



*Advocates demonstrate in remembrance of the women who died recently as victims of intimate partner violence and to call for changes within the justice system to prevent*

## Advocates declare intimate partner violence a public safety emergency – federal government cuts funding

Advocates have declared intimate partner violence a public safety emergency in response to five women killed in July in BC by their male partners. But even as women's groups are warning about the "normalization of femicide in society" alarm bells are being sounded about federal funding cuts to these very groups.

With instances of intimate partner violence, officials are quick to declare "there is no risk to the public". However, according to Angela Marie MacDougall, Executive Director of the Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS), this is a mischaracterization and part of a disturbing trend of gender-based violence in the province.

"Using that kind of language excludes the very people who are at risk, which is all of those other women who are living at home right now, living in fear," she says. "It signals to the public that the situation has been addressed. That it's over, and that there's nothing more to fear, and that the police have now gained control."

However, statistics indicate just the opposite. In 2024 there were 14,270 reported cases of intimate partner violence (IPV) in BC, a significant increase from the 270 reported in 2018.

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Dahye Son, an anti-violence worker at Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, agrees with MacDougall. "I think it's more about the normalization of femicide in the society," she said. "But I want us to remember that it's not acceptable for a woman to die because she's a woman and have her life taken away because she's with a man."

Son was part of a group that demonstrated in remembrance of the women who died recently and to call for

changes within the justice system to prevent more such deaths.

In January 2025, Premier David Eby, declared gender-based violence a national epidemic. He directed ministries to act urgently and in coordination, to reflect the interests and realities of survivors. BC Attorney General Niki Sharma, followed up by sending a letter to the federal

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*- from executive summary of the Dr. Kim Stanton's report*

minister of justice, seeking a change in the criminal code. She asked for better protection of victims of intimate partner violence by making it more likely for perpetrators of domestic assaults that involve choking to be imprisoned immediately upon conviction.

Though the government has the tools like the report by Dr. Kim Stanton entitled *The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence*, released in June 2025 (see link at end of story), which lays out clear, survivor-informed recommendations implementation is uncertain.

As Dr. Stanton quotes in the report's executive summary, "We know what to do. We just need to do it," while another quote asks, "So why aren't we doing it? Or if we are, why isn't it working?"

MacDougall says municipal governments need to stop waiting for provincial direction and begin treating gender-based violence as the public safety emergency it is. She recommends that the different levels of government coordinate across housing, health, justice, and education systems to disrupt the patterns that allow women to be killed despite repeated calls for help.

### Battered Women Support Services #DesignedWithSurvivors initiative

With their #DesignedWithSurvivors initiative, the BWSS is creating a real-time, community-rooted framework for public safety: one that centres survivors, trains first responders, supports court navigation, and strengthens cross-sector collaboration.

The initiative asks media, government, and oversight bodies to stop describing these deaths in neutral terms and start confronting what they reveal: a system that recognizes violence too late and responds too little. Femicide is not an anomaly. It is a measurable, preventable consequence of policy inaction and fragmented systems

To be included with the 100 organizations and individuals across B.C. who have already joined #DesignedWithSurvivors, email [endingviolence@bwss.org](mailto:endingviolence@bwss.org)

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Even as advocates are declaring femicides in Canada a public safety emergency, Women Transitioning Cities (WTC) is sounding the alarm about budget cuts by 80 per cent to Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), the federal department responsible for advancing gender equality and women's rights.

WAGE funds front-line organizations that do vital work to end gender-based violence, promote women's economic security, and support 2SLGBTQ+ communities. At the conclusion of current funding programs, WAGE Canada's budget is set to decline by 80 per cent between 2024-25 and 2027-28.

This is part of the "Comprehensive Expenditure Review" introduced by the new Finance Minister. Federal spending has been growing by 9 per cent every year with direct program spending for 2023-24, totalling \$236-billion, a component of the overall federal budget of \$521-billion. The government is introducing measures to bring that growth down below 2 per cent with federal cabinet ministers being asked to find "ambitious" internal savings.

Specifically, ministers must find ways to reduce program spending by 7.5 per cent in the fiscal year that begins April 1, 2026, followed by 10 per cent in savings the next

year and 15 per cent in the 2028-29 fiscal year.

The reduction in funding to WAGE, however, far exceeds the per cent identified in the new "Comprehensive Expenditure Review".

These budget cuts threaten the future of WTC, alongside many other small, grassroots organizations staffed by women and gender-marginalized people that do not have large donor bases.

**"This is a betrayal of feminist voters and a dangerous signal as gender-based violence, misogyny, and attacks on the 2SLGBTQ+ community and reproductive**

WTC issued a press release that states, "If the budget cuts go ahead, the women's movement will be decimated: women's organizations will shut their doors, violence prevention programs will grind to a halt, and decades of work towards advancing gender rights will be cut short."

The release goes on to claim that the move contradicts the Liberal Party's election platform which promised to increase WAGE funding.

"This is a betrayal of feminist voters and a dangerous signal as gender-based violence, misogyny, and attacks on the 2SLGBTQ+ community and reproductive rights intensify."

WTC is asking its members and the public to send an email to their MP denouncing these cuts. For more information about how to take action visit <https://www.womentransformingcities.org/blog/speak-up-against-80-budget-cut-for-women-and-gender-equality>

According to data from Statistics Canada, approximately 48% of women and girls in British Columbia, aged 15 and older, have experienced intimate partner violence.

*Link to: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence, released in June 2025*

<https://www.bwss.org/wp-content/uploads/20250624-IPVSV-Review-Final-Report-KStanton-1.pdf>

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Multicultural  
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### FALL HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

**Sept. 22-24 – Rosh Hashanah**

**Sept. 30 – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

**Oct. 1-2 – Yom Kippur    Oct. 13 – Thanksgiving**

**Oct. 20 – Diwali**

**Nov. 11 – Remembrance Day**