

To: All Federal Party Leaders

Violence against women, youth and children in Canada is an ongoing public health and safety crisis that remains a devastating daily reality. This violence affects people of all social, economic and cultural backgrounds. As we approach the October federal election, the [REDACTED] has identified four key issues that have federal level solutions.

On behalf of an organization that works collaboratively to eliminate gender-based violence, we are well aware of the importance of the government to support women, children and youth experiencing violence in order to ensure their safety. We ask that all candidates integrate the following issues into their election platforms to make concrete commitments to end violence against women, children and youth in Canada.

Indigenous Women and Girls

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered determined that human rights and Indigenous rights abuses committed and condoned by the Canadian state represent genocide against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. These abuses and violations have resulted in the denial of safety, security, and human dignity. They are the root causes of the violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

Indigenous women are 12 times more likely to be murdered or go missing than any other women in Canada, and 16 times more likely than Caucasian women, despite making up only 4% of the female population¹.

While a 2014 RCMP report states that there were 1,200 documented murdered and missing Indigenous women in Canada between 1980-2012, research from the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) suggests that the actual number could be as high as 4,000². Furthermore, homicide rates for Indigenous women have been going up: In 2015, Indigenous women made up nearly one-quarter (24%) of homicide victims in Canada³.

We ask that the leaders' parties commit to develop, in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, a National Action Plan to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, as recommended in the Calls to Justice in Reclaiming Power and Place.⁴

Housing

Violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women. Transition Houses and Safe Homes provide much-needed emergency responses to women fleeing violence. However, they are not able to provide shelter to all those who need it and they are not designed for long-term stays. According to Shelter

¹ <http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ni-mmiwg-interim-report-revised.pdf>

² <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mmiw-4000-hajdu-1.3450237>

³ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14785-eng.htm>

⁴ https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Executive_Summary.pdf

Voices 2019, on a single day across Canada, 79% of new requests for shelter from women and children could not be accommodated.⁵ The shortage of long term affordable housing cannot be separated from the issue of violence. The lack of access to a safe and secure place to live permanently increases the vulnerability of women and their children.

We ask that the leaders' parties uphold and further the goals of the recent National Housing Strategy, which commits that 25% of all housing investments will specifically target the unique needs of women and girls. We ask that the leaders' parties also consider a commitment to increase that percentage to reflect that women are currently 50.4% of the Canadian population.

Transportation

The [closure of the Greyhound Bus service](#) in western Canada has had devastating impacts on women. Across British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and north-western Ontario the lack of bus service has eroded safe and affordable options for women in large and small towns to relocate, access services, or travel between communities. Currently, women experiencing violence in many remote and rural communities have no access to safe, affordable and public transportation to access safe shelter or social or court services.⁶ Isolated in remote communities, women and their children have very few options. Without transportation, they may have little choice but to remain in unsafe circumstances. We regard affordable and accessible transit as an essential service to protect the safety of women, children and youth experiencing violence.

We ask that the leaders' parties commit to provide additional funding to provinces for safe and affordable transportation systems that reach all rural and remote communities.

Children and Youth

Canada has signed the Convention of the Rights of the Child committing to taking measures to protect children from all forms of violence.⁷ The federal government should affirm its obligation to ending the cycles of violence to ensure children are not exposed to violence.

We ask that the leaders' parties commit to ending the cycles of violence against women, children and youth through providing adequate funding to programs for children and youth who have experienced violence.

We envision a Canada where all women, children and youth are safe and have access to supports, permanent affordable housing, safe transportation and communities where they can thrive. We ask you to commit to these four steps that will move Canada closer to achieving these goals.

Sincerely, **Name & Title**

⁵ <https://wocrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Shelter-Voices-2019.pdf>

⁶ <https://bcsth.ca/blog/affordable-transportation-a-lifeline/>

⁷ <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/rights-children.html>