms\) Come into Force](#), SI/2024-28, 3 July 2024, in *Canada Gazette*, Part II, 17 June 2024.

135 [Regulations Amending the Firearms Licences Regulations](#), 4 February 2025, in *Canada Gazette*, Part I, 8 March 2025.

## Bail

Bail is when a person is released from custody, with or without conditions, while awaiting trial. A number of witnesses appearing before the Committee said that the bail system needs to be reformed.

Stuart Betts said there was a “call for bail reform from police chiefs across this country and here in Ontario,” and that police forces are faced with “a bit of a revolving door or a catch-and-release situation in which [they] are constantly trying to provide that process for safety.”<sup>136</sup> The current bail system is not protecting Canadians, and “often results in a heightened sense of risk and danger.”<sup>137</sup> Stuart Betts further explained that, when an accused is released on bail, he may feel angry and embarrassed, and may also feel “a loss of power and a loss of control.”<sup>138</sup> As a result, the victim is at increased risk. Many victims of abuse are afraid to contact the police because they fear how their abuser will react.<sup>139</sup>

Sunder Singh, Executive Director of the Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women, believes that stricter legislation, particularly when it comes to bail for a person charged with gender-based violence, would reduce the number of cases of domestic violence.<sup>140</sup>

Furthermore, while failing to respect bail conditions is an offence under the *Criminal Code*, the Committee heard that these conditions are often violated.<sup>141</sup> In fact, Manon Monastesse, Executive Director of the Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, told the Committee that many femicides and filicides (the killing of a child by their parent) occur after bail conditions are violated repeatedly.<sup>142</sup>

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136 Stuart Betts, Chief of Police, Peterborough Police Service, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.

139 Martine Jeanson, President, Founder and Front-Line Worker, La Maison des Guerrières, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

140 Sunder Singh, Executive Director, Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

141 Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024; Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

142 Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.



The Honourable Pierre-Hughes Boisvenu told the Committee that “our laws alone won’t protect women; our justice system has to enforce them.”<sup>143</sup> However, the Committee heard that currently the application of the law is inadequate.<sup>144</sup> Stuart Betts mentioned the ladder principle, which provides that “the least onerous form of custody” is applied while awaiting trial.<sup>145</sup> As a result, many individuals are released on bail, and often it is “underserving victims in our community because the least onerous, depending on the nature of that offence, is insufficient to protect our community once they’ve been released.”<sup>146</sup> Stuart Betts clarified that this does not mean that people should not be let out on bail, but just that “legislation needs to be amended in order to allow for a better application.”<sup>147</sup>

### **Wearing of Electronic Monitoring Devices**

A victim of domestic violence told the Committee that women like her feel trapped by the fear that their abuser will reoffend.<sup>148</sup> According to the Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, “[f]or every man who’s released pending trial, there’s a woman who’s imprisoned by fear.”<sup>149</sup> Some witnesses said one solution is to have the accused out on bail wear an electronic monitoring device, also known as an ankle monitor. In the opinion of the Honourable Pierre-Hughes Boisvenu, electronic monitoring devices are an effective and proven way to protect survivors. The former Senator explained that the results of a Quebec pilot project were conclusive, as none of the 350 men who wore ankle monitors had committed homicide.<sup>150</sup>

Appearing as an individual, Diane Tremblay made a similar observation, adding that wearing an electronic monitoring device “would make violent men think even more.”<sup>151</sup> In her view, “without the electronic bracelet, many women will die.”<sup>152</sup> Diane Tremblay

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143 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

144 Stuart Betts, Chief of Police, Peterborough Police Service, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

145 Ibid.

146 Ibid.

147 Ibid.

148 Diane Tremblay, Artist, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

149 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

150 Ibid.

151 Diane Tremblay, Artist, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

152 Ibid.

said that an accused should be required to wear an electronic monitoring device “as soon as there are violent words or gestures, or threats.”<sup>153</sup>

The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu spoke to the Committee about *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to another Act (interim release and domestic violence recognizance orders)*, formerly Bill S-205, which received Royal Assent in 2024.<sup>154</sup> The former Senator expressed his disappointment that certain provisions had been removed from the bill as it moved through the legislative process, particularly those requiring violent men to attend a treatment program as a condition of their release.<sup>155</sup>

In addition, the Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu discussed *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner)*,<sup>156</sup> formerly Bill C-233, which received Royal Assent in 2023. The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu explained that, under the Act, “a man released pending trial under section 515 of the *Criminal Code* may be required to wear an electronic bracelet.”<sup>157</sup> However, the former Senator said that judges are poorly informed about this Act.

Marie-Claude Richer said that “[s]ection 515 of the *Criminal Code* should also be amended to require the court to give reasons for refusing to order the accused to wear an electronic monitoring device if the prosecutor makes the request.”<sup>158</sup>

In addition to having the perpetrator wear an electronic monitoring device, Diane Tremblay identified another way to protect victims, which is to provide victims with a wearable panic button.<sup>159</sup> Activating the alarm would immediately alert the police. Diane

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153 Ibid.

