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CANADA

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: *CRIMINAL CODE* PEACE BONDS, BAIL AND SENTENCING REFORMS IN CANADA

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

Dominique Vien, Chair

**MAY 2026
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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Chair**

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NOTICE TO READER

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

FOURTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied section 810 of the Criminal Code and women's safety and has agreed to report the following:

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SUMMARY

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

The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (the Committee) recognizes the profound and lasting effects of gender-based, domestic and intimate partner violence on women, children and gender-diverse people in Canada. Throughout its recent work, the Committee heard concerns about gaps in Canada's criminal justice system that undermine the safety of women and their families. The Committee undertook a study on *Criminal Code* peace bonds, bail and sentencing to examine how these regimes can provide better protection for victims and survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence.

Throughout the study, the Committee heard concerns about the effectiveness of *Criminal Code* peace bonds, bail and sentencing. Witnesses recommended reforms to Canada's criminal justice system to better safeguard women and children against domestic and intimate partner violence, including:

- changes to peace bonds and bail under the *Criminal Code*;
- sentencing reforms, including making the murder of an intimate partner a first-degree murder in the *Criminal Code*;
- criminalizing coercive control;
- better funding and support for community-based organizations, which provide trauma-informed and culturally relevant survivors' services;
- supporting prevention and public education initiatives, including training for justice sector actors on coercive control, public awareness campaigns on intimate partner violence, and enhancing rehabilitation programming; and
- improving data collection, monitoring and reporting for cross-jurisdictional sharing of information in cases of *Criminal Code* peace bonds and bail.

In releasing this report, including its 19 recommendations and two observations, the Committee hopes to contribute to ongoing efforts to combat gender-based, domestic and intimate partner violence in Canada.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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 consider amending the *Criminal Code* to provide that the justice shall add to recognizance orders under sections 810 to 810.2 a condition prohibiting the defendant from possessing a firearm, cross-bow, prohibited weapon, restricted weapon, prohibited device, firearm part, ammunition, prohibited ammunition or explosive substance, or all those things, in cases involving domestic or intimate partner abuse, subject to the discretion of the justice to not impose the condition, similar to bail orders under section 515(4.1)-(4.2) of the *Criminal Code*. 26

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada, while respecting jurisdiction, work in consultation and collaboration with provinces, territories, Indigenous Peoples and governments to facilitate the sharing of best practices, and support provincial, territorial and Indigenous initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness of *Criminal Code* peace bonds, including improving access and timeliness of applications, monitoring compliance with conditions, and prosecuting breaches. 28

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, conduct research into the use of recognizance orders under sections 810 to 810.2 of the *Criminal Code* in cases of domestic and intimate partner abuse. 28

Observation 1

That provincial, territorial and Indigenous policing authorities explore the reasons that charges under section 811 of the *Criminal Code* are not laid in light of a section 810 violation. 28

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada study ways to amend the *Criminal Code* to extend the maximum duration of *Criminal Code* peace bonds under section 810. 29

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, take steps to amend Subsection 810(3) of the *Criminal Code* to increase the current maximum 12-month duration of a peace bond for all cases involving intimate partner violence. 29

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, study ways to amend the *Criminal Code* to ensure risk assessments of the accused are completed in the course of criminal proceedings where domestic and intimate partner abuse is alleged, especially at the bail stage. 33

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, work to amend the *Criminal Code* to expressly include rehabilitative and supportive conditions, such as counselling and access to wraparound services, in the list of conditions that can be included in bail orders in cases of domestic and intimate partner abuse. 34

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, study ways to extend the application of reverse onus provisions in the *Criminal Code* in the context of bail for persons accused of an offence against their intimate partner, their child or the child of their intimate partner, or accused of breaching a recognizance order under sections 810 to 810.2 designed to protect their intimate partner, their child or the child of their intimate partner. 35

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada recognize the offence of femicide as first-degree murder in the *Criminal Code*. 37

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada criminalize coercive control in Canada. 40

Observation 2

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments explore options to increase the use of electronic monitoring devices as a standard condition in all cases of recidivism involving intimate partner violence, both at bail and sentencing, including an alert device to be provided to victims at bail stage. 42

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, continue to fund Women and Gender Equality Canada to provide ongoing and stable funding to community-based organizations and service providers delivering survivor-centered, trauma-informed and culturally appropriate services to survivors and family members affected by domestic and intimate partner abuse, including coercive control, as well as invest in prevention efforts. 44

Recommendation 12

That the Government of Canada collaborate with provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, as well with survivors, community-based experts in domestic and intimate partner abuse, women’s organizations and Indigenous women’s organizations:

- **to identify, compile and regularly update existing best practices across jurisdictions on effective service models for survivors’ services, including trauma-informed, culturally relevant and survivor-centered approaches, and service models intended to engage everyone, including men and boys, in gender equality and violence prevention; and**

- that these best practices be shared publicly to support high quality services and improve safety outcomes for survivors of domestic and intimate partner abuse.

44

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, provide enhanced funding and support for:

- mandatory, trauma-informed and culturally relevant training for Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers on gender-based, domestic and intimate partner abuse and coercive control, developed in collaboration with survivors and community-based experts;
- the development and delivery of trauma-informed and culturally relevant coercive control training initiatives for justice sector actors, where appropriate, developed in collaboration with survivors and community-based experts; and
- provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments to improve the monitoring and enforcement of *Criminal Code* peace bonds and bail conditions in cases of domestic and intimate partner abuse, including through the creation of specialized units, improved cross-jurisdictional information sharing systems, and proactive follow-up with applicants and victims.

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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, encourage all Canadian police services to establish specialized domestic violence units. These units would be mandated to ensure rigorous monitoring of compliance with peace bond conditions (Section 810 of the *Criminal Code*) and to systematically process violations under Section 811 of the *Criminal Code*, while providing proactive and reassuring follow-up for victims to prevent the escalation of violence.

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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, enhance funding and support for community-based organizations developing and implementing public awareness campaigns and prevention initiatives relating to domestic and intimate partner abuse, including coercive control and the promotion of healthy relationships. 50

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, enhance funding and support for community-based organizations delivering trauma-informed and culturally relevant rehabilitation programs and services for perpetrators of domestic and intimate partner abuse, including coercive control. 52

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada raise the issue of criminal proceedings in domestic and intimate partner violence cases at an upcoming meeting of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for Justice and Public Safety, and with the National Indigenous Organizations and Indigenous governments, in order to identify and advance ways that the Government of Canada can better support provincial, territorial and Indigenous domestic and intimate partner abuse rehabilitation and intervention programs. 52

Recommendation 18

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

- **strengthen the collection and analysis of disaggregated data on gender-based and intimate partner abuse, including femicides;**

- strengthen the collection and analysis of disaggregated data on offenders of gender-based and intimate partner abuse, including information on recidivism, individuals subject to *Criminal Code* peace bonds for domestic and intimate partner abuse, participants in rehabilitation programs for domestic and intimate partner abuse, and the impacts of these programs on diverse population groups; and
- create ways for cross-jurisdictional sharing of data relating to *Criminal Code* peace bonds and bail orders in cases of gender-based and intimate partner abuse, including:
 - police responses to *Criminal Code* peace bond breaches; and
 - stays issued for bail order breaches.

55

Recommendation 19

That the Government of Canada, continue to work collaboratively with provinces and territories to explore mechanisms, including creating a national registry, for collaboration, sharing, and aggregation of data related to recognizance orders under sections 810 to 810.2 of the *Criminal Code*, including information laid, conditions imposed, duration and charges and convictions for breaches of recognizance, recognizing that the administration of justice and related data collection fall primarily with provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

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PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: *CRIMINAL CODE* PEACE BONDS, BAIL AND SENTENCING REFORMS IN CANADA

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence, which includes domestic and intimate partner violence, leaves profound and lasting impacts on women and gender-diverse people, and their children and families.¹ Through its work, including recent studies and reports, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (the Committee) heard about gaps in the criminal justice system in all jurisdictions that compromise the safety of women and children. To further address these issues, the Committee adopted the following motion on 15 September 2025:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee conduct an in-depth study over at least five meetings of how section 810 of the *Criminal Code* could be improved to ensure the safety of women and children; that the committee invite the Department of Justice and its officials to appear regarding changes to bail and sentencing regimes (C-75, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, adopted during the first session of the 42nd Parliament; and C-5, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, adopted during the 44th Parliament) with respect to deterrence and recidivism rates in order to ensure the safety of women in Canada; that the committee invite the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, representatives of the Department of Justice, the Minister of Public Safety, police and law enforcement representatives, victims of domestic violence, and any other

1 Gender-based violence is “based on gender norms and unequal power dynamics, perpetrated against someone based on their gender, gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender. It takes many forms, including physical, economic, sexual, as well as emotional (psychological) abuse.” Family violence refers to “any form of abuse or neglect that a child or adult experiences from a family member, or from someone with whom they have an intimate relationship.” Intimate partner violence is “[p]hysical, sexual, emotional (psychological) or financial harm done by a current or former intimate partner(s) or spouse(s).” The term “domestic violence” is sometimes used to describe family violence more broadly, and at other times refers specifically to intimate partner violence. For the purposes of this report, “domestic violence” is used interchangeably with family violence. Witnesses throughout the study used all four terms: domestic, family, gender-based and intimate partner violence. See: Government of Canada, [What is family violence?](#) and Government of Canada, [Gender-based violence glossary](#).



witnesses deemed suitable by the committee to appear; that the committee present its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.²

As part of this study, between October 2025 and February 2026, the Committee heard from 26 witnesses and received 12 briefs, including testimony from advocates, researchers, organizations supporting victims and survivors of gender-based violence, Indigenous organizations, survivors and family and friends of victims of gender-based violence, and police, as well as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and the Minister of Public Safety. Across the study, it examined sections 810 to 811 of the *Criminal Code*, which deal with *Criminal Code* peace bonds (Code Peace Bonds), otherwise known as sureties to keep the peace or recognizance orders, and also considered judicial interim release, commonly known as bail, and sentencing regimes.

This report reflects the evidence and briefs submitted. It begins with some background on intimate partner violence in Canada and the shared jurisdiction of Canada’s criminal justice system, provides an overview of what the Committee heard on Code Peace Bonds, bail, sentencing, and other legal reforms, and finally addresses issues relating to access to services, prevention and education, and data collection, monitoring and reporting. The Committee acknowledges the contributions made by all those who participated in this study, and thanks them for sharing their knowledge, insights and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

Intimate Partner Violence in Canada

The Committee heard about domestic and intimate partner violence and femicide, which is the intentional killing of a woman or girl because of their gender and usually by a man, in Canada. Harmy Mendoza, Executive Director of WomanACT, explained that “[i]ntimate partner violence remains an epidemic ... across Canada” and the “correlation between women’s abuse and child abuse is very strong.”³ Some witnesses described

2 House of Commons, Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO), [Minutes of Proceedings](#), 15 September 2025.

3 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Harmy Mendoza, Executive Director, WomanACT).

harrowing statistics.⁴ For example, Brian Sauvé, President of the National Police Federation, explained that in 2022, “there were more than 117,000 victims of police-reported intimate partner violence. Nearly eight in 10 were women and girls.”⁵ Debbie Henderson, whose niece was a victim of intimate partner violence, told the Committee that “every five to six days in Canada, somebody loses their life to intimate partner violence.”⁶ The Committee also heard that “Indigenous women face higher risks compared to non-Indigenous women regarding experiencing intimate partner violence.”⁷

Concerning femicide, the Committee heard that “intimate partner femicides are the most common form of femicide, with nearly half of women and girls violently killed in Canada in 2024 being perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner.”⁸ Brian Sauvé noted that “[a]lthough Canada's homicide rate declined in 2024, the number of women killed by intimate partners increased. Additionally, the proportion of women whose deaths were caused by a spouse or intimate partner rose from 32% in 2023 to 42% in 2024, about seven times higher than men.”⁹

The Committee also heard testimony from family and friends of victims of intimate partner violence describing their experiences and how it has impacted their lives. Debbie Henderson told the Committee about the death of her niece, Bailey McCourt, who was attacked in a Kelowna parking lot and later died in hospital from her injuries. McCourt’s former partner has since been charged with first-degree murder in connection with the incident. At the time of the attack, McCourt’s former partner was out on bail awaiting sentencing for charges of uttering threats and assault by strangling relating to a June 2024 incident of intimate partner violence.¹⁰ Henderson explained: “Bailey’s death is a devastating example of how our justice system continues to fail victims of intimate partner violence ... even after they do everything right.”¹¹

4 See also: *Ibid.*; FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault, Advisor, Policy Issues, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes); FEWO, [Brief](#), Aura Freedom International; FEWO, *Written response*, WomanACT.

