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Sexual assault at the hands of Royal Newfoundland Constabulary on-duty police officers

As survivors continue to come forward sharing their accounts of sexual assault from on-duty RNC officers, we express our unequivocal belief of women, Jane Does and all people who have experienced violence at the hands of police. We know that sexual, domestic and gender-based violence is rooted in abuse of power and control, and that consent [cannot be given](#) when someone in a position of authority abuses their power to induce consent.

We are deeply disturbed by the lack of recognition or accountability from the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary to date, of their upholding and participating in a culture of misogyny and corruption where sexual and gender-based violence persists. Stating that survivors "have the power to hold their abusers accountable" is inaccurate and ignores trauma experienced by survivors, both in their experiences of sexual assault and further through the criminal justice system. The comments from the RNC's [press release](#) show absolutely no insight into the realities of how power operates when asking survivors to report a sexual assault to the institution responsible for their harm.

Canadian [research](#) published this year finds that sexual assault is the second most common documented police misconduct, and that when police commit crimes, they are most likely to do it while they're on duty. Police in Canada write off about [sixteen percent](#) of reported sexual assaults as unfounded - substantially more than the determined rate of false reporting of any crime, which is somewhere between just [two and eight per cent](#). This phenomenon has been internationally recognized as a crisis. Even more, survivors who experience systemic marginalization are both [neglected by and overrepresented in](#) our criminal justice system and are most likely to become [criminalized or victimized](#) through interactions with police, even in attempts to report violence. To increase safety for survivors, we reiterate [our statement](#) to defund police forces in Canada, including the RNC. Sustainable institutional change for survivors of sexual violence does not include inflated investment in harmful institutions.

To all survivors, know that you are believed and supported. To the many women who have come forward: thank you, your courage and strength immeasurable. There is power in numbers. There is safety in your support circles. There is healing through community care.