



For immediate release

Women's Groups and Victims' Families Call for Urgent Action to Implement Gun Control Laws to Address Femicide Crisis

Advocates implore all federal party leaders to commit to uphold and enforce new laws to prevent injury and killing of women and children by intimate-partner gun violence, if they become Prime Minister

Anishinaabe Territory/OTTAWA, November 25th, 2024: A coalition of 50 women's organizations – as well as family members of recent femicide and familicide victims murdered by current or former male partners by guns – are calling on the federal government to fully and urgently implement the provisions in Bill C-21 addressing the use of firearms in situations of domestic and gender-based violence before the upcoming federal election.

Although the measures became law almost a year ago when Bill C-21, an *Act to Amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)* received Royal Assent on December 15, 2023, the provisions specifically addressing domestic violence have not yet come into force, pending the drafting of new regulations. No timelines for when such regulations will be finalized have been provided by Public Safety Canada. Given the fact that intimate partner violence against women has been declared an epidemic by the Mass Casualty Commission, survivors and their families can no longer afford to wait for these crucial measures to be implemented.

The measures at risk of not coming into force before the next election include the following critical amendments to the *Firearms Act*:

- **Subsection 6.1**, which makes an individual ineligible to hold a firearms licence if they are subject to a protection order or have been convicted of an offence involving family violence.
- **Subsection 70.1**, which obliges a chief firearms officer who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a licensee may have engaged in domestic violence or stalking to revoke the licence within 24 hours.

- **Subsection 70.2**, which automatically revokes the licence of an individual who becomes subject to a protection order and requires them to deliver their guns to a peace officer within 24 hours.

The National Association of Women and the Law, PolySeSouvient / PolyRemembers, The Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability and family members of victims of shootings also sent [open letters](#) to all national party leaders, calling on them to make two commitments in their campaign platforms to address the crisis of intimate-partner gun violence, including femicides and familicides:

- 1) To uphold and enable the full implementation of Subsections 6.1, 70.1 and 70.2 of Bill C-21; and
- 2) To commit to maintaining the national freeze on the sale, purchase or transfer of handguns by individuals within Canada; banning large-capacity magazines; and completing the buy-back of all military-style firearms, including the models that were omitted or exempted from the 2020 Order in Council.

The coalition's urgent call for action follows an alarming increase in femicides and familicides in Canada, many by gun violence. In 2024, there have been 163 femicides of women and girls, which is already twelve more than at this same time in 2023. Guns are one of the most common methods used to commit these murders, with at least 22 women killed by guns so far this year and seven children killed alongside their mothers.

Quotes

"The delay in the implementation of the domestic violence provisions of Bill C-21 comes at the cost of the lives of women and children. Femicide and intimate partner violence must be treated like the epidemics that they are, and the government must act quickly to bring these measures into force."

- **Suzanne Zaccour**, Director of Legal Affairs, **National Association of Women and the Law**

"Thirty-five years after the École Polytechnique massacre in 1989 made clear the risk of gender-based gun violence and femicide to girls and women in Canada, statistics show that, on average, women and girls are still being murdered every other day in Canada, and tragically the trend is not abating. So far in 2024, 163 women and girls have been killed, mostly by men, 12 more than at the same time in 2023. Guns are frequently used to commit femicide, consistently involved in about one-third of these killings, and often resulting in the deaths of multiple victims, including children."

- **Myrna Dawson**, Director, **Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability**, Professor of Sociology, University of Guelph

"Many of the gun control regulations and enforcement directives are still not in force, and we call on the Bloc and NDP – who supported Bill C-21 in the House – to work with the Liberal government to ensure the law's full implementation during the current session of Parliament."

- **Nathalie Provost**, Spokesperson, **PolyRemembers, and Survivor of the École Polytechnique massacre**

"My daughter, Angie Sweeney, and three children were shot and killed by her ex-boyfriend in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, in October 2023. These murders are a small proportion of the femicides and familicides from intimate-partner gun violence in the last few years alone that have taken the lives of women and children, devastating families, friends and communities across Canada. Clearly, every month that goes by

without these new laws being in force in our cities, towns, and across rural and remote communities puts the lives of all Canadian girls and women at greater risk.”

- **Brian Sweeney**, Founder of **Angie’s Angels**, an advocacy group working to reduce intimate partner violence in Canada

“The intimate-partner shootings that have taken the lives of women and children in Canada this year are tragedies that are preventable. This includes the murder of my own mother, Brenda Tatlock-Burke, who was taken by her husband, a former RCMP officer who kept multiple legal guns in their home. For years she lived with coercive control until he shot and killed her. Had these laws been in place she might very well still be alive.”

- **Tara Graham**, daughter of femicide victim Brenda Tatlock-Burke of Nova Scotia

Quick Facts

- The killing of women by their intimate partners or ex-partners occurs on average once a week in Canada. Guns are frequently used to commit these murders.
- Women and girls living in rural communities are at a disproportionate risk of gun violence and femicide compared to women and girls who live in cities.
- Access to firearms is a significant risk factor for familicide, especially in rural areas, most often perpetrated by male accused with histories of domestic violence.
- Women of all age groups are at risk of femicide throughout their life. However, those aged 35-54 are at greater risk relative to their representation in the population.
- Intimate partner violence (IPV) was formally declared an epidemic by the [Mass Casualty Commission \(MCC\)](#), a public inquiry that examined the circumstances of the 2020 mass killing in Nova Scotia where a gunman killed 22 people following a vicious assault on his spouse. The Commission’s final report recommended stronger measures be put in place to prevent gun possession by people involved in domestic or gender-based violence. The Commission also recommended the federal government “amend the Criminal Code to prohibit all semi-automatic handguns and all semi-automatic rifles and shotguns that discharge centre-fire ammunition and that are designed to accept detachable magazines with capacities of more than five rounds.”
- A [survey](#) conducted by Abacus Data in 2023 found most Canadians want stronger gun control laws, and 89% of Canadians support requiring authorities to revoke a firearms licence and remove firearms quickly (within 24 hours) from individuals who have committed acts of domestic violence, family violence or stalking. The survey also found only 8% of women ‘strongly support’ civilian ownership of assault-style firearms, compared to 62% of women who ‘strongly oppose’ them.

Associated Links

- [Bill C-21, an Act to Amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments \(firearms\)](#)

- Recommendations and Endorsing Organizations: [Regulations and implementation protocols related to intimate violence enabling the effective implementation of Bill C-21](#)
- [National Association of Women and the Law \(NAWL\)](#)
- [Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability](#)
- [PolyRemembers/PolySeSouvient](#)
- [Angie's Angels](#)

For more information, contact:

Suzanne Zaccour, suzanne.zaccour@nawl.ca, 438.345.7445

Heidi Rathjen, via info@polysesouvient.ca or 514.816.7818

Myrna Dawson, cjoja@ugueph.ca or 519.824.4120