5 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Brian Sauvé, President, National Police Federation).

6 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Debbie Henderson, as an individual).

7 FEWO, [Brief](#), Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

8 FEWO, [Brief](#), Aura Freedom International.

9 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Sauvé).

10 See for example, Jordy Cunningham, “[November: Plover sentenced to 12 months for choking, threats in Kelowna](#),” Kelowna Capital News, 30 December 2025; Brieanna Charlebois, “[B.C. man gets months-long sentence for assault, threats, as he awaits murder trial](#),” The Canadian Press, 27 November 2025.

11 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Henderson).



Marie-Claude Richer, Lawyer and Director of Rebâtir, told the Committee about the murder of her friend Lisette Corbeil in 2021, who was a victim of femicide. Richer explained that Corbeil had been a victim of coercive control by her former partner for many years. Although Corbeil notified the police in the weeks leading up to her murder that she feared for her safety, no information was made available to her on the process for obtaining a Code Peace Bond.¹²

Furthermore, the Committee heard about challenges that survivors face in navigating the criminal justice system, such as delays in hearings or limited access to information regarding judicial proceedings.¹³ In a brief to the Committee, an anonymous survivor of gender-based violence explained that: “[T]he stress of the investigation [relating to the incident of gender-based violence] and its outcome was just as bad or worse than the crime itself.”¹⁴

Shared Jurisdiction in Canada’s Criminal Justice System

Canada’s criminal justice system is a shared responsibility between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. Section 91(27) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* gives Parliament the exclusive authority over: “The criminal law, except the constitution of courts of criminal jurisdiction, but including the procedure in criminal matters.”¹⁵ The federal government also has exclusive legislative authority over First Nations individuals and their lands. However, this responsibility often overlaps with the provinces in certain areas, such as policing.¹⁶

The provincial role in criminal justice includes the power to make laws in relation to “[t]he administration of justice in the province, including the constitution, maintenance, and organization of provincial courts, both of civil and of criminal jurisdiction, and including procedure in civil matters in those courts.”¹⁷ This power has also been devolved to territorial governments.¹⁸ The provinces are generally responsible for

12 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Marie-Claude Richer, Lawyer and Director, Rebâtir).

13 FEWO, [Brief](#), Anonymous Author.

14 Ibid.

15 [Constitution Act, 1867](#), 30 & 31 Victoria, c. 3 (U.K.), s. 91(27).

16 Ibid., s. 91(24).

17 Ibid., s. 92(14).

18 Under the *Constitution Act, 1867*, the territories do not share the same authority as that set out in section 92(14); rather, territories exercise powers delegated by the federal government under the authority of the Parliament of Canada through devolution.

Criminal Code proceedings in their jurisdictions, including prosecuting most criminal offences, Code Peace Bonds and bail hearings, as well as monitoring and enforcing related conditions and breaches within their respective jurisdictions.¹⁹

As noted above, policing falls under shared federal, provincial and municipal jurisdiction. Provinces administer policing through their own legislation governing municipal policing, and in the cases of Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, through their own provincial police services. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is responsible for federal law enforcement,²⁰ provides policing services in most provinces and territories (other than Ontario and Quebec) through negotiated police service agreements and provides additional policing services in some First Nation and Inuit communities through the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program.²¹ Other Indigenous Nations have their own community police services that operate under tripartite agreements between the Nation, provincial and federal governments, or receive policing services through the relevant provincial government. Police investigate crimes, lay charges for offences under the *Criminal Code* and are responsible for monitoring and enforcing Code Peace Bonds and bail orders, including breaches. Furthermore, the delivery of most police, court and community-based services for survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence, including most wraparound supports, typically falls under provincial or territorial jurisdiction.

Table 1 provides an overview of the federal and provincial roles relating to shared jurisdiction of Canada's criminal justice system, including Code Peace Bonds, bail and sentencing.

19 See for example: Government of Canada, [Infosheet: Federal, Provincial and Territorial Responsibilities in Canada's Criminal Justice System](#); Quebec, [Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales, Mise en liberté provisoire par voie judiciaire](#), 22 June 2022 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY] and Ontario, Minister of the Attorney General, "[D.23: Intimate Partner Violence](#)," and "[D.24: Judicial Interim Release \(Bail\)](#)," 14 November 2017.

20 See for example, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), [Federal policing](#).

21 Government of Canada, [First Nations and Inuit Policing Program](#).



Table 1— Federal and Provincial Roles Relating to Criminal Justice, *Criminal Code* Peace Bonds, Bail and Sentencing

Context	Federal role	Provincial role
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislate to create criminal offences, including offences under the <i>Criminal Code</i>, as well as other federal statutes Prosecution of <i>Criminal Code</i> offences in the territories, as well as offences under other federal legislation, including the <i>Controlled Drugs and Substances Act</i> and the <i>Firearms Act</i> Training for RCMP members Certain national-level institutions for victims, focused on areas of federal responsibility The Canadian Police Information Centre and certain national registries created under federal legislation (e.g., National Sex Offender Registry) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer justice in their jurisdiction, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prosecution of most <i>Criminal Code</i> offences; funding and training for provincially employed Crown prosecutors and police; delivering court services for victims, most rehabilitation and bail supervision programs; operating specialized courts; and managing justice data and information
Code Peace Bonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal law – outlined in ss. 810-811.1 of the <i>Criminal Code</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and enforce Code Peace Bonds orders
Bail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal law – outlined primarily in section 515 of the <i>Criminal Code</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and enforce bail orders Administer pre-trial detention (remand) facilities
Sentencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal law – outlined in ss. 716-751.1 of the <i>Criminal Code</i> and in other federal statutes, including the <i>Controlled Drugs and Substances Act</i> and the <i>Firearms Act</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislate penalties that enforce provincial laws

Several witnesses highlighted challenges arising from the fact that multiple governments have jurisdiction over elements of the criminal process for domestic and intimate partner violence, such that the enforcement of the *Criminal Code* “varies greatly from coast to coast to coast.”²² For example, Brian Sauvé noted that the information exchanged across police services and provincial courts varies between jurisdictions. Furthermore, privacy laws limit how information about offenders can be shared,

22 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).; FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Manon Monastesse, Executive Director, Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Sauvé).

ultimately impacting the safety of women and children.²³ Manon Monastesse, Executive Director of the Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, emphasized that the use of judicial tools like risk assessments for accused persons is also inconsistent across jurisdictions, describing this inconsistency as a “major problem.”²⁴ Hilda Anderson Pyrz, President of the National Family and Survivors Circle Inc., detailed the jurisdictional complexities specifically related to First Nations communities, including policing in these communities, noting that First Nation reserves “are federally regulated ... [but] also embedded within the province, so it’s quite complex when you’re looking at it.”²⁵

However, witnesses also described a leadership role for the federal government in potential reforms relating to enforcement of the *Criminal Code*. For example, Manon Monastesse told the Committee:

We've often called on the federal government to take a leadership role. It should have much more sustained discussions with the provinces and territories on how they enforce the *Criminal Code*. That way, victims can rely on a certain degree of harmonization in police practices.²⁶

Brian Sauv  also emphasized a role for the federal government in bringing together the various jurisdictions to discuss best practices relating to criminal justice reform in the context of domestic and intimate partner violence, such as improvements to Code Peace Bonds or bail reform.²⁷ Throughout its study, the Committee heard about promising initiatives in provinces like Ontario and Quebec; these will be discussed in greater detail throughout various sections of this report.

During the study, the Committee also heard about funding for certain federal initiatives on gender-based, domestic and intimate partner violence. The Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Public Safety, explained that since the launch of *The federal Gender-based Violence Strategy* in 2017, the federal government has invested over \$820 million to “prevent gender-based violence, support victims and survivors, and promote a responsive justice system.”²⁸ Furthermore, the federal government announced \$36.9 million in October 2025 for the *Community Resilience Fund*, which “supports organizations

23 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Sauv ).

24 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

25 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, President, National Family and Survivors Circle Inc.).

26 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

27 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Sauv ).

28 FEWO, *Evidence*, 5 February 2026 (Hon. Gary Anandasangaree, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Safety).



working directly in communities across Canada to prevent and counter violent extremism and gender-based violence.”²⁹ Tricia Geddes, Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, also discussed investments made by Public Safety Canada to support victims of domestic and intimate partner violence, as well as rehabilitation programs for offenders through the Correctional Service of Canada.³⁰

A note on terminology: under the *Criminal Code*, a recognizance order is a legal mechanism that requires an individual, the defendant, to formally agree to keep the peace and be of good behaviour (among other conditions) for a specified period of time in certain situations. Sections 810 through 810.2 of the *Criminal Code* describe certain types of recognizance orders, also called sureties to keep the peace, that are available in various circumstances, including domestic and intimate partner violence. Witnesses described these orders within this context using various terms (for example, section 810 orders or peace bonds), but for the purposes of the report, they will be referred to as Code Peace Bonds.³¹

CRIMINAL CODE PEACE BONDS

The Committee heard about key risk factors for domestic and intimate partner violence, as well as the circumstances in which an individual may seek out a protection order like a Code Peace Bond. The Committee also heard about the connection between these risk factors and the occurrence of femicide. For example, both Harmy Mendoza and a brief from Aura Freedom International cited findings from the Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, which reported in 2024 that among domestic violence deaths reviewed in Ontario between 2003 and 2020, approximately 71% involved a known history of domestic violence. The Review Committee also found that in 71% of these cases, seven or more risk factors were present, including depression or obsessive behaviour by the perpetrator, threats or prior attempts by the perpetrator to commit suicide, and situations in which the victim had an intuitive sense of fear towards the perpetrator, among others.³² Similarly, a brief from the Fédération des maisons

29 Ibid.

30 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 5 February 2026 (Tricia Geddes, Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness).

31 Peace bonds may also be ordered pursuant to section 83.3 of the *Criminal Code* in relation to individuals reasonably suspected of involvement in terrorism activities. Common law peace bonds are another type of peace bonds. For more information on common law peace bonds, see: [R. v. Musoni](#), 2009 CanLII 12118 (ON SC), para. 21.

32 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Harmy Mendoza, Executive Director, WomanACT); FEWO, [Brief](#), Aura Freedom International. See Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, [“2019–2020 Annual Report,”](#) 31 January 2024.

d'hébergement pour femmes explained that a 2024 report from Quebec's Domestic Violence Death Review Committee identified a history of domestic violence (whether prosecuted or not) and the victim's fear for personal safety in cases of homicide, including femicide.³³ Debbie Henderson further explained that strangulation, something her niece endured from her former partner, is recognized by experts "as one of the strongest predictors of future homicide."³⁴

Code Peace Bonds are typically designed to act as a protection order for a person who fears on reasonable grounds that another person (the defendant) will, among other things: cause injury to them, their intimate partner or child, or damage their property (section 810); or commit domestic violence (section 810.03). Under Code Peace Bonds, a judge or justice of the peace may impose conditions on the defendant, including, for example, prohibiting contact with the applicant, exclusion from specific geographic locations, a ban on possessing firearms, and/or a requirement to wear an electronic monitoring device.³⁵ Since Code Peace Bonds are intended to protect individuals from future harm, they can be imposed even if the defendant has not been accused or convicted of an offence. When a defendant enters into a recognizance as part of a Code Peace Bond, it does not become part of that person's criminal record.³⁶

Some witnesses told the Committee that Code Peace Bonds are an important tool to prevent harm before violence escalates.³⁷ Brian Sauvé argued that: "These peace bonds can literally save lives, especially when supported by consistent follow-up and enforcement."³⁸ Laio Auger, Lieutenant Detective, Domestic Violence Unit at the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal, told the Committee that Code Peace Bonds act as a safety net, as "the rate of victim disengagement at some point during the judicial process is approximately 50%."³⁹ Victim testimony can be key evidence in criminal cases involving domestic or intimate partner violence, such that their disengagement can weaken the case against the accused and lower the possibility of conviction.

