



Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Supporting police professionals through innovative and inclusive police leadership
to advance the safety and security of all Canadians.

Presentation to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Study of Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence in Canada

Remarks by:

Chief Kimberley Greenwood

(Co-chair of the CACP's Victims of Crime Committee)

and

Directeur Francis Lanouette

(Co-chair of the CACP's Crime Prevention, Community Safety
and Well-being Committee)

Representing:

Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

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Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address this committee on behalf of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

I am Chief Kimberley Greenwood, co-chair of the CACP's Victims of Crime Committee.

As police officers, we see firsthand the horrifying, tragic, and sometimes deadly effects that intimate partner violence brings to victims, their families, and our communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated concerns and stresses the need for consistent national approaches to address intimate partner violence.

We are experiencing an increase in femicide across Canada, and we know that when women are killed, it is most often at the hands of a current or past intimate partner.

Women shelters are reporting not only an increase in cases, but also an increase in the intensity of the violence, and in the levels of fear experienced by victims. Shelters are noting a spike in substance abuse as feelings of hopelessness rise.

The many complexities of intimate partner violence and the need for a coordinated understanding of and response to it in Canada is paramount.

In 2016, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, in partnership with the University of New Brunswick, released a research-driven and evidence-based [*National Framework on Collaborative Police Action on Intimate Partner Violence*](#).

The Framework is intended to provide police services across Canada with a shared language and understanding of intimate partner violence. The key themes addressed include:

- Consistent police response and investigation practices that are victim-focused and trauma-informed in nature.
- The adoption of common tools and techniques for police intervention including standardized risk assessments that are used nation wide.
- Sharing responsibility across agencies including public health, police, social agencies, and other community organizations.
- Effective court processes and case management to address risk and prevent further harm.

- More research and adopting proven evidence-based practices when monitoring and supporting offenders, like the research being conducted in Barrie on recidivism rates of intimate partner violence offenders.
- And finally, the creation of a Canadian Centre for Policing Intimate Partner Violence to bring the Framework “online” and make it operational for our front-line police officers and investigators.

Our work has not stopped since the Framework was launched. We are taking steps to produce additional resources on trauma-informed victim-focused policing, as well as educational material on coercive control.

I now turn over the presentation to Directeur Francis Lanouette, Co-chair of the Crime Prevention and Community Safety and Well-Being Committee.

Good afternoon.

As police officers, we know that by the time a domestic violence charge goes to court, it’s likely that the victim has been experiencing some form of violence or controlling behaviours at the hands of their partner for a significant amount of time.

Recently, our association has expanded its focus on domestic violence to address the issue of coercive control.

Our committee is collaborating on research to better understand this phenomenon from a police perspective and to develop the tools necessary to detect it.

To improve the understanding of this concept by the policing community, the association offered a webinar on this topic.

Our association also proposes other avenues of intervention to achieve continued progress to help protect victims sooner, before physical or visible harm comes to them.

First, we must address current limitations in the *Criminal Code* when it comes to intervening in cases of domestic violence. As a result, we support legislative changes including the addition of coercive control as a new offence under the *Criminal Code*, as suggested in our [CACP submission on Bill C-247](#) (which is now known as [Bill C-202](#)).

We also support adopting *Intimate Partner Violence Disclosure Acts*, *Clare's Law*, throughout all provinces and territories in Canada.

In addition to legislative changes, we are also calling for:

1. the development of a **Canadian Intimate Partner Violence Policing Centre**, as previously mentioned by Chief Greenwood;
2. the implementation of **courts specialized in these matters** would be better equipped to support victims throughout the judicial process;
3. continued **education and awareness** initiatives with the general population, and especially with youth; and
4. the development of **multi-sectoral teams** whose mandate is to assess the risk of homicide in cases of intimate partner violence.

On this last point, it should be noted that, in Quebec, such rapid response teams are already being deployed and a new law on electronic bracelet systems has been adopted. The Quebec experience could perhaps be expanded across the country.

In conclusion, we must provide officers with tools to help them recognize and address intimate partner violence, including coercive control because, when victims stay quiet because they do not believe there is anything police can do, they also lose out on the opportunity to access support agencies, resources, and opportunities to change their situation.

Thank you.