



MODERATOR OF THE 2022 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
The Rev. Dr. Robert N. Faris, B.A., M.Div., M.Th., Ph.D.

August 25, 2022

The Hon. Marco Mendicino, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety
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The Hon. Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion
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Dear Ministers,

Greetings from the General Assembly, which met online June 5–8, 2022. The General Assembly considered a report that commented on the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated public health crises, including domestic violence.

It is encouraging to see cross-departmental collaboration to address domestic violence through the Family Violence Initiative. The supports necessary to assist those living with domestic violence, and those who are trying to escape violence, must be informed by expertise from multiple perspectives to address the lived experiences and societal barriers that can hinder someone's ability to leave violent situations.

We also acknowledge the commitments the Government of Canada has made regarding:

- Developing a National Action Plan to End Gender Based Violence, along with \$539.3 million through Women and Gender Equity Canada for provinces and territories to support services for those living in situations of gender-based violence.
- Earmarking \$2.2 billion over five years to respond to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Developing a national definition for elder abuse, and information to support changes to the Criminal Code relating to elder abuse.

We strongly encourage the Government of Canada to ensure that all personnel who are involved in the Family Violence Initiative are trained in trauma-informed, victim-centred and culturally appropriate approaches. It is equally important that such training acknowledge the different vulnerabilities, needs and experiences of violence faced by Indigenous and racialized people, 2SLGTBQI people, people with disabilities, people who have been trafficked and people with precarious immigration status. Ensuring this training for all those who propose and implement policies or programs related to the Family Violence Initiative will improve policy and program outcomes and better help the lives of those they seek to serve. This training and these approaches are needed in the context of responding to the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Clerks of Assembly: The Rev. Victor S.J. Kim and The Rev. Donald G.A. Muir

One of the biggest barriers for leaving violence at home is having no safe place to go. Shelters provide immediate and life-saving protection. But shelters cannot always cope with the number of people who need access to a safe place or provide services that can meet diverse needs. For those who cannot access a shelter space, a short-term financial support (benefit) can assist in accessing safe housing. We encourage the government to consider:

- Increasing priority access to housing for victims of domestic violence.
- Short-term financial assistance for victims of domestic violence so they can access safe housing.
- Help for municipalities to tackle wait-lists and capacity issues for affordable housing.
- Promotion of services that are trauma-informed, victim-centred and culturally appropriate for those experiencing domestic violence, including shelters, housing, counselling and legal advice.

Shelters are also not a long-term solution. Secure and affordable housing is needed to ensure the safety of people fleeing domestic violence. There is a critical need for new purpose-built rental developments, cooperative housing and other public housing initiatives, working in partnership with communities and municipalities to prioritize access to longer-term affordable housing for those facing domestic violence. How does the National Housing Strategy address these longer-term needs?

Thank you for the important work you do and please rest assured of our continued prayers for the important work you do. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert N. Faris".

The Rev. Dr. Robert N. Faris
Moderator of the 2022 General Assembly