33 FEWO, *Brief*, Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes. See : Domestic Violence Review Committee, "[Agir ensemble pour sauver des vies](#)," November 2024 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].

34 FEWO, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025 (Henderson).

35 See for instance: *Criminal Code*, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, ss. 810(3.1)(3.2) and 810.03(6)(c)(d)(e).

36 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Monastesse); FEWO, *Brief*, Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes.

37 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Sauvé); FEWO, *Brief*, Defend Dignity.

38 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Sauvé).

39 FEWO, *Evidence*, 17 November 2025 (Laio Auger, Lieutenant Detective, Domestic Violence Unit, Service de police de la Ville de Montréal).



In contrast, Manon Monastesse said that Code Peace Bonds create a false sense of security for applicants.⁴⁰ Jennifer Davis, Deputy Chief, Investigations and Operational Support of the Waterloo Regional Police Services, explained that “they do not provide a guarantee or prevent future violence.”⁴¹ The National Association of Women and the Law stated in its brief that “the majority of survivors see no reduction in abusive behaviour following a peace bond, with several experiencing *increased* violence [author’s emphasis].”⁴² The Committee heard that the effectiveness of Code Peace Bonds depends on “clear application, strong enforcement, and survivor-centered implementation.”⁴³

In its brief, Defend Dignity submitted that “[m]any survivors are unaware of the availability of Section 810 measures.”⁴⁴ Some witnesses described barriers that women face within Canada’s criminal justice system, which include limited awareness of and access to Code Peace Bonds. The Committee heard that factors such as ethnicity, race, Indigeneity, immigrant or refugee status, as well as language barriers, can heighten vulnerability in cases of domestic and intimate partner violence.⁴⁵ Deepa Mattoo told the Committee that the criminal justice system as a whole lacks “cultural and intersectional responsiveness,” and stated that “tailored conditions” for Code Peace Bond and bail orders are needed for “Indigenous, racialized and newcomer communities.”⁴⁶ Jennifer Davis explained that immigrant and refugee women may be especially vulnerable in cases of domestic and intimate partner violence because they are often financially dependent on their abuser.⁴⁷ Harmy Mendoza noted that “women with precarious immigration status” face an additional layer of challenges and complexities.⁴⁸ In a brief, the National Association of Women and the Law underscored that any reform to the Code Peace Bond regime must

40 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

41 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Jennifer Davis, Deputy Chief, Investigations and Operational Support, Waterloo Regional Police Service).

42 FEWO, [Brief](#), National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL).

43 FEWO, [Brief](#), Defend Dignity.

44 Ibid.

45 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

46 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

47 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

48 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).

“recognize the complex relationship many survivors, particularly racialized and Indigenous women, have with the criminal legal system.”⁴⁹

In any policy review of Code Peace Bonds, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) highlighted the need to take into account the realities of Indigenous women in its territories, including:

[D]isproportionate levels of threat and risk due to limited or no emergency shelters or transitional housing, severe police shortages and long response times, absence of local victim services, recurring intergenerational trauma, lack of transportation or safe escape routes, and social and economic conditions that increase vulnerability.⁵⁰

NAN reported that women can feel discouraged from applying for a Code Peace Bond for fear of contributing “to the already high rates of over-incarceration of Indigenous men and youth,” and added that “[a] protective tool that amplifies colonial harms is less likely to be used, even when safety is at stake.”⁵¹

Application Process for *Criminal Code* Peace Bonds

The Committee heard about the difficulties faced by women who are either fearful of, or experiencing domestic or intimate partner violence, in obtaining a Code Peace Bond. For example, Sabrina Amelia McCurbin, a survivor of intimate partner violence, submitted in her brief that the threshold for issuing Code Peace Bonds (“reasonable grounds for fear”) is “too high and inconsistently applied.”⁵² Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault, Advisor, Policy Issues at the Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, explained that the application process for a Code Peace Bond is significantly simpler and “more judicially recognized” when initiated by the police.⁵³ The involvement of the police relieves the administrative burden on victims, who otherwise have to navigate “a complex legal system while managing trauma and safety risks.”⁵⁴ However, the Committee heard that too often

49 FEWO, [Brief](#), NAWL.

50 FEWO, [Brief](#), Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

51 Ibid.

52 FEWO, [Brief](#), Sabrina Amelia McCurbin. See also: FEWO, [Brief](#), Anonymous Author.

53 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault).

54 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault). See also: FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Jackie Huet, Director General, Crime Victims Assistance Centre of the Estrie region, Crime Victims Assistance Centres Network).



police refuse to apply for Code Peace Bonds, especially if no criminal offence occurred.⁵⁵ Instead, the police encourage women who are victims of domestic violence and who fear harm for themselves to initiate the application process on their own.⁵⁶ In a brief, Rise Women’s Legal Centre explained that “[w]hen people are applying directly to the court for a peace bond, it is typically “because the police had initially failed to assist.”⁵⁷ Brian Sauvé explained that when officers do not make Code Peace Bonds applications, it is mainly due to a lack of time and resources.⁵⁸ Hilda Anderson-Pyrz furthered described the difficulties in obtaining protection orders in remote and isolated First Nations communities, where “you’re looking at a revolving door of policing and also a lot of inexperienced officers.”⁵⁹

While victims can apply for a Code Peace Bond themselves without the support of the police or the Crown, witnesses noted barriers to such applications. Jackie Huet explained that, given the nature of trauma, victims of domestic and intimate partner violence may face difficulty recalling events when putting together a case to explain how they fear for their safety.⁶⁰ According to Catherine Ahélo, Lawyer at Rebâtir, having women self-represent against the defendant is a “major barrier to this type of preventive measure.”⁶¹ While victims can retain the services of a lawyer, it is not covered by legal aid in Quebec and most victims reportedly cannot afford it.⁶² Moreover, Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator at the Crime Victims Assistance Centres Network, told the Committee that victims often misunderstand the Code Peace Bonds process and think they just need to sign a form for the courts to issue a recognizance order against the defendant.⁶³ Furthermore, many women wrongly believe that a Code Peace Bond can influence a court in future criminal matters.⁶⁴

Research conducted by Rise Women’s Legal Centre in British Columbia found that overall, British Columbia’s Provincial Crown policy and case law “has removed an

55 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Catherine Ahélo, Lawyer, Rebâtir); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Richer); FEWO, [Brief](#), Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes.

56 FEWO, [Brief](#), Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes.

57 FEWO, [Brief](#), Rise Women’s Legal Centre.

58 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Sauvé).

59 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz).

60 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Huet).

61 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Ahélo).

62 Ibid.; FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Huet).

63 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator, Crime Victims Assistance Centres Network).

64 FEWO, [Brief](#), Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes.

individual's ability to apply for a peace bond without Crown and police support."⁶⁵ The brief further explained that "[e]ven though the involvement of Crown and police could assist the applicants, especially when a criminal investigation is necessary, it should not be a requirement to obtaining a peace bond."⁶⁶

The Committee heard about a specialized police team in Quebec and their experiences with Code Peace Bonds. Laio Auger told the Committee that in 2021, the police service in Montreal created a multidisciplinary team specializing in domestic violence, following a recommendation from the 2020 expert committee report, *Rebâtir la confiance*.⁶⁷ The team is responsible for, among other things, making applications for Code Peace Bonds in the context of domestic violence when there is no criminal offence involved. It also follows-up with victims on a long-term basis, and in some cases, monitors compliance of peace bond conditions. Auger reported that the team makes, on average, seven applications for Code Peace Bonds each year and that they are able to bring cases before a judge much more quickly and have a higher success rate. The Committee heard that the longer process period with the public prosecutor's office in Quebec (DPCP) makes it difficult for a judge to assess the evidence, because the facts of the case are no longer current at the time of the hearing. Witnesses told the Committee that it can take months to obtain a peace bond order after an application is filed.⁶⁸ During this time, victims are left unprotected and the defendant's reaction to the legal proceedings can "increase the risk of homicide."⁶⁹

Rise Women's Legal Centre noted that delays in obtaining Code Peace Bonds in British Columbia have had the effect of turning victims towards family law courts to obtain protection orders for themselves and for their family members. The legal centre explained that "[t]his shifts the burden 'from the publicly funded criminal justice system onto individual victims themselves, who are expected to secure their own protection.'"⁷⁰ Furthermore, they state this increasing reliance on family law protection orders instead of Code Peace Bonds has effectively "privatized safety," because victims cannot benefit from intervention by the Crown in civil courts and instead must hire their own lawyer, unless they qualify for legal aid or choose to self-represent. As a result, family law

65 FEWO, [Brief](#), Rise Women's Legal Centre.

66 Ibid.

67 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Auger). See also : Tribunal spécialisé en matière de violence sexuelle et de violence conjugale, [Rebâtir la confiance synthèse, Rapport du comité d'experts sur l'accompagnement des victimes d'agressions sexuelles et de violence conjugale](#) [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].

68 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Auger); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Ahélo).

69 Ibid.

70 FEWO, [Brief](#), Rise Women's Legal Centre.



protection orders are not accessible to everyone, since “applications for protection orders in family law are cost prohibitive and deplete limited legal aid hours.”⁷¹

Use of *Criminal Code* Peace Bonds

Several witnesses criticized the lack of effectiveness of Code Peace Bonds, especially because of their use in inappropriate circumstances and minimal monitoring. Jennifer Davis argued that Code Peace Bonds are more appropriate for lower-risk situations, “where clear, specific and enforceable conditions are imposed and where other assurances are in place.”⁷² NAN explained that Code Peace Bonds should be generally avoided in cases of “[s]erious threats, assaults, or repeated violence.”⁷³ Manon Monastesse suggested that they should not be used in the context of domestic violence, which often involves serious offences, but that when used, they should be done so “sparingly.”⁷⁴ Jennifer Davis echoed this sentiment and also noted that “[t]here should be increased scrutiny on when we're using them to ensure the safety of victims,” given that they are “being issued more frequently than we would like to see.”⁷⁵

The Committee heard that where a criminal offence is committed, applications for Code Peace Bonds are sometimes favoured over prosecution.⁷⁶ According to NAN, this practice negatively impacts the trust that some First Nations women have in the criminal justice system; they “report feeling that the harm they face is minimized or that the justice system is reluctant to pursue prosecution when cases arise in remote First Nations.”⁷⁷ The Committee also heard that Code Peace Bonds are often “used to settle a case in which charges have already been laid,” and where the charges against the accused are ultimately dropped in exchange for sureties to keep the peace.⁷⁸ NAN recommended “[r]estrict[ing] the use of peace bonds as substitutes for prosecution.”⁷⁹

71 Ibid. See also: Rise Women’s Legal Centre, *Protection Orders in BC and the Urgent Need for a Specialized Process and Coordinated Reform*, December 2024, p. 7.

72 FEWO, *Evidence*, 17 November 2025 (Davis).

73 FEWO, *Brief*, Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

74 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Monastesse). See also : FEWO, *Evidence*, 17 November 2025 (Davis).

75 FEWO, *Evidence*, 17 November 2025 (Davis).

76 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Monastesse); FEWO, *Brief*, Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

77 FEWO, *Brief*, Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

78 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Ahélo).

79 FEWO, *Brief*, Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

The Committee heard several reasons for which Code Peace Bonds are used in inappropriate circumstances. For instance, Code Peace Bonds can be used as an alternative when the victim no longer wants to testify at trial against their perpetrator.⁸⁰ Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault suggested that many women do not feel heard or supported in the justice system, and therefore opt to apply for a Code Peace Bond instead of going through criminal proceedings and having to testify.⁸¹

Furthermore, the Committee heard that Code Peace Bonds can be used instead of prosecuting criminal charges to avoid a stay of proceedings because the accused's right to trial within a reasonable time has been violated, under the Supreme Court's ruling in *R. v. Jordan*.⁸² Jackie Huet, Director General of the Crime Victims Assistance Centre of the Estrie region at the Crime Victims Assistance Centres Network, proposed examining the causes of such delays and determining why criminal proceedings are so long.⁸³ Manon Monastesse expressed the view that through the implementation of specialized courts in Quebec, police and prosecutors should be able to accelerate legal proceedings, similar to Australia, where cases are reportedly heard by courts within five weeks.⁸⁴ Karine Gagnon cautioned against solutions that propose to exempt certain criminal offences from the application of *Jordan*, because permitting longer delays for certain offences "could have the perverse effect of ensuring that these types of offences are not prioritized in favour of other types of offences for which the *Jordan* decision would remain applicable."⁸⁵

The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, identified a tension between two distinct concerns in relation to the *Jordan* decision: "One is delays generally, which are an injustice to the victim, to the accused and to society. The second is the consequences of the *Jordan* decision, which result in those

80 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault).