154 [\*An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to another Act \(interim release and domestic violence recognizance orders\)\*](#), S.C. 2024, c. 22.

155 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024. See also: [Bill S-205, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to another Act \(interim release and domestic violence recognizance orders\)](#), 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> Session (first reading version).

156 [\*An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act \(violence against an intimate partner\)\*](#), S.C. 2023, c. 7.

157 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

158 Marie-Claude Richer, Director, Rebâtir, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

159 Diane Tremblay, Artist, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.



Tremblay told the Committee that she herself as a victim of domestic violence had used one, and that these devices should be offered to women free of charge.<sup>160</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 8**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, reform bail by holding violent offenders in custody or under strict supervision, including through the use of ankle monitors, enforcing zero-tolerance for bail breaches, ending reliance on restraining orders, undertakings or peace bonds alone to protect victims and survivors of crimes involving deadly force, scaling bail to income, and requiring sureties to pay upfront with forfeited funds redirected to survivor supports.**

### **Legal Support Services for Victims**

Several witnesses mentioned that victims of violence could benefit from legal support throughout the judicial process. It can be difficult for them to understand the workings of the judicial system, particularly those with cultural or language barriers.<sup>161</sup> Some witnesses pointed out to the Committee that Crown prosecutors are “not there to support the victim;”<sup>162</sup> rather, they support “the general safety of the public.”<sup>163</sup> Anuradha Dugal told the Committee that there is not enough money in the justice system, in both federal and provincial courts, to provide women with adequate legal support.<sup>164</sup>

Unlike victims, an accused in a criminal case has access to lawyer services paid for by the state. Some witnesses did mention that legal services for victims are available in certain areas. In Quebec, the organization Rebâtir has a mandate “to provide four hours of free legal consultation to any victim of domestic and sexual violence, anywhere in Quebec, in any field of law. In three years, we’ve provided over 67,000 legal consultations to more than 16,000 victims.”<sup>165</sup> Élyse Joyal-Pilon, Lawyer and Director at Rebâtir, told the

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160 Ibid.

161 Amanda Buffalo, Advisor, Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society, *Evidence*, 6 November 2024; Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024.

162 Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024.

163 Amanda Buffalo, Advisor, Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society, *Evidence*, 6 November 2024.

164 Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024.

165 Marie-Claude Richer, Director, Rebâtir, *Evidence*, 25 November 2024.

Committee that criminal law is one of the legal fields for which the organization provides the most consultations: “In Quebec, victims needed better guidance, support, advice and information.”<sup>166</sup> As an example, Marie-Claude Richer added the following:

We’re the only law firm that meets with victims before they turn to the police. First, we meet with them to reassure them. We then explain how things will work in the justice system so that they know what to say and how to make a good statement. We know that this statement will be analyzed by the courts.<sup>167</sup>

According to Marie-Claude Richer, Rebâtir helps make women feel safe, and “safety is the cornerstone of a victim’s successful journey through the justice system.” Marie-Claude Richer further indicated, “[s]ome women say that, had they known what would happen to them, they wouldn’t have reported the violence. Why not? Because they don’t feel safe.”<sup>168</sup> Other witnesses were in favour of access to free legal advice for victims.<sup>169</sup> Megan Walker specified that victims need support throughout the legal process.<sup>170</sup>

In addition, Melanie Omeniho told the Committee that a “dedicated network of Métis justice system navigators is crucial for guiding Métis individuals through the legal process, connecting them with trauma-informed, culturally safe supports and ensuring access to specialized courts like mental health courts.”<sup>171</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 9**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, provide free or funded legal counsel and court support for all victims of intimate partner**

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166 Élyse Joyal-Pilon, Lawyer & Director, Rebâtir, *Evidence*, 25 November 2024.

167 Marie-Claude Richer, Director, Rebâtir, *Evidence*, 25 November 2024.

168 Ibid.

169 Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, *Evidence*, 30 October 2024; Tracey Parsons, *Submission To the Standing Committee on Gender Based Violence and Femicide – FEWO*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, *Evidence*, 20 November 2024.

170 Megan Walker, Advocate to End Male Violence Against Women, as an individual, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024.

171 Melanie Omeniho, President, Women of the Métis Nation, *Evidence*, 4 November 2024.



**violence, sexual assault, and femicide, with special attention to avoiding retraumatization and victim-blaming.**

## Creating an Independent Commissioner Position

A number of witnesses recommended creating a position for an independent gender-based violence commissioner.<sup>172</sup> This role would be part of a larger gender-based violence accountability mechanism, and the commissioner would “strengthen the monitoring of Canada’s adherence to international obligations concerning gender-based violence.”<sup>173</sup> The Women’s Legal Education & Action Fund, which proposed creating this position in a 2024 report, explained to the Committee that the commissioner would “monitor the implementation and renewal of Canada’s National Action Plan on GBV [gender-based violence],” and that its mandate would be “identifying and filling gaps in data collection, service provision, and rights fulfillment.”<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, the commissioner should have “full powers proper to its federal role,” meaning:

the ability to investigate legal issues within federal jurisdiction (e.g., criminal, Indigenous, immigration, and refugee matters), including the power to compel documents and witnesses and/or intervene in court cases in relation to these matters.<sup>175</sup>

Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator at the Ending Violence Association of Canada, was disappointed that funding to implement the *National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence* (National Action Plan)<sup>176</sup> is currently dependent on election

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172 Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024; Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024; Women’s Legal Education & Action Fund, [Submission to The Standing Committee on the Status of Women on its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 4 November 2024; Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

173 Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

174 Women’s Legal Education & Action Fund, [Submission to The Standing Committee on the Status of Women on its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 4 November 2024.

