

Analysis of the 2021 Federal Mandate Letters through a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Lens

On December 16th, 2021, the Federal Government issued updated [mandate letters](#) to its new Ministers, offering guidance on their priorities and outlining the way forward. The table below summarizes the priorities related to gender-based violence contained in these letters, with the aim of facilitating advocacy efforts and holding the government accountable to its own targets.

A key message from the Prime Minister to all Ministers is to "address the profound systemic inequities and disparities that remain present in the core fabric of our society, including our core institutions." This includes the use of an intersectional lens as well as the use of Gender-Based Analysis Plus in policy development.

In instances where more than one department has been assigned the same priority, we have listed the priority under the department leading the initiative wherever possible. Refer to the original letters for exact wording, as points have been edited to fit the table. Items in bold make explicit reference to gender-based violence or closely-related issues. Items not in bold refer to various social justice and equity issues that are necessary to addressing the systemic and root causes of gender-based violence.

Ministry Mandate Letter	Minister	Priorities related to GBV
Women and Gender Equality and Youth (WAGE) Mandate Letter	Marci Ien	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a 10-year National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence and dedicated Secretariat, including involving provinces/territories within a year • Sustain funding commitments to women’s organizations and equality-seeking groups • Collaborate with the women’s movements, organizations, experts, and advocates • Support the application of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) across government decision-making processes • Advance gender equality in the following areas: economic, leadership, poverty reduction, health and well-being • Launch the Federal LGBTQ2 Action Plan and related funding • Preclude anti-abortion organizations who engage in harmful practices from obtaining charitable status (with Deputy Prime Minister and Finance)

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Public Safety Mandate Letter	Marco Mendicino	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce “Red flag” laws to remove firearms in cases of intimate partner violence (with Ministry of Justice) • Enact Clare’s Law so that individuals at risk of domestic violence can request information from the police/RCMP about their partner’s violent history • Reform the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), including culture change, accountability, equity, diversity and inclusion, oversight and externalizing the Independent Centre for Harassment Resolution (with WAGE) • Ensure that federal correctional institutions are safe and humane environments, free from violence and sexual harassment, and promote rehabilitation and public safety • Prioritize policing reform to address systemic racism • Advance Canada’s first-ever National Action Plan on Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries (with Mental Health and Addictions) • Keep our cities and communities safe from gun violence • Co-develop a legislative framework for First Nations policing and engage with Inuit and Métis (with Indigenous Services & Crown-Indigenous Relations)
Justice and Attorney General of Canada Mandate Letter	David Lametti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with provinces and territories to support the development of specialized sexual violence courts • Reform the criminal justice system, including addressing systemic racism and BIPOC overrepresentation • Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act • Make obstructing access to healthcare and intimidating healthcare professionals and patients a criminal offence • Introduce legislation to combat serious forms of harmful online content (with Canadian Heritage)
Crown-Indigenous Relations Mandate Letter	Marc Miller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate the implementation of the Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQA+ People, and support the implementation of the 2021 MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQA+ National Action Plan (with Indigenous Services and WAGE) • Accelerate the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation’s Calls to Action (with Indigenous Services)

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<p>National Defence</p> <p>Mandate Letter</p>	<p>Anita Anand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In consultation with survivors, transform the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), rebuild trust and build a healthy, safe and inclusive workplace, free from harassment, discrimination and violence, including by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing recommendations of the Independent External Comprehensive Review, including instituting external oversight over the reporting, investigation and adjudication of complaints, outside the chain of command; • Implementing recommendations from the Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination • In consultation with survivors, end discrimination, sexual misconduct and gender-based violence in the military (with WAGE) by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring survivors have the full range of options and protections available in the civilian system by implementing recommendations from the Third Independent Review of the National Defence Act, and bringing into force the Declaration of Victims Rights • Moving the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases from the military justice system to civilian courts • Expanding services and resources for survivors of sexual misconduct, including veterans, National Defence, and family members, through the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (with the Minister of Veterans Affairs) • Expanding health services available to CAF women, ensuring comprehensive access to sexual and reproductive health resources, childcare, and mental health resources • Understanding and addressing the clinical, occupational and deployment health needs of CAF women • Funding a peer-to-peer support program for those who have experienced military sexual trauma • Improve the diversity of the CAF, including the recruitment and promotion of women, LGBTQ2, Indigenous, Black and racialized Canadians and people with disabilities