81 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault).

82 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Huet).

A criminal case may be dismissed if the court finds that the delay in proceedings was unreasonable and violated the accused right to be tried within a reasonable time under section 11(b) of the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#): *R. v. Morin*, [1992] 1 S.C.R. 771; *R. v. Jordan*, [2016] 1 SCR 631. *R. v. Jordan* set out a new framework to ensure accused are tried within a reasonable time.

83 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Huet).

84 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

85 FEWO, *Written response*, Karine Gagnon.



delayed cases being thrown out when the time runs out.”⁸⁶ The Minister of Justice highlighted the Government’s response to these concerns in Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters (child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures) (Bill C-16), which was introduced in the House of Commons on 9 December 2025. At the time of publication, the bill is before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in the House of Commons:

We want to directly address these circumstances in *Jordan*, because delays were always a problem, but the consequence of cases being thrown out is a more recent phenomenon that followed the *Jordan* decision. We want to insist that courts consider alternative remedies, other than a stay of proceedings, that may be appropriate in those circumstances. The facts of individual cases may vary, but we want to preserve some discretion for what those remedies may be.

...In particular, one of the things we want to do is not just increase the timeline by classifying certain cases as complex, but actually streamline the procedures, for example, of how you may adduce evidence in a sexual assault trial, to ensure that the time-consuming applications that are leading to massive delays are diminished as part of the trial process so we can have more cases come to their natural conclusion more quickly.⁸⁷

Moreover, the Committee heard that a high number of Code Peace Bonds adds pressure to police services for monitoring compliance.⁸⁸ For example, Laio Auger stated that a lack of staff prevents adequate verification of compliance with conditions for such orders.⁸⁹

Briefs submitted to the Committee argued that varied application and enforcement of Code Peace Bonds across the country impacts their effectiveness.⁹⁰ For example, Sabrina Amelia McCurbin stated that “[p]olice and courts interpret Section 810 unevenly across jurisdictions, leading to inequitable protection.”⁹¹ Both Sabrina Amelia McCurbin and

86 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 5 February 2026 (Hon. Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada).

87 Ibid; [Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters \(child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures\)](#), 45th Parliament, 1st session (first reading version), clause 46.

88 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

89 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Auger).

90 FEWO, [Brief](#), Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes; FEWO, [Brief](#), Sabrina Amelia McCurbin.

91 FEWO, [Brief](#), Sabrina Amelia McCurbin.

Defend Dignity recommended standardizing processes for monitoring Code Peace Bonds across Canada and addressing breaches of conditions promptly.⁹²

The Committee also heard testimony relating to the prohibition of firearms as a condition for Code Peace Bonds. Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault told the Committee that household access to a firearm presents a high-risk factor for femicide.⁹³ Jennifer Davis reported numbers from the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, which identified that “between 2003 and 2023, a firearm was used in 24.7% of the [intimate partner] homicides reviewed.”⁹⁴ Pierre Brochet explained that in a city like Laval, Quebec with a population of 450,000, police previously seized between four to five firearms a year, whereas now they are seizing “between 25 and 40 firearms a year.”⁹⁵ Brochet explained: “It has become a trend. People have firearms, and this ... affects domestic violence cases.”⁹⁶ Manon Monastesse described a case of intimate partner violence in Quebec where “the *Jordan* decision was invoked, and the offender threatened his ex-spouse with a firearm a few weeks later.”⁹⁷ Harmy Mendoza described the case of Savannah Kulla, a young mother of four, who was murdered in October 2025. Her former partner, who is alleged to have killed her, was out on bail at the time on firearms-related charges in connection to a case involving Kulla.⁹⁸

Before issuing a Code Peace Bond order, the court has to consider whether it is desirable to prohibit the defendant from possessing any firearms.⁹⁹ However, the court maintains full discretion to include this condition in a Code Peace Bond order.¹⁰⁰ The Committee heard that a firearm prohibition should be automatically included in Code Peace Bonds orders, especially when the defendant is known to possess firearms.¹⁰¹ While it would not prevent all homicides by firearms, as illegal firearms may still be used by defendants,

92 Ibid.; FEWO, [Brief](#), Defend Dignity.

93 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault).

94 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis). See also: Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, [2022–2023 Annual Report](#), November 2025, p. 59.

95 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Brochet).

96 Ibid.

97 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

98 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).

99 See for instance: [Criminal Code](#), R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, ss. 810(3.1) and 810.03(7).

100 FEWO, [Brief](#), NAWL.

101 Ibid.; FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).



Jennifer Davis told the Committee that, “if it prevents one, it's serving a purpose of what it's intended to do.”¹⁰²

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada consider amending the *Criminal Code* to provide that the justice shall add to recognizance orders under sections 810 to 810.2 a condition prohibiting the defendant from possessing a firearm, cross-bow, prohibited weapon, restricted weapon, prohibited device, firearm part, ammunition, prohibited ammunition or explosive substance, or all those things, in cases involving domestic or intimate partner abuse, subject to the discretion of the justice to not impose the condition, similar to bail orders under section 515(4.1)-(4.2) of the *Criminal Code*.

Enforcing Penalties for Breaches of Conditions

The Committee heard about challenges relating to enforcing penalties for breaching conditions of Code Peace Bonds. For example, Hilda Anderson-Pyrz told the Committee that: “Even when a peace bond is issued, its effectiveness depends entirely on enforcement. ... Without functioning systems behind them, peace bonds become symbolic, rather than protective.”¹⁰³ Anderson-Pyrz emphasized that effective enforcement depends on communication between justice bodies, timely notification for survivors, and ensuring communities are properly prepared.¹⁰⁴

In a brief to the Committee, the Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes, stated that breaches of Code Peace Bonds constitute “warning signs in the assessment of the risk of femicide.”¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the brief explained that the way “conditions are enforced varies greatly between regions, depending on the financial and human resources, practices and knowledge of local police services, which leads to stark inequalities in the protection actually offered to women, depending on where they live.”¹⁰⁶

102 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

103 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz).

104 Ibid.

105 FEWO, [Brief](#), Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes.

106 Ibid.

Section 811 of the *Criminal Code* provides that breaching a Code Peace Bond is a criminal offence.¹⁰⁷ Manon Monastesse explained that prosecuting breaches under section 811 of the *Criminal Code* is “an effective way to provide a safety net for victims and their children” and added that Code Peace Bonds are useless if penalties for breaches are not enforced.¹⁰⁸ However, breaches are reportedly common, are often not prosecuted, or are enforced too late to prevent harm.¹⁰⁹ Failure to prosecute breaches of Code Peace Bonds “places women and children who are victims of violence in an extremely vulnerable position.”¹¹⁰ Monastesse told the Committee: “We need to apply the tools already in place, such as section 811,” and further explained that “when a breach of conditions occurs, a red flag must go up. The police need to step in. The law must be enforced to maintain the safety net.”¹¹¹

Aura Freedom International stated that justice sector actors, such as police, prosecutors and judges, need a better understanding of the dynamics of intimate partner violence to properly assess whether a breach of a Code Peace Bond condition has occurred:

[I]nconsistent handling of breaches often fails to account for the complex dynamics of intimate partner violence, including the patterns of coercion, manipulation, and psychological abuse that may not be immediately visible or easily documented. Many breaches involve subtle forms of control or threats that are difficult to prove but have significant impacts on survivors’ safety and well-being. The cyclical nature of abuse and the power imbalances inherent in these relationships require a nuanced understanding that goes beyond a simple assessment of whether a specific condition was violated. Without this deeper context, enforcement may overlook ongoing risks, dismiss survivors’ lived experiences, and fail to provide the timely and tailored interventions needed to protect those at risk effectively.¹¹²

Therefore, the Committee makes the following recommendations and observation:

107 [Criminal Code](#), R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, s. 811.

108 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

109 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Deepa Mattoo, Executive Director and Lawyer, Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault); FEWO, [Brief](#), Aura Freedom International; FEWO, [Brief](#), Nishnawbe Aski Nation; FEWO, [Brief](#), Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes.

110 FEWO, [Brief](#), Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes.

111 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

112 FEWO, [Brief](#), Aura Freedom International.



Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada, while respecting jurisdiction, work in consultation and collaboration with provinces, territories, Indigenous Peoples and governments to facilitate the sharing of best practices, and support provincial, territorial and Indigenous initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness of *Criminal Code* peace bonds, including improving access and timeliness of applications, monitoring compliance with conditions, and prosecuting breaches.

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, conduct research into the use of recognizance orders under sections 810 to 810.2 of the *Criminal Code* in cases of domestic and intimate partner abuse.

Observation 1

That provincial, territorial and Indigenous policing authorities explore the reasons that charges under section 811 of the *Criminal Code* are not laid in light of a section 810 violation.

Length of *Criminal Code* Peace Bonds

Code Peace Bonds typically last up to 12 months and can be renewed through a further application to the court. In certain cases, Code Peace Bonds can be imposed for longer periods of time. For example, in cases of domestic violence where the defendant has a prior conviction for domestic violence, a court can impose a peace bond lasting up to two years under section 810.03(4) of the *Criminal Code*.

Several witnesses told the Committee that the duration of Code Peace Bonds is too short and should be extended.¹¹³ Witnesses explained that 12 months is not enough to ensure sufficient protection for the victims, because the risk of harm often persists for much longer, especially for Indigenous women living in “tightly knit communities” and in proximity to the defendant.¹¹⁴ In a brief to the Committee, an anonymous victim of gender-based violence recommended extending Code Peace Bonds durations from one to

113 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Ahélo); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon); FEWO, [Brief](#), Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes.

114 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo); FEWO, [Brief](#), Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

three years.¹¹⁵ Jennifer Davis explained that an extended period of time can sometimes be necessary to “work through counselling, to work through housing, to work through financial stability, etc., or to work through programs that the offender may be going through as well—anger management, etc.”¹¹⁶

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada study ways to amend the *Criminal Code* to extend the maximum duration of *Criminal Code* peace bonds under section 810.

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, take steps to amend Subsection 810(3) of the *Criminal Code* to increase the current maximum 12-month duration of a peace bond for all cases involving intimate partner violence.

BAIL

As noted above, Parliament has jurisdiction to legislate on criminal law matters, including bail, which is outlined primarily in section 515 of the *Criminal Code*. The provinces and territories, as part of their jurisdiction over the administration of justice, are usually responsible for prosecuting offences and bringing other proceedings under the *Criminal Code*. The provinces also set policies governing provincial Crown attorneys in bail hearings and the prosecution of breaches of bail conditions. Most policing also falls under provincial jurisdiction, including monitoring and enforcing bail conditions and breaches.

The Committee heard that in some cases of intimate partner violence and domestic violence, some accused individuals are released on bail, but ultimately treat their bail conditions with contempt, and endanger the safety of the victim to a point where their life is at risk.¹¹⁷ Many witnesses told the Committee that bail reform is needed, including by ensuring the safety of the victims before releasing the accused, conducting a risk

115 FEWO, [Brief](#), Anonymous Author.

116 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

117 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Henderson).



assessment of the accused when appropriate, adding rehabilitative and supportive conditions in bail orders, and extending the circumstances where the accused has the burden to demonstrate they should be released on bail. However, witnesses insisted that legislation alone will not be sufficient to prevent violence.¹¹⁸ Instead, the Committee was told that bail reform needs to be paired with better coordination between the justice system, social services and community sectors.¹¹⁹ Moreover, Deepa Mattoo, Executive Director and Lawyer at the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, noted that keeping more people in custody might not be the solution: “[I]n the last 40 years, the number of people in our country living in pretrial detentions has doubled. That has not necessarily reduced the crime of domestic violence and gender-based violence.”¹²⁰

The Committee also heard about situations in which perpetrators of intimate partner violence were released on bail, sometimes with fatal consequences for their victims.¹²¹ Debbie Henderson told the Committee she believes that if her niece Bailey’s perpetrator had not been released on bail for charges relating to intimate partner violence, that “Bailey would still be alive.”¹²² Jennifer Davis also stated that: “We know that people are breaching, and then they're being re-released on a new order with new conditions.”¹²³

Some witnesses commented on the impact of An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, formerly Bill C-75 (Bill C-75), which received Royal Assent in 2019.¹²⁴ In particular, this Act amended bail provisions, including by:

- introducing the concept of the “principle of restraint” in the *Criminal Code*;
- requiring the courts to consider the circumstances of accused Indigenous persons and other vulnerable populations at the bail hearing;

118 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Sauvé).