175 Ibid.

176 Government of Canada, [National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence](#).

cycles and added that the position of an independent commissioner would be more reliable and sustainable in terms of accountability.<sup>177</sup>

## Improving Access to Services

Various witnesses highlighted the importance of offering survivor-centred services and supports that meet the needs of all groups and that take into account the trauma experienced by survivors.<sup>178</sup> Some witnesses recommended a comprehensive, integrated approach to providing services that bring together all sectors and that ensures women’s safety.<sup>179</sup> Witnesses called for improved support and services, including by:

- increasing funding for emergency shelters and transition housing;<sup>180</sup>
- supporting low-barrier shelters that offer harm-reduction services for women and gender-diverse people who use drugs;<sup>181</sup>

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- 177 Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.
- 178 Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Canadian Federation of University Women, [Brief for the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 8 November 2024; Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024; Lucas Broadfoot, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024; Melanie Omeniho, President, Women of the Métis Nation, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024; Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration, Safe Centre of Peel, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.
- 179 Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.
- 180 Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, [Gender-Based Violence and Femicides Against Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024; Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Mathilde Trou, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.
- 181 HIV Legal Network, [Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.



- ensuring access to affordable housing;<sup>182</sup>
- providing access to child-care services,<sup>183</sup>
- developing transportation networks and infrastructure in rural, remote and Northern communities;<sup>184</sup> and
- improving access to and funding for mental health services.<sup>185</sup>

Lenore Lukasik-Foss said that it is important “to have that intersectional lens for survivors—racialized, [I]ndigenous, gender diverse, non-binary, etc.”<sup>186</sup> A number of witnesses were in favour of an intersectional approach to address barriers in accessing services, as these services are even more important for people in rural areas and with intersecting identities.<sup>187</sup> In addition, some witnesses said there was a lack of resources

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182 Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, *Gender-Based Violence and Femicides Against Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024; Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024; The Salvation Army, *Brief Submission for the Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides against women, girls, and gender-diverse people*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024; Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, *Evidence*, 4 November 2024; Mathilde Trou, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, *Evidence*, 4 November 2024; Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024; Tracey Parsons, *Submission To the Standing Committee on Gender Based Violence and Femicide – FEWO*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.

183 Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, *Evidence*, 30 October 2024.

184 Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, *Evidence*, 30 October 2024; Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, *Evidence*, 30 October 2024.

185 The Salvation Army, *Brief Submission for the Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides against women, girls, and gender-diverse people*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024; Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, *Evidence*, 6 November 2024; Tracey Parsons, *Submission To the Standing Committee on Gender Based Violence and Femicide – FEWO*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, *Evidence*, 20 November 2024.

186 Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, *Evidence*, 30 October 2024.

187 Canadian Federation of University Women, *Brief for the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women for its Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 8 November 2024.

to meet the specific needs of older women who experience gender-based violence.<sup>188</sup> To ensure that everyone has access to services, it is necessary to provide bilingual services for anglophone and francophone minority communities, as well as interpretation services in a number of languages.<sup>189</sup>

The Ontario Native Women’s Association emphasized the need to strengthen cultural competencies and provide culturally relevant services, including Indigenous-led healing programs and mental health and wellness programs specific to Indigenous women.<sup>190</sup> This would also include culturally relevant housing and programs focused on community prevention that strengthen connections with land, culture and community. Furthermore, witnesses such as Rosemary Cooper, President and Chief Executive Officer of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, emphasized the need to implement the 231 Calls for Justice<sup>191</sup> made in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.<sup>192</sup> Egale Canada recommended training for personnel about violence toward members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community that “make a distinction between trans and queer cisgender individuals’ experiences and needs.”<sup>193</sup>

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- 188 Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, *Evidence*, 28 October 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, *Evidence*, 20 November 2024.
- 189 Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, *Gender-Based Violence and Femicides Against Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024; Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University, *Evidence*, 30 October 2024.
- 190 Ontario Native Women’s Association, *Indigenous Women’s Experiences of Gender-Based Violence*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024.
- 191 National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, 2019. Note: A supplementary report specific to Quebec has an additional 21 calls for justice. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) specifies that Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA people are included in the term MMIWG.
- 192 Women’s Legal Education & Action Fund, *Submission to The Standing Committee on the Status of Women on its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 4 November 2024; Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Chair, National Family and Survivors Circle Inc., *Evidence*, 4 November 2024; Rosemary Cooper, President and Chief Executive Officer, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, *Evidence*, 4 November 2024; Woodfibre LNG, *Written brief in response to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women’s Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024.
- 193 Egale Canada, *Brief for the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) for its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 19 November 2024.



