



November 15, 2023

## The Struggle for Freedom from Violence Against Women Continues

December 6th is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women - the day we stop to remember and honour the lives tragically cut short 34 years ago of 14 young women in an anti-feminist attack at l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal. They are:

Geneviève Bergeron, 21

Maryse Laganière, 25

Hélène Colgan, 23

Maryse Leclair, 23

Nathalie Croteau, 23

Anne-Marie Lemay, 22

Barbara Daigneault, 22

Sonia Pelletier, 23

Anne-Marie Edward, 21

Michèle Richard, 21

Maud Haviernick, 29

Anne St-Arneault, 23

Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, 31

Annie Turcotte, 21

In a special collaboration between the Comité Mémoire and the City of Montreal, a special ceremony is held on Mont Royal at 510 pm on December 6th to mark the exact time when shots were first fired. A victim's name is called and then a bright beam of blue light representing her illuminates the sky – until the skies above

Montreal are filled with 14 powerful beams of light.

But unfortunately, the violence didn't start that day and there is no end in sight. The recent tragedy in Sault Ste Marie where one woman and three children were murdered, while another woman was wounded is a reminder that women and girls are at risk every day.

Women face violent threats – because of their gender. In 2022, nearly 184 women or girls – that's one every 48 hours - were murdered, mostly by men.

Some groups are more disproportionately at risk than others:

- Indigenous women are killed at seven times the rate of non-Indigenous women
- Racialized women in Canada face disproportionate levels of violence
- Studies show that when women of colour report violence, their experiences are often taken less seriously
- Transgender and gender diverse people in Canada are significantly more likely than non gender-diverse people to having been physically or sexually assaulted at least once since age 15

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- Women with a disability are up to four times more likely to be victims of spousal violence, more likely to be victims of violence than non-disabled women

In Canada and around the world, gender equality will never be achieved as long as women continue to be threatened with all forms of violence.

Now is the time to recommit to efforts to end violence against women – from joining a community or advocacy group to signing petitions to voting for elected officials who commit to putting an end to violence against women. You can educate yourself further on the issue. Check out government resources available here:  
[https://link.edgepilot.com/s/c12c6932/QIqVslNx40qukxJ\\_xU1kZA?u=https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence/about-gender-based-violence.html](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/c12c6932/QIqVslNx40qukxJ_xU1kZA?u=https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence/about-gender-based-violence.html)

You can also read the final report of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls  
<https://link.edgepilot.com/s/30f935de/3jY2i0JhRUenXpjj6rx6WQ?u=https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/>

CUPW encourages members to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in any way you feel comfortable. You can wear a white ribbon (a symbol condemning violence against women), observe a moment of silence at 11 a.m., or attend a vigil in your community. You can also observe a minute of silence as the beams are lit.

In Solidarity,

Coleen Jones  
2<sup>nd</sup> National Vice- President