119 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza). See also: FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

120 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

121 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Henderson).

122 Ibid.

123 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

124 [An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts](#), S.C. 2019, c. 25.

- creating a reverse onus at the bail hearing for offences related to violence against an intimate partner when the accused has a prior conviction for violence against an intimate partner; and
- including abuse against an intimate partner as an aggravating factor in sentencing.

Pierre Brochet, President of the Association des directeurs de police du Québec, told the Committee that Bill C-75 has had an impact on domestic violence cases.¹²⁵ For example, Brochet explained that, due to the principle of restraint, some police officers are “inclined to release certain people quickly, even for crimes for which they could have argued and forced the detention of suspects.”¹²⁶ In contrast, Harmy Mendoza recognized that Bill C-75 has made “important strides by recognizing [intimate partner violence] as an aggravating factor and introducing reverse onus provisions [in bail hearings] for repeat offenders.”¹²⁷

Principle of Restraint

Bill C-75 codified the common law principle of restraint recognized and applied by the Supreme Court of Canada.¹²⁸ Enclosed in section 493.1 of the *Criminal Code*, this principle seeks to release the accused at the earliest reasonable opportunity and on the least onerous conditions necessary in the circumstances. It applies to both the police and courts. Some witnesses were in favour of amending the *Criminal Code* to ensure that the principle of restraint does not undermine the safety of the victims over the release of the accused.¹²⁹ For example, Catherine Ahélo favoured limiting the discretion under the *Criminal Code*, especially of police officers, to release those accused of offences in the context of domestic and intimate partner abuse.¹³⁰

125 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Pierre Brochet, President, Association des directeurs de police du Québec).

126 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Brochet). See also: FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Louise Riendeau, Co-Lead, Political Affairs, Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Patrick Michel, Director, Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales).

127 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).

128 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel). See : [R. v. St-Cloud](#), 2015 SCC 27, para 70; [R. v. Antic](#), 2017 SCC 27, para 67.

129 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel).

130 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Ahélo).



Risk Assessment

The Committee heard that a risk assessment of the accused can be completed for consideration at a bail hearing. However, it requires the consent of the accused, which limits its use.¹³¹ The Committee heard that risk assessments can be “very useful tool[s].”¹³² Harmy Mendoza told the Committee that a risk assessment provides a more fulsome picture of the situation and helps to determine if bail should be granted, as well as appropriate conditions.¹³³ There are different risk assessment tools, which are evidenced-based and are used in the justice system, including by the police.¹³⁴ The Committee heard that risk assessments done by police should be “survivor-centric.”¹³⁵

Many witnesses told the Committee that courts should be allowed to order mandatory risk assessments of the accused, regardless of their consent.¹³⁶ Some witnesses also recommended that it be made possible to conduct a risk assessment throughout criminal proceedings, including at sentencing and in the context of Code Peace Bonds applications.¹³⁷ The Committee also heard that variations in risk assessment practices across jurisdictions lead to inconsistent protections for women experiencing domestic and intimate partner violence across Canada.¹³⁸ In a brief, Defend Dignity explained that “[s]entencing and bail decisions ... rely on risk assessments that vary across jurisdictions, potentially leaving gaps in protection.”¹³⁹ Along with a risk assessment, one witness called for the need for safety planning, as a way to follow up with the accused.¹⁴⁰

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

131 Ibid.; FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel).

132 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Ahélo).

133 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

134 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).

135 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

136 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Ahélo); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

137 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Ahélo); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon); FEWO, [Brief](#), Sabrina Amelia McCurbin; FEWO, [Brief](#), Valerie Gravelle; FEWO, [Brief](#), NAWL.

138 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse); FEWO, [Brief](#), Valerie Gravelle.

139 FEWO, [Brief](#), Defend Dignity.

140 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, study ways to amend the *Criminal Code* to ensure risk assessments of the accused are completed in the course of criminal proceedings where domestic and intimate partner abuse is alleged, especially at the bail stage.

Bail Conditions

The *Criminal Code* provides various conditions that can be included in bail orders, in addition to any other conditions that the court considers reasonable.¹⁴¹ Subject to the discretion of the court, the *Criminal Code* provides that bail orders should generally prohibit the accused from possessing a firearm in some cases, including when the offence involves a firearm or is related to violence against a person.¹⁴² In a brief, Thomas Kerr argued for imposing this condition in all bail orders, regardless of the circumstances.¹⁴³ The Committee also heard that rehabilitative and supportive conditions, including access to wraparound services, such as mandatory counselling and housing and mental health services, should be added to the list of available bail conditions.¹⁴⁴ Deepa Mattoo explained that “restrictive conditions are not really bringing the rate of violence down or the reporting down ... There is better compliance and safety if you actually put more responsibility on the perpetrator.”¹⁴⁵

The Committee also heard that bail conditions are frequently breached.¹⁴⁶ Catherine Ahélo argued that “a key point in ensuring the safety of victims” is to arrest and keep perpetrators in custody when victims report a breach of conditions.¹⁴⁷ However, Ahélo further stated that victims who report breaches of conditions by accused persons are

141 *Criminal Code*, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, s. 515(4).

142 *Ibid.*, s. 515(4.1).

143 FEWO, *Brief*, Thomas Kerr.

144 FEWO, *Evidence*, 17 November 2025 (Mattoo). In Canada, some community-based and Indigenous organizations operate bail verification and supervision programs, although these vary by jurisdiction.

145 FEWO, *Evidence*, 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

146 FEWO, *Evidence*, 17 November 2025 (Gagnon).

147 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Ahélo).



often not believed, causing them to lose their trust in the justice system and making them “reluctant to move forward”.¹⁴⁸

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

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, work to amend the *Criminal Code* to expressly include rehabilitative and supportive conditions, such as counselling and access to wraparound services, in the list of conditions that can be included in bail orders in cases of domestic and intimate partner abuse.

Reverse Onus

At the bail hearing, the prosecution generally has the burden to prove the accused should remain in custody until the end of the proceedings. However, the burden of proof is reversed for certain offences (known as “reverse onus”), meaning that accused persons will be kept in custody unless they show they should be released. For instance, the reverse onus may be applied in cases of violence against an intimate partner if the accused has been previously convicted, or received an absolute or conditional discharge under section 730 of the *Criminal Code*, for an offence involving violence against an intimate partner.¹⁴⁹ Louise Riendeau, Co-Lead, Political Affairs at the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, told the Committee that “in the case of repeat offenders and people who haven't complied with the conditions imposed on them ... reversing the onus is an important measure.”¹⁵⁰

The Honourable Sean Fraser told the Committee about Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act (bail and sentencing), which was introduced in the House of Commons on 23 October 2025.¹⁵¹ At the time of publication, the bill is before the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in the Senate. The Minister explained that the bill “aims to

148 Ibid.

149 [Criminal Code](#), R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, s. 515(6)(a)(b.1).

150 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau). See also: FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon Network); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

151 [Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act \(bail and sentencing\)](#), 45th Parliament, 1st session.

strengthen bail and sentencing laws, thereby reducing the risk of violence and femicides from recidivism.”¹⁵² Jennifer Davis explained that expanded reverse onus provisions in the bill will “address some of the challenges we've previously seen around reverse onus.”¹⁵³

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, study ways to extend the application of reverse onus provisions in the *Criminal Code* in the context of bail for persons accused of an offence against their intimate partner, their child or the child of their intimate partner, or accused of breaching a recognizance order under sections 810 to 810.2 designed to protect their intimate partner, their child or the child of their intimate partner.

SENTENCING

Appropriate sentencing is integral to ensuring victims feel safe and that aggressors of domestic and intimate partner violence are held accountable for their crimes. In an anonymous brief, a victim of gender-based violence recounted their experience following their aggressor’s six-month imprisonment and 12-month probation period. The victim frequently encountered their aggressor in public spaces, which led to panic attacks and extreme emotional and psychological discomfort. They eventually felt forced to relocate to ensure their safety.¹⁵⁴

Several witnesses discussed amending the *Criminal Code* to make femicide a first-degree murder charge and adding statutory mandatory minimum sentences. The Committee also heard that courts should give more consideration to the needs and desires of victims in sentencing offenders for crimes of domestic and intimate partner violence, as well as the

152 FEWO, *Evidence*, 5 February 2026 (Hon. Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada).

153 FEWO, *Evidence*, 17 November 2025 (Davis).

154 FEWO, *Brief*, Anonymous Author.



impacts of such crimes on their lives.¹⁵⁵ Karine Gagnon argued that these factors should be prioritized over other factors considered at sentencing.¹⁵⁶

First-Degree Murder Charge for Femicide or Murder of an Intimate Partner

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.¹⁵⁷

First-degree murders are limited to planned and deliberate murders, as well as murders in specific circumstances, such as involving sexual assault or criminal harassment.¹⁵⁸ Otherwise, murder is generally considered a second-degree murder.¹⁵⁹ Aggravating circumstances are taken into consideration at sentencing, including offences involving the abuse of an intimate partner and offences motivated by hate based on sex, gender identity or expression.¹⁶⁰

The recently introduced Bill C-16 seeks to, among other things, make femicide a first-degree murder in some circumstances, including those involving coercive control.¹⁶¹

Some witnesses expressed their support for amending the *Criminal Code* to make the murder of an intimate partner a first-degree murder.¹⁶² In contrast, Deepa Mattoo argued that harsher and more punitive sentences do not prevent domestic and intimate partner violence.¹⁶³ Hilda Anderson-Pyrz warned the Committee against automatically

155 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon); FEWO, [Brief](#), Anonymous Author.

156 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon).

157 [Criminal Code](#), R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, ss. 231(2)(7), 235, and 745. Unlike murder, manslaughter does not necessarily lead to life imprisonment: [Criminal Code](#), R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, 234 and 236.

158 [Criminal Code](#), R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, ss. 231(2) and 235.

159 *Ibid.*, s. 231(7).

160 *Ibid.*, s. 718.2(a)(i)–(ii).

161 [Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters \(child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures\)](#), 45th Parliament, 1st session (first reading version), clause 25.

162 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Ahélo); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Henderson).

163 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

charging intimate-partner murders as first-degree murders because women who kill abusive partners in self-defence could be charged with first degree murder under such a provision.¹⁶⁴ However, Catherine Ahélo suggested that this concern was addressed by the fact that defence of self-defence, among others, would still be available.¹⁶⁵

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada recognize the offence of femicide as first-degree murder in the *Criminal Code*.

Mandatory Minimum Sentences

Witnesses discussed mandatory minimum sentences, particularly in regard to *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, formerly known as Bill C-5 (Bill C-5), which received Royal Assent in November 2022.¹⁶⁶ Among other amendments, Bill C-5 removed mandatory minimum penalties for certain criminal offences under the *Criminal Code* and the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.¹⁶⁷

Witnesses expressed differing views about Bill C-5 and mandatory minimum penalties. Pierre Brochet described Bill C-5 as “a major step backwards.”¹⁶⁸ However, when asked

164 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz.).

165 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Ahélo).

166 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, S.C. 2022, c. 15.

167 Specifically, it repealed all mandatory minimum sentences for drug offences under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, as well as for 13 firearms offences and for one tobacco offence under the Code.

Additional note: During the study of the Committee, on 31 October 2025, the Supreme Court of Canada rendered its judgment in *Quebec (Attorney General) v. Senneville*, in which five of the nine judges found the mandatory minimum sentences of one year’s imprisonment for offences of access and possession of child pornography (ss. 163.1(4)a) and 163.1(4.1)a) of the *Criminal Code*) to be unconstitutional.

On 9 December 2025, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada introduced Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters (child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures), which seeks to, among other things, allow courts to impose a shorter term of imprisonment than the statutory minimum punishment if, in the circumstances, the minimum punishment would amount to “cruel and unusual punishment” for the offender: [Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters \(child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures\)](#), 45th Parliament, 1st session (first reading version), clause 46.

