



ᐱᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸ  
ᐱᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸ  
**PAUKTUUTIT**  
INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA

# Ending Gender-Based Violence Against Inuit Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse Inuit

## KEY MESSAGES:

- **Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit experience some of the highest rates of violence in Canada.** These realities are rooted in colonial disruption and perpetuated by systemic inequities, service gaps, and chronic underinvestment. As of 2025, only two of the [231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls \(MMIWG\)](#) have been fully implemented.
- **For more than 40 years, [Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada](#) has advanced Inuit-led solutions — yet structural change and long-term funding remain limited.** Greater accountability and sustained action are urgently required.
- **Every Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Response must be built on an Inuit-specific foundation, and be backed by real investment in safety infrastructure.** All policies and programs must incorporate an Inuit-Specific Gender-Based Analysis Plus (ISGBA+) lens, uphold Inuit women's rights, and ensure equitable Inuit women's leadership and governance. This includes for urban Inuit. Safe shelters, transition homes, community crisis spaces, mobile response units, and 24-hour helplines staffed by Inuit service providers must be funded and operational across all regions of Inuit Nunangat.
- **Culturally safe, Inuit-led health and social services are essential.** Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit values and an ISGBA+ lens must be embedded into all service standards, with mandatory trauma-informed training for police, health, and social service staff. Community-based midwifery, mental health, substance use, and GBV services led by Inuit practitioners must be expanded. Healing circles, land-based programs, and community wellness gatherings must be resourced as core services.
- **Prevention and accountability must engage the whole community and centre the leadership of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit.** Pilimmaksarniq-style mentorship, peer-led campaigns in Inuktitut and English, and men's healing initiatives addressing colonization-related trauma are essential to long-term GBV prevention. Community-based justice committees that incorporate Inuit women Elders must be resourced, and targeted recruitment and scholarships must increase the representation of Inuit women and gender-diverse Inuit within the RCMP and justice system.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Ending gender-based violence against Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit requires a comprehensive, Inuit-specific gender-based approach that addresses both immediate safety needs and the deeper systemic causes of violence.

- Gender-based violence against Inuit women stems from a combination of historical and ongoing factors. Colonization, residential schools, and forced relocations disrupted traditional Inuit values and caused intergenerational trauma that continues to affect families and communities. Systemic racism and inadequate access to justice and health services leave many Inuit women without protection or support.
- Economic inequalities, overcrowded housing, and the lack of shelters in northern communities make it harder for women to escape violence. The introduction of patriarchal systems through colonization undermined traditional gender balance, increasing women's vulnerability. Geographic isolation further limits access to safety and resources.
- Together, these factors create conditions where violence is more likely to occur and harder to escape. Ending it requires Inuit-led, culturally grounded, gender-based solutions that strengthen community healing, gender equality, and access to safe housing, education, and justice.
- Recent data from Statistics Canada show that family and intimate partner violence in Canada remains high. In 2023, women represented approximately 78% of victims of police-reported intimate partner violence in Canada.<sup>1</sup>
- Violence rates in Inuit regions far exceed national averages. In Nunavut, Inuit women experience violent crime, including sexual assault, at roughly 12-13 times the rate of women in Canada overall, among the highest levels in the country.<sup>2</sup> In Nunavik, community surveys indicate that many Inuit women have experienced violence at home, and many report sexual assault.<sup>3</sup>
- Significant service gaps further compound the risks faced by Inuit women and families. Approximately 60% of communities in Inuit Nunangat lack shelters for women and children experiencing violence, and earlier assessments found that over 70% lacked any safe shelter.<sup>4</sup>
- Across Canada, demand for Indigenous shelter services remains high. 9,707 admissions to Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse were recorded in 2022-2023, with women and children representing nearly all residents.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. (2024). *Trends in police-reported family violence and intimate partner violence in Canada, 2024*. Government of Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/251028/dq251028a-eng.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Women and Gender Equality Canada. (n.d.). *Facts, Stats and WAGE's Impact: Gender-Based Violence*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/facts-stats.html>

<sup>3</sup> Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, & Comack, E. (2020). *Addressing Gendered Violence against Inuit Women: A Review of Police Policies and Practices in Inuit Nunangat*. Public Safety Canada. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsracs/pblctns/rvw-plc-prctcs-pauk/index-en.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. (2021). *Housing and Shelter Needs Across Inuit Nunangat*. Ottawa: Pauktuutit, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Maxwell, A. (2024). *Shelters for victims of abuse with ties to Indigenous communities or organizations in Canada, 2022/2023*. Juristat. Statistics Canada.