The Committee heard a number of criticisms about the way that funding is allocated to provide services to victims of gender-based violence. Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director of the Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, spoke about per-capita funding, which does not take into account the fact that it is more expensive to serve clients in rural and remote regions than in large city centres.<sup>194</sup> Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, President of National Family and Survivors Circle Inc., spoke about the need to provide sustained and equitable funding to Indigenous-led organizations where Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people develop and guide solutions that take into account the specific needs of Indigenous survivors.<sup>195</sup>

Some witnesses described the funding allocated for the National Action Plan as insufficient.<sup>196</sup> More specifically, the Ending Violence Association of Canada (since renamed the Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada) called for adequate funding for community-based, survivor-serving organizations through the National Action Plan to ensure timely services for survivors.<sup>197</sup> This call echoed recommendations made by the Mass Casualty Commission<sup>198</sup> about the need for investments to prioritize community-based responses that centre survivors' well-being and prevent violence.<sup>199</sup>

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194 Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

195 Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Chair, National Family and Survivors Circle Inc., [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

196 Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

197 Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024.

198 The Mass Casualty Commission was the public inquiry created to analyze the causes, context and circumstances of the mass casualty that took place on 18–19 April 2020 in Nova Scotia. The chain of events began with a man attacking his partner. He then went on to impersonate an RCMP officer and kill 22 people, injuring three more, and set a number of fires over a two-day period. The Mass Casualty Commission also had a mandate to write a report “to set out lessons learned as well as recommendations that could help prevent and respond to similar incidents in the future.” See Mass Casualty Commission, *Turning the Tide Together: Final Report of the Mass Casualty Commission*, “[Executive Summary and Recommendations](#),” March 2023.

199 Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

In addition to the lack of funding, some witnesses criticized the lack of minimum standards for victim support across the provinces and territories.<sup>200</sup> Manon Monastesse told the Committee that “women unfortunately still don’t have access to the same services or the same quality of service across the country.”<sup>201</sup> The Honourable Pierre-Hughes Boisvenu spoke about the need to reach reciprocal agreements between provinces so that victims have access to services no matter where the crime took place.<sup>202</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 10**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories and of Indigenous Peoples and governments, and in consultation and collaboration with them, take steps to support survivors of gender-based violence and their families by:**

- **continuing to provide funding through the *National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence* to community organizations and service providers to address gender-based violence and femicide by ensuring access to culturally relevant, trauma-informed and integrated services; and**
- **creating prevention strategies and initiatives to address sexist attitudes that drive violence.**

### **Recommendation 11**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, provide funding to support culturally relevant, safe and trauma-informed services guided by Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, as well as programs and supports for women experiencing homelessness, substance use, or complex trauma.**

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200 The Honourable Pierre-Hughes Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024; Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

201 Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

202 The Honourable Pierre-Hughes Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.



## Recommendation 12

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, increase funding to implement Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls (MMIWG) specific initiatives and the Call for Justice 1.7.**

### Prevention and Education

Various witnesses told the Committee that prevention, education and awareness efforts are important to address the root causes of gender-based violence and femicide. Various measures – such as training for key actors in the legal system and victim service providers, or education programs and awareness campaigns for the public and for children – were recommended by witnesses as ways to address gender-based violence.

Humberto Carolo drew the Committee’s attention to the fact that findings from Ontario’s Domestic Violence Death Review Committee coroner’s inquests have repeatedly shown that gender-based violence is not only predictable but also preventable.<sup>203</sup> However, underfunding for prevention initiatives – when several witnesses said these initiatives should be a priority – makes it difficult to see progress in reducing violence.<sup>204</sup> Woodfibre LNG emphasized the importance of proactive programming that can deter gender-based violence and prevent femicide. For example, Woodfibre LNG introduced its Gender and Cultural Safety Plan for its Squamish project, which includes mandatory training to prevent violence.<sup>205</sup>

The Committee heard that prevention helps create “new societal expectations of acceptance, non-violence and equity” and focuses on the root cause of gender-based

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203 Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

204 Erin Griver, Co-chair, Woman Abuse Working Group, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024; Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024; Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Women’s Legal Education & Action Fund, [Submission to The Standing Committee on the Status of Women on its Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 4 November 2024; Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

205 Woodfibre LNG, [Written brief in response to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women’s Study on Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024.

violence: “the unhealthy socialization of men and boys.”<sup>206</sup> Jill Young was also in favour of focusing on prevention and awareness from a young age to instill skills such as “life skills, healthy relationships, empowerment to girls and boys.”<sup>207</sup> Prevention efforts need to take place across various sectors.