168 FEWO, *Evidence*, 29 October 2025 (Brochet).



about the impacts of the bill, as well as Bill C-75, witnesses did not exclusively attribute the increase of criminality to these two bills.¹⁶⁹

Some witnesses told the Committee that mandatory minimum sentences may be appropriate for certain offences, particularly those involving firearms in cases of domestic violence or offences committed by repeat offenders.¹⁷⁰ The Committee also heard that mandatory minimum sentences might send a dissuasive message.¹⁷¹ Certain witnesses indicated their lack of support for mandatory minimum sentences, while others emphasized that the courts should maintain discretion in ensuring appropriate sentencing.¹⁷²

OTHER LEGAL REFORMS

Criminalizing Coercive Control

Throughout its recent work, the Committee heard from several witnesses about the harmful impacts of coercive control and the need to criminalize such conduct. This concern was reflected in the Committee's two most recent reports, *Coercive Control in Canada* and *Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, in which it recommended the criminalization of coercive control.¹⁷³ During this study, the Committee heard additional testimony reinforcing this position.

The Committee heard that coercive control is as a repetitive form of violence used to control and deprive victims of their autonomy. It can include psychological, financial and physical abuse.¹⁷⁴ Its effects on the victims include "isolation, dehumanization and loss of freedom."¹⁷⁵ Witnesses told the Committee that coercive control heightens the risk of serious violence and is an important sign that future violence might turn lethal.¹⁷⁶ Aura

169 Ibid.; FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault).

170 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Brochet). See also for mandatory minimum sentences in cases of repeat offenders only: FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

171 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel).

172 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Huet).

173 FEWO, [Coercive Control in Canada](#), First Report, November 2025; FEWO, [Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Second report, December 2025.

174 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Huet); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau); FEWO, [Brief](#), Valerie Gravelle.

175 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Brochet).

176 Ibid.; FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

Freedom International added that “[c]oercive control is a better predictor of femicide than physical violence.”¹⁷⁷

Coercive control is not currently a criminal offence, nor is it explicitly mentioned in the *Criminal Code*. From a legal standpoint, Aura Freedom International explained that violence is still “narrowly limited to acts causing bodily harm, overlooking a broader spectrum of abuse and violence, including threats, intimidation, isolation, and other coercive tactics.”¹⁷⁸ Consequently, police officers can feel powerless when responding to cases of domestic and intimate partner violence that include coercive control, but where no criminal offence, such as assault, has been committed.¹⁷⁹ In such cases, they can “advise the victim, do prevention, talk to the suspect,” but are limited in what they can do to protect the victim.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, Jennifer Davis explained that peace bonds under section 810.03 of the *Criminal Code* can be used in situations of coercive control.¹⁸¹

The recently introduced Bill C-16 seeks to create a new offence prohibiting engaging in a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct toward an intimate partner.¹⁸² The Committee heard about some promising provincial practices, despite the lack of a federal *Criminal Code* offence. For example, the Committee heard that the DPCP has been directed to consider coercive control in their files.¹⁸³ Nevertheless, Karine Gagnon explained that “it is necessary to go further” and criminalize coercive control.¹⁸⁴

Several witnesses recommended criminalizing coercive control.¹⁸⁵ If coercive control is criminalized, Pierre Brochet explained that police officers would not have to rely as

177 FEWO, [Brief](#), Aura Freedom International.

178 Ibid.

179 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Brochet).

180 Ibid.

181 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

182 [Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters \(child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures\)](#), 45th Parliament, 1st session (first reading version), clause 28.

183 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel).

184 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon).

185 FEWO, [Brief](#), Sabrina Amelia McCurbin; FEWO, [Brief](#), Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale; FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Brochet); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Richer); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Auger); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).



much on Code Peace Bonds; rather, they could lay criminal charges in situations of coercive control, regardless of whether another offence has been committed.¹⁸⁶

Louise Riendeau told the Committee that an offence of coercive control would direct the police to “leave no stone unturned and examine all events, not just isolated incidents. This will help us to respond more effectively and, by extension, improve prevention.”¹⁸⁷

Valerie Gravelle submitted in a brief that other jurisdictions, such as England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and Australia have all criminalized coercive control and have demonstrated that “legislation can prevent escalation when paired with safeguards, training and oversight.”¹⁸⁸

In addition to recommendations for criminalizing coercive control, the Committee heard that coercive control should also be considered as an aggravating factor at sentencing.¹⁸⁹ Finally, the Committee heard of the need for training on coercive control, which is discussed in further detail below.

The Committee welcomes the Government’s response to its recommendations to criminalize coercive control introduced in Bill C-16, and therefore recommends:

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada criminalize coercive control in Canada.

Electronic Monitoring Devices

Many witnesses discussed the use of electronic monitoring devices as a condition for either a bail order or Code Peace Bonds; therefore, this tool is addressed in a separate section of this report. Witnesses generally described the use of electronic monitoring devices positively.¹⁹⁰ For example, Debbie Henderson explained:

It turns a piece of paper into real-time protection. With geofencing, instant alerts could go to police and to victims, and they would be notified the moment an offender entered a restricted zone, such as home, school or work. This technology transforms our system from reactive to proactive. Instead of waiting for harm, authorities can respond the

186 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Brochet).

187 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

188 FEWO, [Brief](#), Valerie Gravelle.

189 FEWO, [Brief](#), Anonymous Author.

190 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Henderson); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel).

instant an offender breaches a restricted area. Victims have a chance to find a safe place and contact the authorities. Evidence shows that breaches drop when offenders know that they're being tracked. It creates accountability and it deters crime.¹⁹¹

Louise Riendeau reported that electronic monitoring devices have been generally shown to be a “deterrent” to breaches of conditions, and that alerts for non-compliance are limited.¹⁹²

Jennifer Davis reported that the use of electronic monitoring device has increased: “We have seen GPS monitoring [increase] about 500% in Ontario. Locally, in Waterloo Region, the number of people who we're monitoring with GPS has increased by 25%.”¹⁹³ However, the witness also indicated that such devices can provide a “false sense of security,” explaining that there is “a lot of manipulation” of such devices by accused persons, to the extent that some are able to remove it without triggering the alert.¹⁹⁴ As such, Davis told the Committee that a condition requiring an accused to wear an electronic monitoring device is a useful tool in low threshold cases, where the accused is willing to abide by the conditions imposed; however, if the accused wants to commit a crime against an intimate partner or stalk the victim, they are unlikely to be deterred by wearing an electronic monitoring device.¹⁹⁵

In contrast, Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault told the Committee that electronic monitoring devices should be systemically used in “high-risk cases.”¹⁹⁶ Briefs to the Committee recommended the use of electronic monitoring devices in specific circumstances, including in cases of repeat offenders of intimate partner violence, as well as where “strangulation, weapon access, or credible threats are identified.”¹⁹⁷ Thomas Kerr indicated they should be used in all cases where bail is granted, whereas the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) explained that wearing an electronic monitoring device should be imposed as a condition following a case-by-case analysis and along with “trauma-informed and privacy-protected protocols.”¹⁹⁸

191 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Henderson).

192 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

193 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

194 Ibid.

195 Ibid.

196 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault).

197 FEWO, [Brief](#), AFN; FEWO, [Brief](#), Valerie Gravelle.

198 FEWO, [Brief](#), AFN; FEWO, [Brief](#), Thomas Kerr.



Therefore, the Committee makes the following observation:

Observation 2

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments explore options to increase the use of electronic monitoring devices as a standard condition in all cases of recidivism involving intimate partner violence, both at bail and sentencing, including an alert device to be provided to victims at bail stage.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

In Canada, the delivery of most police, court (including legal aid) and community-based services for survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence falls under provincial or territorial jurisdiction. Emergency shelters and transitional housing are also primarily a provincial or territorial responsibility, except on Indigenous lands, although the federal government provides funding through a variety of mechanisms, including bilateral agreements on housing.¹⁹⁹ The federal government also provides funding to the provinces and territories to support services for survivors and to community-based organizations through various programs. It has also led certain initiatives to support victims of crime.²⁰⁰

During this study, the Committee heard testimony about the importance of survivor-centered and wraparound services and continued funding, as well as examples of best practices and service models in certain provinces. For instance, witnesses described the benefits of specialized domestic violence courts in Ontario and Quebec.²⁰¹ Harmy Mendoza told the Committee that these courts “are very important in making sure that we provide the best support services for victims who have to had to go through the courts.”²⁰² In a brief to the Committee, the AFN explained:

Specialized courts in Quebec that oversee domestic violence and sexual assault files characterize an opportunity to leverage existing resources and capacity as these courts

199 See for example: Government of Canada, [About the National Housing Strategy](#); Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, [Federal/Provincial/Territorial housing agreements](#).

200 The Department of Justice leads the [Policy Centre for Victim Issues](#) and the [Victims Fund for provincial and territorial governments](#). The Committee also previously heard testimony on the [Canadian Victims Bill of Rights](#). See: FEWO, [Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Second report, December 2025, p. 29.

201 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

202 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).

are not only victim-centered, but they provide space for strengthened components such as culturally informed risk assessments.²⁰³

Witnesses told the Committee about other survivor-centered approaches in Quebec.²⁰⁴ For example, Patrick Michel from the public prosecutions office in Quebec described trauma-informed practices used by prosecuting attorneys, including “vertical prosecution,” a process whereby a single prosecutor handles a case involving a survivor throughout proceedings to foster a relationship between the prosecutor and survivor, as well as to avoid revictimizing survivors so that they do not have to recount their trauma to several prosecutors. Michel further explained that they can also assist survivors wishing to leave an abusive partner, for example by helping them terminate their residential lease.²⁰⁵

The Committee’s latest reports, *Coercive Control in Canada* and *Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, included recommendations for improving survivors’ access to services. These included, among others, recommendations to provide federal funding to organizations and service providers supporting survivors of coercive control; continued funding to community organizations and service providers through the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*; and funding culturally relevant and trauma-informed services led by Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people.²⁰⁶ The Committee heard similar recommendations from witnesses as part of this study.

Several witnesses emphasized the need for continued funding for community-based organizations that provide support services to survivors.²⁰⁷ Louise Riendeau emphasized that “[f]unding allocated to groups working on the ground is essential. It enables us to work directly with victims, do prevention and to contribute to the arguments when it comes to reporting what works in the legislation and what doesn’t.”²⁰⁸

Furthermore, witnesses underlined the need for culturally relevant, Indigenous-led and distinctions-based wraparound services.²⁰⁹ NAN described challenges that Indigenous

203 FEWO, [Brief](#), AFN.

204 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Richer).

205 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel).

206 FEWO, [Coercive Control in Canada](#), First Report, November 2025, pp. 43 and 47; FEWO, [Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Second report, December 2025, p. 43. See also: Government of Canada, [The National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#).

207 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Brochet); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

208 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

209 FEWO, [Brief](#), AFN; FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz); FEWO, [Brief](#), Nishnawbe Aski Nation.



women in their communities face in seeking out Code Peace Bonds, including difficult travel, missing work or their caregiving responsibilities, and navigating the court system in an unfamiliar community.²¹⁰ Furthermore, NAN told the Committee that throughout the peace bond process, survivors should have access to Indigenous court workers, Elders, knowledge-keepers and Indigenous-led legal aid, available in plain and Indigenous languages. NAN also underlined the need for emergency shelters, safe houses and transitional housing in Indigenous communities, as a “peace bond cannot protect a woman who has nowhere safe to go.”²¹¹

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

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, continue to fund Women and Gender Equality Canada to provide ongoing and stable funding to community-based organizations and service providers delivering survivor-centered, trauma-informed and culturally appropriate services to survivors and family members affected by domestic and intimate partner abuse, including coercive control, as well as invest in prevention efforts.

Recommendation 12

That the Government of Canada collaborate with provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, as well with survivors, community-based experts in domestic and intimate partner abuse, women’s organizations and Indigenous women’s organizations:

- **to identify, compile and regularly update existing best practices across jurisdictions on effective service models for survivors’ services, including trauma-informed, culturally relevant and survivor-centered approaches, and service models intended to engage everyone, including men and boys, in gender equality and violence prevention; and**
- **that these best practices be shared publicly to support high quality services and improve safety outcomes for survivors of domestic and intimate partner abuse.**

210 FEWO, [Brief](#), Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

211 Ibid.

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

The Committee's recent reports, *Coercive Control in Canada* and *Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, included several recommendations on prevention and education for gender-based, domestic and intimate partner violence, including coercive control. For example, the Committee recommended supporting trauma-informed training of legal sector actors, funding public education and awareness campaigns, as well as support services for rehabilitation of coercive behaviours.²¹² During this study, the Committee heard further evidence about the importance of prevention, education and awareness efforts in addressing domestic and intimate partner violence, including training of and increased resources for legal sector actors, public awareness and education, and enhanced rehabilitation programs.