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Seniors Mandate Letter	Kamal Khera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize the national definition of elder abuse, invest in better data collection and establish new related offences and penalties in the Criminal Code (with Minister of Justice)
Health Mandate Letter	Jean-Yves Duclos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all Canadians have access to sexual and reproductive health services, including youth-led services (with WAGE) • Increase investments to primary and virtual care and mental health services, including in rural communities • Work towards a national universal pharmacare with willing provinces and territories
Mental Health and Addictions Mandate Letter	Carolyn Bennett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that health inequities are understood and addressed (with Minister of Health) • Expand the delivery of high-quality, accessible and free mental health services, including in rural areas (with Minister of Health) • Ensure that mental health care is treated as a full and equal part of our universal health care system
Indigenous Services Mandate Letter	Patty Hajdu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close socio-economic gaps and improve access to high-quality services, including eliminating all remaining long-term drinking water advisories, closing the infrastructure gap by 2030, and building sustainable and affordable housing (with Crown-Indigenous Relations, Housing, Diversity and Inclusion, Northern Affairs & Intergovernmental Affairs) • Implement An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families • Ensure the reform of child and family services in First Nations communities, including compensation for those harmed, keeping families together and providing youth (18+) supports for up to 2 years (with Crown-Indigenous Relations) • Co-develop a Mental Health and Wellness Strategy including culturally appropriate wraparound services for addiction and trauma, suicide and life promotion and building treatment centres (with Mental Health and Addictions)
Labour Mandate Letter	Seamus O'Regan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the International Labour Organization Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019, and support employers and unions to strengthen harassment and violence prevention measures in federally regulated workplaces • Amend the Canada Labour Code to include mental health in occupational health and safety and to require federally regulated employers to address workplace stress and injury

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International Development Mandate Letter	Harjit Sajjan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding to grassroots women’s rights organizations and close persistent gaps in sexual and reproductive health and rights services, including in relation to the prevention of sexual and GBV • Implement the Feminist International Assistance Policy and focus on gender equality through an intersectional, human rights-based feminist approach to address economic, political and social inequalities • Advance gender equality and LGBTQ2 rights abroad, including support for global feminist initiatives, relevant international institutions, and civil society partners, including the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council (with WAGE & Foreign Affairs) • Support women leaders and feminist groups leading efforts to promote peace and protect the rights of women and vulnerable groups through new funding for the Women’s Voice and Leadership Program • Support and protect the rights of paid and unpaid care workers
Housing, Diversity and Inclusion Mandate Letter	Ahmed Hussien	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve housing affordability and end chronic homelessness • Co-develop an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy (with Northern Affairs) • Lead a whole-of-government approach to build a more inclusive, equitable and just society, working to combat systemic racism, discrimination and xenophobia • Develop a National Action Plan on Combatting Hate as part of the Anti-Racism Strategy, including compensation for survivors (with Justice & Public Safety)
Families, Children and Social Development Mandate Letter	Karina Gould	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system, including a culturally appropriate option for Indigenous children
Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion Mandate Letter	Carla Qualtrough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Canada Disability Benefit Act and Canada Disability Benefit for low-income working age persons with disabilities. • Finalize and release Canada’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan • Improve foreign credential recognition (with IRC) • Implement sector-based work permits and ensure the health and safety of temporary foreign workers (with Agriculture and Agri-Food)

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Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (IRC) Mandate Letter	Sean Fraser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further explore ways of regularizing status for undocumented workers • Expand pathways to Permanent Residence for temporary foreign workers (with Agriculture and Agri-Food)
Rural Economic Development Mandate Letter	Gudie Hutchings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate the delivery of broadband service across Canada to ensure that all Canadians have access to high-speed internet through the Universal Broadband Fund
Northern Affairs Mandate Letter	Dan Vandal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve food security in Inuit Nunangat through the Harvesters Support Grant and the Nutrition North Canada program, amended to make it more transparent and responsive to Inuit needs (with Crown-Indigenous Relations)
Finance Mandate Letter	Chrystia Freeland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert the Canada Caregiver Credit into a refundable tax-free benefit, allowing caregivers to receive up to \$1,250 a year
Treasury Board Mandate Letter	Mona Fortier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Public Service workplaces are free from sexual harassment and violence, as well as racism and all forms of hate.
Sport Mandate Letter	Pascale St-Onge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch the Independent Safe Sport Mechanism, responsible for administering the implementation of the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport for federally funded sport organizations