Various witnesses suggested that prevention efforts are needed to address online hate speech.<sup>208</sup> Karine Gagnon said that gender-based violence stems from hate speech shared on social media, which is why there is a “need for prevention and awareness. We need to dismantle the thinking that leads to these behaviours being perpetuated.”<sup>209</sup> Elizabeth Atcheson called for steps to be taken “to address AI [artificial intelligence]-powered sexist hate speech and gendered disinformation and misinformation.”<sup>210</sup> Humberto Carolo recommended a multi-faceted prevention strategy that would include support for men and boys. These prevention efforts must “change the deeply entrenched, sexist, hyper-masculine norms, views and attitudes of the online toxic ecosystems” so that men and boys can resist harmful influences online.<sup>211</sup> Prevention efforts could reduce a person’s tendency to support the ideology, “reducing the credibility of deeply misogynistic and hateful influencers.”<sup>212</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends and makes the following observation:

### **Recommendation 13**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories and of Indigenous peoples and governments, and in consultation and collaboration with them, provide funding for programs that raise public awareness of**

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206 Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

207 Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Lethbridge and District, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

208 Elizabeth Atcheson, [Brief](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2 November 2024; Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024; Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault, Policy Issues Advisor, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

209 Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

210 Elizabeth Atcheson, [Brief](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2 November 2024.

211 Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024.

212 Ibid.



**harmful attitudes and behaviours; encourage men and boys to contribute to ending gender-based violence and femicide; and promote healthy relationships.**

#### **Recommendation 14**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, explicitly recognize senior women as a vulnerable group facing domestic, financial, institutional, and psychological violence, and fund awareness programs, caregiver training, and community support initiatives to prevent and detect abuse against them.**

#### **Observation 1**

**Given that gender-based violence is a pressing nationwide issue, the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, should explore the possibilities of collaborating with the ministries to ensure that provinces and territories have support to address intimate partner violence, sexual assault and femicide.**

### **Training Actors in the Legal System**

The Committee heard that it is necessary to provide better training for actors in the legal system to improve their understanding of the risk and the occurrence of femicide, gender-based violence and coercive control. These actors include, among others, prosecutors, judges, police officers and law students.<sup>213</sup> For example, Valérie Auger-Voyer suggested that law students should take courses on gender-based violence, domestic violence and sexual violence to really understand these dynamics.<sup>214</sup>

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213 Alison Irons, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Élyse Joyal-Pilon, Lawyer & Director, Rebâtir, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024; Jackie Huet, Director General, CAVAC, Estrie Region, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024; Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault, Policy Issues Advisor, Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024; Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024; Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024; Sunder Singh, Executive Director, Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Tracey Parsons, [Submission To the Standing Committee on Gender Based Violence and Femicide – FEWO](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

214 Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

Some witnesses discussed the need for funding to provide training to everyone working in legal and social services so that they are equipped to properly assess the risks to victims' safety.<sup>215</sup> On the topic of better training for stakeholders, Julie S. Lalonde said the following:

You shouldn't be allowed to be a police officer if you can't recognize what constitutes domestic violence. You shouldn't be a prosecutor if you don't know the kind of trauma victims experience or how that trauma affects their testimony.<sup>216</sup>

Lisa Harris mentioned the lack of accountability measures for training actors in the legal system, as well as the need for a better awareness of victims' rights and the nuances of gender-based violence.<sup>217</sup> Benjamin Roebuck criticized the fact that there are still "judges who have no training in criminal matters who are listening to cases that involve complex power dynamics and gender imbalance."<sup>218</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 15**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, support trauma-informed training for judges, court staff, health professionals, law enforcement, and social service providers, and that training should include risk assessments and how to administer them; the warning signs that can lead to femicide, including but not limited to coercive and controlling behaviour, damage to property, harm to companion animals, verbal, physical and psychological abuse, strangulation or the presence of firearms; the importance of protective tools such as electronic monitoring devices and panic buttons; and updates on new legislation related to gender-based violence.**

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215 Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, *Evidence*, 4 November 2024; Marie-Claude Richer, Director, Rebâtir, *Evidence*, 25 November 2024.

216 Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, *Evidence*, 30 October 2024.

217 Sgt Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.

218 Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, *Evidence*, 27 November 2024.



## Rehabilitation

On the topic of prevention, various witnesses discussed the need to adopt an approach that focuses on rehabilitating those who perpetrate gender-based violence rather than focusing solely on the prison system and incarceration. The Committee heard about the need to direct perpetrators of gender-based violence to resources that can help and to ensure that there is rigorous follow-up when the police intervene. As Cait Alexander asked the Committee, “when are we going to hold these abusers accountable?”<sup>219</sup> However, some witnesses said that therapy has its limits, and that some men will “never change.”<sup>220</sup>

Martine Jeanson explained that:

[M]en who grow up seeing impulsive behaviours can become impulsive. Most children who grow up in families that experience domestic violence become violent people. That cycle has to stop. ... Men need help to deal with their violent behaviour.<sup>221</sup>

Martine Jeanson therefore suggested that violent men should be required to undergo specialized therapy in men’s therapy centres and Manon Monastesse noted that the programs currently in place are inadequate as “they don’t focus on the need to hold these men accountable for their violent behaviours.”<sup>222</sup> Amanda Buffalo explained the difference between punishment and accountability as follows:

Instead of punishing, we need to rethink ways to invite accountability into our conversations so that people can take that step to rehabilitation and make the changes in their own world and in the way that they’re choosing to treat other people.<sup>223</sup>