Training and Resources

In Canada, the provinces are responsible for funding and training most justice sector actors because they have jurisdiction over the administration of justice within their borders. To ensure judicial independence, governments do not create judicial training programs. Instead, independent bodies set standards for overseeing the education and delivering training programs for federal, provincial and territorial judges.²¹³ Some changes have also been made to the *Judges Act* to address education for judges relating to sexual assault law, including coercive control.²¹⁴

During this study, some witnesses told the Committee about the need to train actors in the justice system, such as police, on domestic and intimate partner violence.²¹⁵ The Committee heard about certain police training practices in Ontario and Quebec. Provincial governments typically fund and authorize provincial policing academies or colleges to provide training to officers. Pierre Brochet noted that, in addition to standard police training in Quebec, “various police departments have added training specifically on domestic violence” and that “[s]everal police forces in Canada have decided to hire

212 FEWO, *Coercive Control in Canada*, First Report, November 2025, pp. 27, 42 and 48; FEWO, *Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, Second report, December 2025, pp. 45, 46 and 49.

213 See: Canadian Judicial Council, *About* and the National Judicial Council, *Who We Are*.

214 See for example: *Judges Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c.J-1, Ss. 3(b), 60(2)(b), and 60(3).

215 FEWO, *Brief*, Valerie Gravelle; FEWO, *Evidence*, 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).



investigators or police officers who specialize in domestic violence and focus on prevention, but this isn't consistent across the country.”²¹⁶

Jennifer Davis told the Committee that the Waterloo Regional Police Service has had a dedicated team of specially trained investigators in domestic and intimate partner violence since 2006, with officers certified by the Ontario Police College to investigate such cases. Davis also mentioned training conferences for police specifically on coercive control.²¹⁷ However, Deepa Mattoo told the Committee that what Davis described is “not a universal stance of police services across the board” and suggested that there are “many gaps on the ground on a daily basis all across Ontario.”²¹⁸

Training on Coercive Control

Several witnesses stressed the need for improved training on coercive control, including for police, Crown prosecutors, judges and child and youth protection services workers.²¹⁹ For example, Louise Riendeau commented:

[I]f police officers are properly trained, they will be able to identify all aspects, all manifestations of coercive control experienced by a woman. They will be able to better document their cases and provide more information to the prosecutors who will have to plead the cases.²²⁰

Some witnesses described a connection between the inconsistent application and enforcement of Code Peace Bonds and a lack of training on coercive control.²²¹ In a brief to the Committee, Aura Freedom International explained that “representatives of the legal system, including police, prosecutors, and judges, frequently lack the specialized training and capacity needed to recognize and respond effectively to coercive control, resulting in inconsistent application and enforcement of peace bond conditions.”²²²

The Committee heard, for instance, that in Quebec, training of many justice sector actors on coercive control is already underway. For example, to date, the Regroupement des

216 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Brochet).

217 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

218 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

219 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Auger); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

220 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

221 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse); FEWO, [Brief](#), Sabrina Amelia McCurbin.

222 FEWO, [Brief](#), Aura Freedom International.

maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale has trained approximately 12,000 professionals in Quebec, including 5,000 police officers, on coercive control.²²³ Catherine Ahélo described seeing the positive effects of such training, particularly on police: “I saw a change in the way police officers treated victims, in the way they put together their files, and in the comments made by victims.”²²⁴ Furthermore, Marie-Claude Richer described the work being done by the Echo Institute in Quebec, a Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale initiative, which provides tailored training on coercive control for professionals working with survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence, including health and social services, judicial, community organizations and employers and trade unions.²²⁵ Prosecutors at Quebec’s DPCP also receive training on coercive control.²²⁶

Insufficient Resources

The Committee also heard that justice system actors lack sufficient resources for addressing domestic and intimate partner violence.²²⁷ Brian Sauvé told the Committee that the RCMP lack sufficient resources for the monitoring and enforcement of Code Peace Bonds:

[W]orkloads are heavy, particularly in rural and remote areas where one detachment with as few as two members may cover hundreds of kilometres. When a breach occurs and response is delayed because there are simply not enough police officers available, the sense of safety for victims erodes quickly.²²⁸

Other witnesses also described challenges monitoring or enforcing Code Peace Bonds in remote and isolated areas, particularly in Indigenous communities, due to insufficient policing and inexperienced or rotating officers.²²⁹

Sauvé explained challenges for the RCMP policing communities under the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program, including inconsistent policing and a lack of community trust due to “constant [personnel] transfers” and “no consistency in knowledge of the

223 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

224 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Ahélo).

225 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Richer); [Institut écho](#).

226 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Michel).

227 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Mattoo).

228 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Sauvé).

229 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz).



heritage.”²³⁰ Hilda Anderson-Pyrz described the racism that Indigenous women endure within the criminal justice system, including by the police: “Survivors describe being dismissed by police, minimized in court or spoken to with racist and victim-blaming assumptions.”²³¹

Sauvé referred favourably to longstanding recommendations to improve the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program as it relates to the RCMP, including cultural sensitivity training for officers, placing cultural liaisons within participating communities, longer postings for officers, and refresher courses on or developing deeper knowledge of community bylaws.²³²

In a brief to the Committee, NAN recommended “dedicated funding for consistent, permanent policing in remote communities, mandatory rapid response protocols for reported breaches, formal involvement of Indigenous policing services, including [Nishnawbe Aski Police Service] and increased judicial awareness of enforcement challenges in remote First Nations.”²³³ Hilda Anderson-Pyrz recommended implementing specialized intimate partner units in Indigenous communities, establishing minimum staffing benchmarks for remote detachments, and mandating training on coercive control and colonial violence.²³⁴

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada, while respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples and governments, provide enhanced funding and support for:

- **mandatory, trauma-informed and culturally relevant training for Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers on gender-based, domestic and**

230 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Sauvé).

231 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz). Call for Justice 5.4 calls upon all governments “to immediately and dramatically transform Indigenous policing from its current state as a mere delegation to an exercise in self-governance and self-determination over policing.” 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.

232 Ibid.

233 FEWO, [Brief](#), Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

234 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz).

intimate partner abuse and coercive control, developed in collaboration with survivors and community-based experts;

- **the development and delivery of trauma-informed and culturally relevant coercive control training initiatives for justice sector actors, where appropriate, developed in collaboration with survivors and community-based experts; and**
- **provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments to improve the monitoring and enforcement of *Criminal Code* peace bonds and bail conditions in cases of domestic and intimate partner abuse, including through the creation of specialized units, improved cross-jurisdictional information sharing systems, and proactive follow-up with applicants and victims.**

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, encourage all Canadian police services to establish specialized domestic violence units. These units would be mandated to ensure rigorous monitoring of compliance with peace bond conditions (Section 810 of the *Criminal Code*) and to systematically process violations under Section 811 of the *Criminal Code*, while providing proactive and reassuring follow-up for victims to prevent the escalation of violence.

Public Education

In Canada, provincial and territorial governments are responsible for education, including setting curricula and standards, and administering schools and post-secondary institutions within their jurisdictions.²³⁵ However, the federal government can initiate national public awareness campaigns, fund community-based organizations developing public education and awareness materials, and play a role in the delivery of education on reserve.

During this study, several witnesses emphasized that public education on domestic and intimate partner violence, including coercive control, is crucial for prevention. Louise Riendeau told the Committee: “We think that we really need to work upstream with

235 [*Constitution Act, 1867*](#), 30 & 31 Victoria, c. 3 (U.K.), s. 93.



young people and the general population to change mindsets. We want men to no longer feel that the use of sexual or domestic violence against women is legitimate.”²³⁶

Harmy Mendoza told the Committee about prevention strategies involving education, including: “comprehensive sex education and healthy relationship programming in schools, workplace training on recognizing and responding to [intimate partner violence], and public awareness campaigns addressing coercive control and warning signs of abuse.”²³⁷ Debbie Henderson also told the Committee about the need for “more information on coercive control and more education for women about it so they have a greater understanding of what’s going on.”²³⁸

The Committee heard about different initiatives in Ontario and Quebec, in which shelters and police work in schools to educate young people on intimate partner violence, coercive control and healthy relationships, as well as shelters’ involvement in workplace training and with newly arrived immigrants.²³⁹

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, enhance funding and support for community-based organizations developing and implementing public awareness campaigns and prevention initiatives relating to domestic and intimate partner abuse, including coercive control and the promotion of healthy relationships.

Rehabilitation

In Canada, provinces and territories are responsible for non-custodial rehabilitation and treatment programs related to intimate partner violence, as well as custodial programming in provincial jails for offenders sentenced to terms of imprisonment of less than two years. At the federal level, Correctional Service Canada has a mandate to

236 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

237 FEWO, *Written response*, WomanACT.

238 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Henderson).

239 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Gagnon); FEWO, [Evidence](#), 29 October 2025 (Riendeau).

provide rehabilitation services for offenders serving sentences of two years or more, who are held in federal penitentiaries.²⁴⁰

Throughout the study, witnesses underlined the importance of rehabilitating perpetrators to reduce recidivism. The Committee heard about the impacts that perpetrators can have on multiple families, if further domestic or intimate partner violence is not prevented: “Why are we not engaging perpetrators so they change their behaviour and the way they use violence? The chances are that ... if a woman doesn't want to go back to him, the perpetrator will likely touch another nine families.”²⁴¹

Some witnesses expressed concerns about the limitations of current court-mandated rehabilitation programs, which are typically funded and approved by provincial and territorial governments and delivered by various community-based organizations, although arrangements vary by jurisdiction.²⁴² For example, Harmy Mendoza described concerns about the effectiveness of Ontario’s Partner Assault Program and whether it achieves its desired objectives.²⁴³ Participation in these programs can be ordered as a condition in criminal proceedings involving domestic violence, including through Code Peace Bonds, bail, conditional discharge or sentencing.

Witnesses also described the need for culturally relevant rehabilitative programming.²⁴⁴ Hilda Anderson-Pyrz explained that safety for survivors of gender- and race-based violence must “include healing and rehabilitation for those who cause harm, something clearly laid out in [C]alls for [J]ustice 7.1 and 7.3” in the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. These Calls for Justice urge governments and health service providers to support Indigenous-led prevention initiatives and to recognize that health and wellness services for Indigenous Peoples are most effective when designed for and delivered by Indigenous Peoples.²⁴⁵

The Committee also heard promising testimony about certain early intervention rehabilitation models. For example, Jennifer Davis told the Committee about the Family

240 See: Section 76 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, S.C. 1992, c.20 and Correctional Service Canada, *Programs for offenders*.

241 FEWO, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).

242 FEWO, *Written response*, Debbie Henderson; FEWO, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025 (Mendoza); FEWO, *Brief*, Valerie Gravelle.

243 FEWO, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).

244 FEWO, *Written response*, WomanACT.

245 FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz); 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.



Violence Project of Waterloo Region in Ontario, where “early intervention teams offer outreach, education, safety planning and referrals to supports including counselling, legal aid, housing, etc.”²⁴⁶ These services are available not only to survivors of domestic violence and their children, but also for individuals subject to peace bond conditions in cases of domestic or intimate partner violence. Davis provided that “to strengthen the effectiveness of section 810 orders, we need to invest in early intervention programs and multi-agency hub models that provide comprehensive supports for individuals.”²⁴⁷

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, enhance funding and support for community-based organizations delivering trauma-informed and culturally relevant rehabilitation programs and services for perpetrators of domestic and intimate partner abuse, including coercive control.

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada raise the issue of criminal proceedings in domestic and intimate partner violence cases at an upcoming meeting of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for Justice and Public Safety, and with the National Indigenous Organizations and Indigenous governments, in order to identify and advance ways that the Government of Canada can better support provincial, territorial and Indigenous domestic and intimate partner abuse rehabilitation and intervention programs.