## Ending Gender-Based Violence Against Inuit Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse Inuit



- Many Inuit communities are fly-in only, meaning survivors must often travel elsewhere to access shelter or specialized services, frequently at high cost.<sup>6</sup>
- Evidence from recent initiatives funded through Public Safety Canada confirms that effective solutions exist, but implementation gaps and underinvestment remain major barriers to safer Inuit communities.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women. (2018). *Evidence: Gender-Based Violence in Inuit Nunangat*. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.

<sup>7</sup> Government of Canada, Public Safety Canada. (2020). *Addressing Gendered Violence against Inuit Women: A Review of Police Policies and Practices in Inuit Nunangat*. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca>

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Establish a Federal Accountability Framework for the MMIWG Calls for Justice.** The Government of Canada must establish a binding accountability framework with annual public reporting and independent oversight that includes Indigenous Women's Organizations.

Violence prevention investments must align with the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP), the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#), and the [MMIWG Calls for Justice](#). With only two of the 231 Calls to Action implemented as of 2025, long-term, distinctions-based funding must move beyond engagement toward structural change.

- **Embed an Inuit-Specific Gender-Based Analysis Plus (ISGBA+) Lens and Fund Inuit-Led Safety Infrastructure.** All GBV policies and programs must incorporate an ISGBA+ lens and ensure equitable Inuit women's leadership and governance, including for urban Inuit.

Governments must establish long-term, predictable funding for Inuit-led GBV services. These include low-barrier shelters, safe spaces, second-stage housing, healing centres, mobile response units, and 24-hour helplines staffed by Inuit service providers.

- **Expand Housing Supports and Safe Exit Pathways for Survivors.** Governments must fund rent-gated-to-income and second-stage housing models that provide sustained exit pathways from violence.

Inuit-governed housing authorities must be resourced to integrate shelters with long-term survivor housing, structured as multi-year commitments that reflect northern construction costs and infrastructure realities.

- **Resource Culturally Safe, Inuit-Led Health and Healing Services.** Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit values and an ISGBA+ lens must be embedded into all service standards, with mandatory trauma-informed training for police, health, and social service staff.

Community-based midwifery, mental health, substance use, and GBV services led by Inuit practitioners must be expanded. Intergenerational programming, healing circles, land-based programs, and community wellness gatherings must be funded as long-term core services.

- **Centre Inuit Women's Leadership in Prevention and Justice Reform.** Governments must fund mentorship programs, peer-led prevention campaigns in Inuktitut and English, and men's healing initiatives addressing colonization-related trauma.

Community-based justice committees incorporating Inuit women Elders must be formally resourced. Targeted recruitment and scholarships must increase Inuit women and gender-diverse Inuit representation within the RCMP and justice system.

# Ending Gender-Based Violence Against Inuit Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse Inuit



## REFERENCE LIST:

- Government of Canada, Public Safety Canada. (2020). *Addressing Gendered Violence against Inuit Women: A Review of Police Policies and Practices in Inuit Nunangat*. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rvw-plc-prctcs-pauk/index-en.aspx>
- House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women. (2018). *Evidence: Gender-Based Violence in Inuit Nunangat*. Parliament of Canada.
- Maxwell, A. (2024). *Shelters for victims of abuse with ties to Indigenous communities or organizations in Canada, 2022/2023*. Juristat. Statistics Canada. <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.944452/publication.html>
- Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. (2021). *Housing and shelter needs across Inuit Nunangat*. Pauktuutit.
- Statistics Canada. (2024). *Trends in Police-Reported Family Violence and Intimate Partner Violence in Canada, 2024*. Government of Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/251028/dq251028a-eng.htm>
- Women and Gender Equality Canada. (n.d.). *Facts, stats and WAGE's impact: Gender-based violence*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/facts-stats.html>



350 Sparks St., Suite 805  
Ottawa, ON K1R 7S8  
[policy@pauktuutit.ca](mailto:policy@pauktuutit.ca)

Telephone: 613-238-3977  
Toll Free: 1-800-667-0749  
[pauktuutit.ca](http://pauktuutit.ca)