However, Amy Jarrette, Deputy Commissioner for Women with the Correctional Service of Canada, said that “holding criminals accountable is a key component of ... the approach that the Correctional Service of Canada takes. It is part of the assessment

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219 Cait Alexander, Founder, End Violence Everywhere, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, CAVAC Network, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

220 Martine Jeanson, President, Founder and Front-Line Worker, La Maison des Guerrières, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024. See also: Esther Uhlman, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024; Sunder Singh, Executive Director, Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

221 Martine Jeanson, President, Founder and Front-Line Worker, La Maison des Guerrières, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

222 Ibid.; Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

223 Amanda Buffalo, Advisor, Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

process for offenders that they must demonstrate accountability for their actions.”<sup>224</sup> Kathy Neil, Deputy Commissioner for Indigenous Corrections at the Correctional Service of Canada, mentioned that healing lodges are a key component in the rehabilitation of Indigenous people.<sup>225</sup>

The Committee heard that these therapies need to have a clear framework that establishes objectives for men with violent behaviours who participate in rehabilitation programs.<sup>226</sup> Julie S. Lalonde explained that prisons are gender-specific for many reasons, but that “it’s crazy to think that putting someone in jail is going to change the attitude of a man who exhibits sexist and violent behaviour.”<sup>227</sup> Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu told the Committee that the prison system may not sufficiently rehabilitate men, who may emerge even more violent, and emphasized the importance of investing in rehabilitation and assistance services.<sup>228</sup> Julie S. Lalonde also mentioned the need to fund programs that work with perpetrators of gender-based violence, even if it makes people uncomfortable.<sup>229</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

#### **Recommendation 16**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, create a public intimate partner violence offender registry and mandate participation in in-person rehabilitation programs, for all convicted offenders of intimate partner violence and sexual assault.**

#### **Recommendation 17**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments,**

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224 Amy Jarrette, Deputy Commissioner for Women, Correctional Service of Canada, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

225 Kathy Neil, Deputy Commissioner, Indigenous Corrections, Correctional Service of Canada, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

226 Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

227 Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

228 The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator, Former Senator, Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

229 Julie S. Lalonde, Executive Director, Canadian Anti-Stalking Association, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.



**and in collaboration with them, fund the creation and maintenance of specialized programs for men exhibiting violent or high-risk behaviours, focused on accountability, impulse management, and the development of healthy relationship skills.**

## Data Collection

The Committee heard a number of recommendations about the need to establish better data collection about femicide and gender-based violence in Canada in order to develop tailored prevention and awareness programs.<sup>230</sup> “Comprehensive” data is needed to better understand gender-based violence and femicide to develop an effective prevention strategy.<sup>231</sup>

Stuart Betts told the Committee that “[o]btaining accurate, reliable and comparable statistics for calls for service for intimate partner violence is nearly impossible.”<sup>232</sup> Given these shortcomings, Manon Monastesse criticized the methodology used by Statistics Canada. The Universal Crime Reporting Survey includes only police-reported data, which excludes all crimes that are not reported to the police.<sup>233</sup> Erin Griver, Co-chair of the

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230 Alison Irons, as an individual, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne, [Brief by the Alliance des Femmes de la Francophonie Canadienne \(AFFC\) for the Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024; Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director, Women’s Shelters Canada, [Evidence](#), 28 October 2024; Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024; Children First Canada, [Study on Gender-based Violence & Femicides against Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 7 November 2024; Heidi Rathjen, Coordinator, PolySeSouvient, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024; Leighann Burns, [Gender-Based Violence and Femicides Against Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 20 November 2024; Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024; Megan Walker, [Submission to The Standing Committee on the Status of Women on its Study on Male Violence Against Women and Femicides in Canada](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 19 November 2024; Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024; DisAbleD Women’s Network, [Gender-based Violence and Femicides against Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse People with Disabilities](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, November 2024; Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

231 Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Brief for Study on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#), Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 15 November 2024. See also: Rosemary Cooper, President and Chief Executive Officer, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, [Evidence](#), 4 November 2024; Valérie Auger, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

232 Stuart Betts, Chief of Police, Peterborough Police Service, [Evidence](#), 30 October 2024.

233 Ibid.

Woman Abuse Working Group, said that “intimate partner violence and sexual violence is vastly under-reported for reasons that include fear of police, court system intervention [and] lack of trust in the criminal justice system.”<sup>234</sup> Amanda Buffalo told the Committee that Indigenous women are particularly reluctant to trust the system because of the historical context and the colonial heritage of Canadian police forces.<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, Suzanne Zaccour said that data must be analyzed carefully: “Sometimes an increase in numbers, depending on how we collect data, is a good thing. It means that more women are disclosing these abuses.”<sup>236</sup>

