

**Brief submitted by Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes (AOcVF)
Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence in Canada**

Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes (AOcVF) is a provincial, francophone and feminist network of sexual assault support centres (centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel (CALACS)), women's shelters and violence against women programs that offer French-language services (FLS) in Ontario.

Recommendation 1: AOcVF recommends that the government adopt a comprehensive action plan to prevent violence against women. While we appreciate the government's initiatives to fight violence against women, such as the Gender-Based Violence Strategy, we find the government's lack of an overall vision for this fight regrettable. A comprehensive action plan would allow for the issue to be tackled in its entirety and for the measures needed to be identified. This plan must be coordinated with the initiatives of the provinces and territories for greater effectiveness. It needs to be ambitious and to include concrete measures that mitigate the factors putting women at risk of violence, that prevent all forms of gender-based violence and oppression society-wide, and that ensure survivors of violence have access to adapted, high-quality services in both official languages. This plan also needs to account for the additional barriers that affect certain groups of women, including racialized and Indigenous women, senior women, girls and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Recommendation 2: AOcVF recommends that the government address the factors putting women at risk of violence to ensure their economic and physical security.

Recommendation 2.1: Multiple studies show persistent economic inequality between men and women. Women have more precarious and lower-paying jobs than men. Even in jobs requiring the same skills, women are paid less. In general, women are the ones who stop working to care for children and relatives. The pandemic has only exacerbated these issues. AOcVF recommends that the government implement adequate programs and mechanisms that financially and socially empower women to recover from the crisis and, above all, address existing inequalities. Women's economic independence is especially important, as it is one of the factors that help eliminate violence against women.

Recommendation 2.2: AOcVF recommends that the government improve access to safe and affordable housing. Many women live in vulnerable situations because safe, affordable housing is lacking. The financial insecurity produced by the pandemic has made even more women vulnerable. The government must take steps to ensure the most vulnerable women have access to safe and affordable housing across the country. While pandemic support measures have improved housing access in some regions, we are concerned that, if long-term measures are not implemented, the housing crisis will begin again once emergency supports end.

The government must ensure that no women remain in a violent situation because of a lack of housing. Very often, the shelters in our network are full and cannot accept women facing violence, putting the life and safety of these women and their children in danger. AOcVF

recommends that the government create new shelters for francophone women and invest in transition houses and in subsidized housing.

Recommendation 2.3: AOcVF recommends that the government continue its work on child care. Having a child care system accessible for all would also support women's social and economic independence. There are two aspects to the issue of child care accessibility: capacity and affordability. It is difficult for families in Ontario to watch other provinces and territories reform their child care system while Ontario's system remains largely unchanged. AOcVF recommends that the federal government work with the Ontario government to quickly implement an affordable child care system. AOcVF also recommends that specific child care allowances be provided to women fleeing abusive relationships.

Recommendation 3: Even if education is within provincial and territorial jurisdiction, the federal government needs to play a leadership role in this area. The government must ensure that national educational standards and models are put in place so that young people can receive a minimum level of education on healthy relationships, consent and the challenging of sexist stereotypes. Similarly, social sectors managed by the provinces and territories, such as health and child care, must have standards set at the federal level to somewhat harmonize Canadians' work in these sectors.

Recommendation 4: AOcVF recommends that survivors of violence be provided with access to appropriate high-quality support in the language of their choice, regardless of where they live. Specific, adapted support must be offered to Canadian francophone women facing violence in minority-language communities. To do so, the government needs to help the provinces and territories offer high-quality FLS.

On behalf of AOcVF, thank you for the opportunity to present these recommendations.



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