

**100+ Organizations Publish Open Letter Calling for a Provincial Declaration  
of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as an Epidemic**

**TORONTO, December 6, 2023** – Today, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, YWCA Toronto, joined by more than 100 organizations, released an [open letter](#) urging the provincial government to declare Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) an epidemic. The call for a declaration comes after the province's refusal in June 2023 to do so in accordance with the first of 86 recommendations in the [Culleton, Kuzyk and Warmerdam Inquest Report](#); which followed the 2015 triple femicide of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew County.

Despite the province's initial rejection of the recommendation, survivors, advocates, and organizations in the sector have continued to advocate to all levels of government to declare IPV and GBV an epidemic, and for greater efforts to address this violence meaningfully. The initiative of municipal declarations began in Lanark County on December 14, 2022 – almost a year ago today. This bold effort has been raised relentlessly by survivors and advocates in the GBV sector and now, more than 75 municipalities across the province have declared IPV and/or GBV an epidemic.

Femicide, a form of IPV and GBV and which is defined as the killing of women, children, trans women, 2-Spirit People and gender diverse people, is most commonly perpetrated by current or former intimate partners ([31%](#)), often men. In the past year, there have been [62 recorded femicides in Ontario](#).

Heather McGregor, YWCA Toronto Chief Executive Officer, expressed the urgency of this declaration: "Intimate Partner Violence and Gender-Based Violence are pervasive, systemic issues in our society. The troubling rise in femicides across the province, increases in uses of emergency shelter services, and the declarations by municipalities across the province exemplify just how persistent the issues of IPV and GBV really are in our communities. Naming this violence for what it is, an epidemic, not only acknowledges the severity of it, but also supports the gender-based violence sector, and ultimately, helps to create a future where women, children, and gender diverse people are free from violence."

Read the full open letter to Premier Doug Ford here: [Open Letter](#)

**NOTE: Interviews opportunities can be arranged. Please contact Sami Pritchard.**

YWCA Toronto is Ontario's largest multi-service organization serving women, girls and gender diverse people. Our advocacy work is informed by the communities we serve and the structural barriers that keep them from achieving equity and justice. We are proud of our [150-year history](#) of creating positive change in our community.

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