In addition, Manon Monastesse mentioned that Statistics Canada reports do not take into account a number of factors that are key to understanding gender-based violence in Canada, such as “power relationships, domination relationships, and, among other things, coercive control.”<sup>237</sup> Valérie Auger-Voyer made a similar observation, saying that Statistics Canada’s Homicide Survey does not capture data on femicides; for example, it does not capture if there is a history of violence, or any underlying socio-cultural or systemic factors.<sup>238</sup> Valérie Auger-Voyer recommended establishing “a comprehensive data collection mechanism for femicides that specifically identifies and tracks sexual violence as a key risk factor and also captures the societal conditions that lead to sexual violence and femicide.”<sup>239</sup>

Myrna Dawson, Director of the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, emphasized the importance of having data in order to prevent and address femicide. The Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability collects data on femicides in Canada, but these data do not capture all types, and there is still a data gap.<sup>240</sup> To illustrate this gap in Canada, she used the example of the United Nations statistical framework on femicide, which uses 10 variables to measure femicide. In comparison, Canada’s Homicide Survey “could gather information on only four of

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234 Erin Griver, Co-chair, Woman Abuse Working Group, [Evidence](#), 27 November 2024.

235 Amanda Buffalo, Advisor, Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

236 Suzanne Zaccour, Director of Legal Affairs, National Association of Women and the Law, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.

237 Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, [Evidence](#), 6 November 2024.

238 Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

239 Ibid.

240 Myrna Dawson, Director, Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, [Evidence](#), 25 November 2024.



those 10 variables.”<sup>241</sup> In 2018, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women visited Canada and noted that government intervention “lacks the coordination of prevention measures and ‘comparable data collection for all forms of gender-based violence against women.’”<sup>242</sup>

Valérie Auger-Voyer highlighted the importance of collecting disaggregated data, as it helps distinguish different gender identities and intersecting identities to ensure that any solutions developed fit the needs of all groups affected by gender-based violence.<sup>243</sup> Collecting disaggregated data would ensure that trends could be tracked for specific groups of people, such as women and girls with disabilities, newcomers, migrants and refugees, members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community and older women.<sup>244</sup>

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

#### **Recommendation 18**

**That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories and of Indigenous Peoples and governments, strengthen the collection and analysis of data on femicides, gender-based violence, and intimate partner homicides by integrating social, economic, and any or all structural factors (such as poverty, isolation, addictions, origin, age), in order to guide public policies toward solutions grounded in local and intersectional realities.**

#### **Recommendation 19**

**That the Government of Canada, respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, invest in research to collect Canadian data on the firearms used in femicides, including the type of weapon used and whether or not it was licensed, to better understand the risks.**

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241 Ibid.

242 Ibid.

243 Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator, Ending Violence Association of Canada, [Evidence](#), 20 November 2024.

244 Ibid.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Committee recognizes the devastating effects of gender-based violence and femicide on women, girls and gender-diverse people, as well as their families. Various measures need to be taken to end gender-based violence in Canada. The evidence heard and briefs received illustrate the need to combine measures such as criminalizing coercive control and femicide with measures that focus on prevention, training for key actors and stakeholders, and comprehensive services to support victims and survivors while preventing and combatting gender-based violence. The Committee would like to express its gratitude to the victims and survivors who shared their perspectives as part of this study.



## APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

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The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

### 44th Parliament – 1st Session

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<b>As an individual</b> Alison Irons Megan Walker, Advocate to End Male Violence Against Women	2024/10/28	127
<b>End Violence Everywhere</b> Cait Alexander, Founder	2024/10/28	127
<b>Safe Centre of Peel</b> Shelina Jeshani, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration	2024/10/28	127
<b>Women's Shelters Canada</b> Anuradha Dugal, Executive Director	2024/10/28	127
<b>Canadian Anti-Stalking Association</b> Julie S. Lalonde, Executive director	2024/10/30	128
<b>Crime Victims Assistance Centres Network</b> Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator Jackie Huet, Director General, Crime Victims Assistance Centre of the Estrie region	2024/10/30	128
<b>McMaster University</b> Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, Equity and Inclusion Office	2024/10/30	128
<b>Peterborough Police Service</b> Stuart Betts, Chief of Police	2024/10/30	128

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>As an individual</b> Lucas Broadfoot Alison Irons Diane Tremblay, Artist	2024/11/04	129
<b>Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak</b> Melanie Omeniho, President	2024/11/04	129
<b>National Family and Survivors Circle Inc.</b> Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Chair	2024/11/04	129
<b>Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada</b> Rosemary Cooper, President and Chief Executive Officer	2024/11/04	129
<b>Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale</b> Louise Riendeau, Co-responsible of Political Affairs Mathilde Trou, Co-responsible of Political Affairs	2024/11/04	129
<b>White Ribbon</b> Humberto Carolo, Chief Executive Officer	2024/11/04	129
<b>Elsbeth Heyworth Centre for Women</b> Sunder Singh, Executive Director	2024/11/06	130
<b>Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes</b> Manon Monastesse, Executive Director Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault, Policy Issues Advisor	2024/11/06	130
<b>La Maison des Guerrières</b> Martine Jeanson, President, Founder and Front-Line Worker	2024/11/06	130
<b>Liard Aboriginal Women's Society</b> Amanda Buffalo, Advisor	2024/11/06	130
<b>YWCA Lethbridge and District</b> Jill Young, Chief Executive Officer	2024/11/06	130
<b>As an individual</b> Esther Uhlman	2024/11/20	132