DATA COLLECTION, MONITORING AND REPORTING

In Canada, the provinces and territories are responsible for collecting data relating to the administration of justice within their jurisdictions (for example, on policing, courts and corrections), while the federal government collects data related to federally administered corrections, and has a responsibility to collect, aggregate and disseminate certain criminal and justice statistics through Statistics Canada.²⁴⁸ The RCMP also oversee the

246 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis). See: Family Violence Project Waterloo Region, [About](#).

247 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 17 November 2025 (Davis).

248 See for example: Ss 22 and 26 to 29 of the [Statistics Act](#), R.S.C., 1985, c. S-19 and Statistics Canada, [Crime and Justice Statistics](#).

administration of certain national registries related to law enforcement, such as the National Sex Offender Registry and the Canadian Firearms Program.²⁴⁹

In its recent reports, *Coercive Control in Canada* and *Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, the Committee made recommendations to improve the collection and analysis of disaggregated data on gender-based, domestic and intimate partner violence, including femicides and coercive behaviour in Canada.²⁵⁰

During this study, the Committee heard more evidence about the importance of collecting disaggregated data on domestic and intimate partner violence, including data relating to Code Peace Bonds and bail. Harmy Mendoza told the Committee: “Across all legislative areas, we need data that is survivor-centred; disaggregated by gender, race and immigration status; and focused on outcomes, not just processes.”²⁵¹

Brian Sauv   described challenges that justice sector actors, particularly the police, experience with collecting data and managing information relating to Code Peace Bonds and bail. Sauv   explained: “Currently, there is no single national database tracking section 810 peace bonds or related conditions,” presenting monitoring and enforcement issues for police across jurisdictions.²⁵² Witnesses also told the Committee about data gaps relating to peace bond breaches, including police responses.²⁵³ Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault from the F  d  ration des maisons d’h  bergement pour femmes, an association representing more than 40 shelters and transitional houses in Quebec, explained:

Our member shelters systematically report that a number of police officers refuse to do anything about non-compliance with section 810 conditions. It's important to know those figures as well to understand the scope of the situation. Not only do we need accurate data about instances of non-compliance in family and domestic violence cases, but we also need data on the police response when there are notices of non-compliance, reports, requests for protection and peace bonds.²⁵⁴

249 See for example: RCMP, [Sex offender management](#); RCMP, [Registration and verification of firearms](#).

250 FEWO, [Coercive Control in Canada](#), First Report, November 2025, p. 48; FEWO, [Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada](#), Second report, December 2025, p. 52.

251 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2025 (Mendoza).

252 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Sauv  ).

253 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Monastesse).

254 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (St-Pierre Gaudreault femmes).



In a brief to the Committee, Sabrina Amelia McCurbin recommended improved “federal-provincial collaboration to collect, track, and publish anonymized data on Section 810 applications, approvals, denials, and outcomes.”²⁵⁵

Hilda Anderson-Pyrz emphasized the importance of Indigenous-led data collection and oversight, noting the need for “distinctions-based data on [recognizance] orders, breaches and outcomes ... and using the data to set national standards and require accountability.”²⁵⁶

Regarding bail order breaches, Brian Sauv  described challenges in sharing information across jurisdictions; for example, in cases where charges relating to multiple breaches of conditions have been stayed in exchange for a guilty plea on the underlying substantive charge. Sauv  explained:

[I]f you have jurisdictional information sharing of those who have breached, a judge in Calgary will know that an offender in Vancouver violated their conditions numerous times, and entered into a stay of proceedings for those violations to plead guilty to the substantive charge. Right now, they don't know that, because they don't share that information. It's maintained within the courthouse database.²⁵⁷

In response to issues regarding data collection, monitoring and reporting overall, Brian Sauv  described areas where improvements could be made:

“[I]nvestments in effective monitoring and compliance systems ... [p]rovinces and territories need to invest in modern monitoring systems that allow police to track compliance in real time;” and

“modernizing privacy laws to enable information sharing ... Currently, Canada's privacy laws limit how information about offenders can be shared across police services and jurisdictions.”²⁵⁸

Sauv  also noted that the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC), which is maintained by the RCMP and accessible to all police services, could serve as a basis for interprovincial-territorial data-sharing between police services. However, Sauv  also explained the system “need[s] modernization” and that the parameters governing how the system operates and

255 FEWO, [Brief](#), Sabrina Amelia McCurbin.

256 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Anderson-Pyrz).

257 FEWO, [Evidence](#), 19 November 2025 (Sauv ).

258 Ibid.

what it contains would likely need to be adjusted. For example, CPIC does not currently include charges that have been stayed.²⁵⁹

Some witnesses also expressed support for the creation of a domestic violence offender registry separate from the National Sex Offender Registry, a national registry for sex offenders convicted of designated sex offences who are ordered by the courts to report annually to police.²⁶⁰ In its report, *Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, the Committee recommended creating a federal public intimate partner violence offender registry.²⁶¹

In a brief to the Committee, Valerie Gravelle recommended “fund[ing] consistent national data collection and public reporting on [intimate partner violence], coercive control and femicide,” as well as the adoption of “a federal Clare’s Law framework ensuring equitable disclosure of partner-violence risk information across all jurisdictions.”²⁶² Clare’s Law legislation provides that persons at risk of domestic violence and certain third parties, such as parents, can request risk-related information regarding a current or former intimate partner from the police.²⁶³

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 18

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

- **strengthen the collection and analysis of disaggregated data on gender-based and intimate partner abuse, including femicides;**
- **strengthen the collection and analysis of disaggregated data on offenders of gender-based and intimate partner abuse, including information on recidivism, individuals subject to *Criminal Code* peace bonds for domestic and intimate partner abuse, participants in**

259 Ibid.

260 FEWO, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025 (Henderson); FEWO, *Evidence*, 19 November 2025 (Richer).

261 FEWO, *Gender-based Violence and Femicides in Canada*, Second report, December 2025, p. 49.

262 FEWO, *Brief*, Valerie Gravelle.

263 For example, see: RCMP, *Intimate partner violence and abuse* and *Clare’s Law*. Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador have passed Clare’s Law/Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme legislation. New Brunswick legislation has received royal assent but is not yet in force.



rehabilitation programs for domestic and intimate partner abuse, and the impacts of these programs on diverse population groups; and

- **create ways for cross-jurisdictional sharing of data relating to *Criminal Code* peace bonds and bail orders in cases of gender-based and intimate partner abuse, including:**
 - **police responses to *Criminal Code* peace bond breaches; and**
 - **stays issued for bail order breaches.**

Recommendation 19

That the Government of Canada, continue to work collaboratively with provinces and territories to explore mechanisms, including creating a national registry, for collaboration, sharing, and aggregation of data related to recognizance orders under sections 810 to 810.2 of the *Criminal Code*, including information laid, conditions imposed, duration and charges and convictions for breaches of recognizance, recognizing that the administration of justice and related data collection fall primarily with provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

CONCLUSION

The Committee recognizes the devastating effects of domestic and intimate partner violence on victims and their families, and stresses that various aspects of the criminal justice system need to be improved to better protect their safety and wellbeing. Over the course of this study, it heard from witnesses and received briefs highlighting the need for various measures, including reforming bail and Code Peace Bonds regimes, making the murder of an intimate partner a first-degree murder, and criminalizing coercive control. This report also looks to improve trauma-informed and culturally relevant survivors' services, support prevention and public education initiatives, enhance rehabilitation programming, and improve data collection, monitoring and reporting across Canada. The Committee wishes to express its gratitude to those who shared their perspectives as part of this study and hopes this contribution will strengthen support for victims and survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

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](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
As an individual Debbie Henderson	2025/10/27	10
WomanACT Harmy Mendoza, Executive Director	2025/10/27	10
Association des directeurs de police du Québec Pierre Brochet, President Didier Deramond, Chief Executive Officer	2025/10/29	11
Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales Audrey Mercier-Turgeon, Assistant Director Patrick Michel, Director	2025/10/29	11
Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale Louise Riendeau, Co-Lead on Political Affairs	2025/10/29	11
Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic Deepa Mattoo, Executive Director and Lawyer	2025/11/17	14
Crime Victims Assistance Centres Network Karine Gagnon, Organizational Support and Development Coordinator Jackie Huet, Director General, Crime Victims Assistance Centre of the Estrie Region	2025/11/17	14
Service de police de la Ville de Montréal Laio Auger, Lieutenant Detective, Domestic Violence Unit	2025/11/17	14
Waterloo Regional Police Service Jennifer Davis, Deputy Chief, Investigations and Operational Support	2025/11/17	14

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Fédération des maisons d’hébergement pour femmes Manon Monastesse, Executive Director Julie St-Pierre Gaudreault, Advisor, Policy Issues	2025/11/19	15
National Family and Survivors Circle Inc. Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, President	2025/11/19	15
National Police Federation Brian Sauvé, President	2025/11/19	15
Rebâtir Catherine Ahélo, Lawyer Marie-Claude Richer, Lawyer and Director	2025/11/19	15
Department of Justice Hon. Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Chelsea Moore, Team Lead and Senior Counsel, Criminal Law Policy Section Matthew Taylor, Senior General Counsel and Director General, Criminal Law Policy Section	2026/02/05	23
Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Hon. Gary Anandasangaree, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Safety Tricia Geddes, Deputy Minister Amy Johnson, Director General, Firearms Policy Chad Westmacott, Director General, Community Safety, Corrections and Criminal Justice	2026/02/05	23
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Bryan Larkin, Senior Deputy Commissioner	2026/02/05	23

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS

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](#).

Anonymous Author

Assembly of First Nations

Aura Freedom International

Defend Dignity

Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes

Gravelle, Valerie

Kerr, Thomas

McCurbin, Sabrina Amelia

National Association of Women and the Law

Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale

Rise Women's Legal Centre

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. 10, 11, 14, 15, 20, 23, 27, 29, 31, 34 and 36](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Dominique Vien
Chair

Supplementary Report

Study on Criminal Code Reforms Related to Intimate Partner Violence Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO)

Through this supplementary report, the Bloc Québécois wishes to highlight both the progress reflected in the Committee's report and the significant limitations that remain within the adopted recommendations.

At the outset, it is important to recall the seriousness of the situation. The testimony heard clearly demonstrated that intimate partner violence remains a persistent crisis affecting tens of thousands of victims every year in Canada, the majority of whom are women. The shortcomings of the criminal justice system, particularly with respect to peace bonds, bail release, and offender monitoring, were clearly brought to light.

The Bloc Québécois recognizes that several recommendations move in the right direction, particularly regarding funding for community organizations, training for justice system stakeholders, and the importance of rehabilitation for perpetrators of violence. These elements reflect a necessary understanding of the systemic nature of intimate partner violence.

However, several major concerns must be raised.

One significant concern relates to respect for Quebec's jurisdictions. The Canadian criminal justice system is based on a clear division of responsibilities, whereby the federal government legislates criminal law while the provinces administer justice, including policing services, courts, and rehabilitation programs. Yet several recommendations, particularly those concerning police training, the creation of specialized units, or the management of certain data, risk encroaching on these jurisdictions or duplicating initiatives already in place in Quebec.

Furthermore, several responsibilities related to the concrete implementation of reforms addressing intimate partner violence fall directly under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, particularly with regard to the administration of justice, policing services, courts, shelters, psychosocial services, rehabilitation programs, and community organizations. Any enhancement of obligations, monitoring mechanisms, or interventions proposed by the federal government should therefore be accompanied by adequate and recurring financial transfers to enable Quebec and the provinces to strengthen their services without placing additional strain on systems that are already under pressure. Without financial support corresponding to the new responsibilities and expectations created, several measures risk remaining difficult to implement effectively on the ground.

Certain proposals also raise important concerns regarding their actual effectiveness. For example, the possible creation of a national peace bond registry, although seemingly relevant, risks duplicating existing mechanisms without concretely improving access to information or

the protection of victims. Likewise, discussions surrounding the criminalization of coercive control must necessarily rely on a clear definition in order to avoid any legal ambiguity.

Finally, the Bloc Québécois reiterates that combating intimate partner violence cannot rely solely on judicial measures. A comprehensive approach is required, including support for community organizations, prevention efforts, and targeted interventions aimed at perpetrators of violence. In this regard, it is essential to recognize that prevention also involves greater accountability among men and the development of services adapted to this reality.

In conclusion, although the Committee's report constitutes an important foundation, it must be strengthened through more concrete measures that respect Quebec's jurisdictions and are better grounded in existing practices. The Bloc Québécois reaffirms the importance of a coherent, structured approach centred on the real needs of victims and communities.