

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington St.  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5K9

March 9, 2020

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

We are writing to you today to underline the Ending Violence Association of Canada's support for the March 3, 2020 [joint statement](#) released by Women's Shelters Canada, in collaboration with partners from across the country, calling on the government to provide a timeline on the development and implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence. The Ending Violence Association of Canada echoes this call for a bold, ambitious, and intersectional National Action Plan, and urges the government to recognize its timely development as an integral step in addressing violence against women and gender-based violence in Canada.

Furthermore, as a national organization with representation from community-based sexual assault centres, provincial and regional sexual assault networks, and other organizations working with survivors of sexual violence from across the country, the Ending Violence Association of Canada and its member organizations would like to emphasize the vital importance of the National Action Plan to addressing and responding to the unique needs of sexual violence survivors and sexual violence centres, organizations, and advocates.

Demands for sexual violence services have grown considerably in recent years in response to awareness and concerns related to the #MeToo movement; the challenges survivors encounter when navigating systems and seeking justice; the high rates of sexual violence experienced by women with disabilities; the experiences of immigrant, refugee, and newcomer women; and the findings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. While the increase in individuals seeking support following sexual violence is welcome, community-based sexual assault centres and advocates struggle daily to meet growing demands to not only provide direct services to survivors but also meet requests for the training, education, and subject-matter expertise these organizations offer. A National Action Plan that includes a comprehensive examination of sexual violence services is essential in meeting the pressing need for a coordinated, consistent, and cross-jurisdictional approach to responding to the unmet and continually increasing demands for sexual assault support and services across all provinces and territories.

In addition, the National Action Plan – and timely communication about its development and implementation – can make significant improvements in sexual violence prevention and response in the following ways:

- Addressing significant inadequacies and inconsistencies in funding across jurisdictions for sexual assault support and services and community-based sexual assault centres, especially in rural, remote, and northern regions where access to specialized sexual violence services is often non-existent.
- Ensuring formal recognition of the breadth and complexity of the labour, services, and expertise sexual violence advocates and organizations provide, and ensuring this labour is properly compensated.
- Ensuring key sexual violence specific issues and challenges that fall under federal jurisdiction are addressed, including strengthening the criminal justice system's response to sexual violence and Canada's obligations to fulfill its sexual violence specific human rights commitments.
- Strengthening understanding of and strategies for closing jurisdictional and sectoral gaps that create increased opportunity for sexual violence, especially sex trafficking and childhood sexual abuse.
- Improving sexual violence specific data collection, with a specific focus on understanding the experiences of the most marginalized, including Indigenous women and children; women with disabilities; newcomer, immigrant, refugee, and non-status women and children; and 2SLGBTQIA people.
- Centring the experiences and knowledge of those at the greater risk for sexual violence, including women with disabilities, Indigenous women and girls, sex workers, women living in poverty, and newcomer, immigrant, refugee, and non-status women so that the strategies proposed in the National Action Plan will lead to systemic change that addresses discriminatory systems and practices that are the root of sexual violence.
- Providing adequate resources to support ongoing collaboration among all organizations within the anti-violence sector and other equality-seeking civil society organizations to foster innovative, cross-sectoral, intersectional strategies for ending all forms of violence against women and gender-based violence.

In acting on its commitment to develop a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence in consultation with all stakeholders, including frontline workers and survivors, the government has an opportunity to create meaningful, systemic change that will address the root causes of violence against women and gender-based violence, including sexual violence.

We look forward to learning more details about the steps that will be taken to ensure that the unique needs of sexual violence survivors and the organizations and advocates that work to support them will be included in the development, content, and implementation of the National Action Plan.

Sincerely,

Erin Whitmore  
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**EVA BC**  
ENDING VIOLENCE ASSOCIATION

NL Sexual Assault Crisis  
and Prevention Centre

SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
VIOLENCE SEXUELLE



Ontario  
Network  
of Sexual Assault  
Domestic Violence  
Treatment Centres



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ENDING VIOLENCE  
Association of Canada