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues</b> Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Administrator and Former Senator	2024/11/20	132
<b>Ending Violence Association of Canada</b> Valérie Auger-Voyer, Advocacy Coordinator	2024/11/20	132
<b>Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability</b> Myrna Dawson, Director	2024/11/25	133
<b>Correctional Service of Canada</b> Amy Jarrette, Deputy Commissioner for Women Kathy Neil, Deputy Commissioner, Indigenous Corrections	2024/11/25	133
<b>National Association of Women and the Law</b> Suzanne Zaccour, Director of Legal Affairs	2024/11/25	133
<b>PolySeSouvient</b> Heidi Rathjen, Coordinator	2024/11/25	133
<b>Rebâtir</b> Élise Joyal-Pilon, Lawyer and Director Marie-Claude Richer, Director	2024/11/25	133
<b>Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime</b> Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime	2024/11/27	134
<b>Royal Newfoundland Constabulary</b> Lisa Harris, Non-Commissioned Officer, Criminal Investigation Division	2024/11/27	134
<b>Woman Abuse Working Group</b> Erin Griver, Co-Chair	2024/11/27	134



## **APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS**

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The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

### **44th Parliament – 1st Session**

**Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes**  
**Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne**  
**Anonymous Author**  
**Atcheson, Elizabeth**  
**Aura Freedom International**  
**Burns, Leighann**  
**Butler, Oneil**  
**Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns**  
**Canadian Federation of University Women**  
**Canadian Women's Foundation**  
**Canadian Women's Sex-Based Rights**  
**Children First Canada**  
**Crawford, Susan Ann**  
**DisAbled Women's Network of Canada**  
**Egale Canada**  
**Ending Violence Association of Canada**  
**Graham, Tara**  
**HIV Legal Network**  
**Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime**  
**Ontario Native Women's Association**  
**Parsons, Tracey**  
**Persons Against Non-State Torture**

**PolySeSouvient**

**Salvation Army**

**Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter**

**Walker, Megan**

**West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund**

**Woodfibre LNG**

## REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 6 to 9 and 13](#)) from the 45th Parliament, 1st Session and ([Meetings Nos. 127 to 130 and 132 to 135](#)) from the 44th Parliament, 1st Session is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Gladu  
Chair



**Supplementary Report of the Bloc Québécois  
Gender-Based Violence and Femicide  
Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO)**

The Bloc Québécois would like to commend the work carried out by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women in its study on gender-based violence and femicide. The Committee's deliberations have led to significant progress, including the integration of intimate partner homicide into the definition of femicide—an essential acknowledgment of the contemporary realities of domestic violence. This inclusion reflects a more accurate understanding of power dynamics and of the multiple forms that violence can take in intimate relationships.

However, the Bloc Québécois believes that certain aspects of the report would benefit from clarification or adjustment to ensure coherence with the principles of respect for jurisdictions and shared governance. The fight against gender-based violence cannot be approached through a centralizing lens. Measures must be developed and implemented with full respect for the areas of jurisdiction of Quebec, the provinces, the territories, and Indigenous governments. The federal government must act as a partner, not as a directing authority. Interventions should support, strengthen, and recognize the mechanisms already in place within provincial jurisdictions rather than reproducing them at the federal level.

The Bloc also wishes to highlight the importance of exercising caution regarding the creation of a public registry of offenders convicted of intimate partner violence. While the goals of safety and transparency are legitimate, a registry of this nature carries significant risks related to privacy, stigmatization, and social recidivism. Its implementation should be preceded by a thorough analysis of the gravity of the crimes concerned, the rehabilitation capacity of those convicted, and the necessary safeguards to prevent misuse. The Bloc maintains that such a registry must be strictly regulated, with particular attention given to the protection of fundamental rights.

The Bloc is also concerned by the tendency, noted in certain recommendations, to frame or condition funding transfers intended for programs addressing violence. Funds allocated to this area must be transferred without conditions to the Government of Quebec, which is best positioned to understand the needs of its communities, coordinate services, and adapt interventions to local realities. Centralizing funding in Ottawa weakens the capacity of community organizations and local institutions, which rely on deep, context-specific knowledge of issues such as violence, homelessness, mental health, and poverty.

The Bloc Québécois also stresses the importance of ensuring, over the longer term, rigorous monitoring of the implementation of adopted measures. Without calling into question the Committee's work, it is essential that the recommendations translate into concrete and lasting action. Combating gender-based violence requires sustained commitment and continuous coordination between all levels of government so that survivors can genuinely benefit from the proposed legislative and social advances.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois supports the spirit of the report but wishes to emphasize that the fight against gender-based violence must be grounded in respect for jurisdictions, trust in local authorities, and recognition of community expertise. For public policy to be truly effective, it must be rooted in the realities of the people it seeks to protect. It is within this perspective of respectful collaboration and sovereign action that Quebec can continue to play an exemplary role in prevention, protection, and support for victims of violence.