

INTERIM REPORT CARD

MINISTER'S COMMITTEE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

WHAT WE KNOW

The rates of interpersonal and sexual violence in Newfoundland and Labrador are continuing to rise. The St. John's Status of Women Council (SJSWC), the St. John's Native Friendship Centre (SJNFC), and the Provincial Action Network on the Status of Women (PANSOW) are calling once again for the establishment of a provincial task force on gender-based violence.

THE MINISTER'S COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT

The positives

The Committee was able to convene some key stakeholders and held several meetings over a six-month period. Their first report includes a list highlighting some of the ongoing initiatives and motions towards the development of victim supports. For example, implementing third party reporting, strengthening Emergency Protection Orders, as well as planning a forum on violence against women and girls to be held before year end.

Our concerns

1. The Committee was formed over six months ago and has neither identified nor presented a comprehensive assessment of the issues and gaps that perpetuate violence against women. There are glaring omissions, including lack of pertinent data on violence against women and femicides, deaths of women in prisons, and the serious levels of sexual assaults occurring in schools throughout the province.
2. The Committee is under resourced and missing rural representation. The St. John's-centric composition of the Committee sidelines northern rural and Indigenous women. This exclusion of voices from northern Indigenous communities has also resulted in a lack of understanding of the scope of violence and the prevention work that is relevant and ongoing.
3. The Progress Report does not provide clear leadership on the responsibilities which fall directly under the Department of Justice and Public Safety, including low reporting levels and conviction rates; lenient penalties; sexual assault law training for Judicial Officers; underfunding of support services for women; a plan for evaluation of programs and services; and culturally appropriate supports within Indigenous communities.

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How is the Minister of Justice's
Committee on Violence Against
Women and Girls measuring up?

GRADE:

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Limited action, needs significant
improvement.

The Minister's Committee



The Minister's Committee on
Violence Against Women and
Girls in Newfoundland and
Labrador was struck in 2017.

They committed to province-wide
representation and collaboration
in order to identify issues & gaps
in all areas related to violence
against women & girls.

The Committee's Progress Report



Find the Minister's Committee
October 2018 Progress Report
here.

4. It must be acknowledged that the majority of the initiatives identified in the progress report have been operating as part of the community for several years. While we agree that many of these initiatives provide vital community supports and services that need to continue, we note a complete lack of strategic perspective and/or evaluation forthcoming from the committee.

CONCLUSION

Given the lack of tangible and timely outcomes within the progress report, the SJSWC continues to advocate for a task force to proactively address the continued prevalence of gender-based violence. The structure of a committee that has no resources, staffing, political will, ministerial accountability and a concrete action plan, is simply inappropriate and inadequate to address the scope of the issue within our province.

There are real concerns that those who are at the highest risk of experiencing violence including rural, disabled, seniors, Indigenous, trans, sex working, and racialized women are neither mentioned nor prioritized.

“Nain and Sheshatshiu have the highest rates of violence against Women and Girls in this province. The exclusion of Indigenous Women of Labrador on the Minister’s Committee on Violence Against Women and Girls is not only extremely concerning, it is also not in good faith with moving towards reconciliation. AnânauKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women’s Association is in full support of a provincially funded and staffed task force which fairly represents and reflects the voices of all women of this province.”

Kim Campbell McLean, Executive Director
AnânauKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women’s Association

Intimate Partner Violence

Per 100,000 persons aged 15 years & older

NL	NS	SK	CA
323	307	680	310

NL intimate partner violence rate is slightly higher than the national rate but mid-range when compared to the rates of other provinces.

Source: 2018 NL Vital Signs, Statistics Canada

Contact Information

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