



July 19, 2023

Mayor Olivia Chow
Office of the Mayor
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

UPLOADED

Re Toronto City Council Resolution CC8: Declaration of IPV/GBV Epidemic

Dear Mayor Chow,

It is a great pleasure to congratulate you on your recent election as Mayor of Toronto.

As it happens, members of the VAW sector from across Ontario were gathered in Petawawa on the evening of your election to work together developing our collective capacity to advocate for implementation of the 86 recommendations arising from the CKW Inquest. The news of your election brought great joy and hope to our gathering, even in the face of the disappointing news that the Province of Ontario has rejected and refused to implement some of the key recommendation of the CKW Inquest jury.

We are delighted that the hope we felt upon your election has so quickly been made manifest in your prioritization of the urgent fight to end gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. We want to commend you on your passionate and authentic leadership on this issue.

As you may know, EVA Renfrew is a coalition of advocates, survivors and agencies working to end intimate partner violence in Renfrew County. We sought and were granted standing at the June 2022 inquest into the femicides of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam where we carried forward the voices of survivors and the frontline service providers who support them in the search for meaningful solutions to end IPV and femicide.

The first recommendation of the jury at that inquest was to call on the Province of Ontario to declare IPV an epidemic in Ontario. Despite our efforts to communicate the importance of this declaration, Ontario has (so far) rejected that recommendation. Nevertheless, advocates and municipal leaders from small rural communities and large urban centres across Ontario know that IPV and GBV are a public health emergency, and we cannot change what we refuse to name!

It is for this reason that we are sending a delegation from EVA Renfrew 400 km to attend the City Council meeting this week and to accompany our sister organizations in Toronto in support and solidarity for City Council Resolution CC8.2, the declaration of a gender-based violence and intimate partner violence epidemic in the City of Toronto.

Lanark County was the first municipality to act on CKW Inquest Recommendation #1 and made its declaration on December 14, 2022. Other rural regions followed, including of Renfrew County. And as of today, more than 35 municipalities representing 40% of Ontario's population have made this declaration. If Toronto adopts Resolution CC8.2, it will mean that more than half of Ontarians live in jurisdictions that acknowledged the pervasive and pernicious impact of IPV and GBV on the health and wellbeing of their communities.

This issue could not be more timely and your leadership on this issue could not be more important. For too many, this is a matter of life and death. As you may know, earlier this month, OAITH released a report confirming that Ontario has seen 30 femicides in the last 30 weeks. That means that every week this year, a woman has been killed because she is a woman, and so many more are living with IPV and GBV. The only way to reverse this harrowing trend is to eliminate the root causes of this violence. Resolution CC8.2 builds on the critical work already being done by agencies and advocates in Toronto, lending City Council's support and attention to this urgent fight.

Since the CKW Inquest, we have continued to carry the voice of survivors and those who have been stolen by femicide. We are fully engaged in moving forward to implement the recommendations of the CKW Inquest and end IPV and GBV and we are so grateful that Toronto City Council has joined us in this incredibly important work.

In support and solidarity,



JoAnne Brooks
EVA Renfrew Coordinator

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