

**Meeting Survivors' Needs: Gender-Based Violence against
Inuit Women and the Criminal Justice System Response**

Online Survey Results

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Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

KEY FINDINGS..... 3

RECOMMENDATIONS 4

DEMOGRAPHICS..... 5

SURVEY RESULTS 7

AWARENESS OF RIGHTS AND AVAILABLE SUPPORTS..... 7

AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES 7

KNOWLEDGE OF RIGHTS AS A VICTIM OF CRIME 8

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SUPPORTS..... 10

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM..... 14

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM..... 14

PERCEPTIONS OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM 15

UNDERSTANDINGS OF JUSTICE 18

SURVEY LIMITATIONS 19

APPENDIX A 21

MEETING SURVIVORS’ NEEDS: ONLINE SURVEY..... 21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the online survey for the project “Meeting Survivors’ Needs: Gender-Based Violence against Inuit Women and the Criminal Justice System Response.” Although Inuit women face a higher risk of experiencing gender-based violence than other Canadian women, their access to resources and supports across Inuit Nunangat as victims of crime is extremely limited. This survey represents the first widespread effort to understand Inuit women’s experiences and knowledge of their legal rights as victims of gender-based violence in the context of the criminal justice system. By collecting quantitative data, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada (PIWC) intends to facilitate the development of a Legal information multimedia campaign and culturally responsive policy recommendations aimed at improving Inuit women’s access to justice.

The results discussed in this report are from an online survey conducted from June to October 2021 in the Inuit regions of Inuvialuit, Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, Qikiqtaaluk, and Nunavik. Given the sensitive subject matter of the project, the survey was designed and disseminated in consultation with a Project Advisory Committee that included representatives from the above-mentioned regions. The online survey of 28 questions was publicly disseminated through the Survey Monkey platform and promoted directly to Inuit women through email, social media, and in-person events by Pauktuutit staff members. In total, 70 completed surveys were received by Pauktuutit, of which 64 (91.4%) respondents identified as Inuit women.

KEY FINDINGS

- Most respondents are aware of government-provided services and institutional supports available for Inuit women experiencing violence, such as the RCMP, court system, health and social services, women’s shelters, and counselling services.
- Very few respondents are aware of Inuit-specific supports available for Inuit women experiencing violence, such as local justice committees or traditional Inuit justice programs.
- While respondents are familiar with how to report a crime to the police, they are less aware of how to access preventative measures such as Emergency Protection Orders or restraining orders.
- Most respondents have direct personal experience with the RCMP or police and criminal justice system, either as a survivor of violence or as the family member of a survivor.
- The most important barriers for Inuit women to report physical and sexual violence are fear of the person who committed the crime; stigma and feelings of shame; not trusting the court system; and fear of losing their children to social services.
- Respondents report limited confidence in the RCMP or police to take violence against Inuit women seriously and to respond appropriately in the context of Inuit culture and values.
- Most respondents believe current laws around violence against women are unfair and result in outcomes for offenders that are too lenient. Respondents describe a preference for stricter sentencing alongside increased access to healing supports for offenders.

- Respondents express low confidence in the court system to take seriously violence against Inuit women and describe serious concerns around the organization, timeliness, and safety of legal processes.
- The number and detail of written responses on the online survey suggest Inuit women trust Pauktuutit to collect, keep safe and act on their personal experiences with the violence and the criminal justice system.

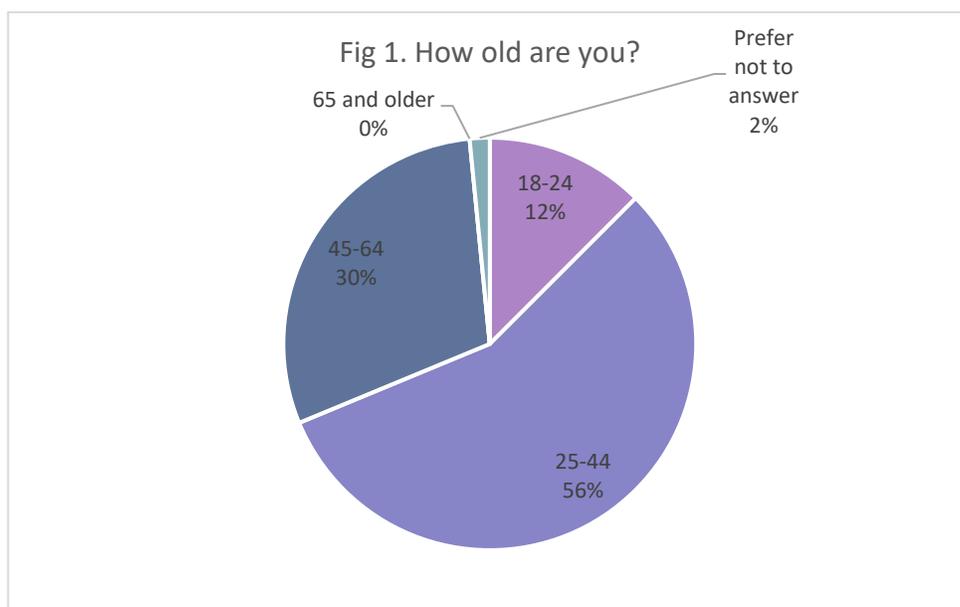
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Inuit women experiencing violence need access to a comprehensive continuum of care that includes Inuit-specific supports, services, and counselling.
- Informational resources are required to direct Inuit women to available and relevant local services that can assist with their needs through varying phases of experiencing violence. Increased awareness is required around available preventative measures and early supports, and longer-term assistance.
- Educational resources are required to increase awareness of what constitutes online violence and abuse and actions that may be taken by victims, particularly in relation to sexual harassment.
- Inuit women need access to resources, including informative and educational resources, programs, and services, to strengthen understanding of victims' rights and how to navigate these rights as an Inuk woman in Inuit Nunangat.
- Inuit-specific healing and mental health counselling supports are required for perpetrators to address gender-based violence long-term across the Inuit regions.
- Consultation, outreach, and training are required to facilitate increased trust between Inuit women and law enforcement. More information is also needed to understand how Inuit women may or may not be provided with support when interacting with police services.
- Resources are required to build Inuit women's awareness of current laws, intended outcomes, and how they are applied in the Inuit regions, as well as victim's rights within this process.

Note: The full survey is attached as an appendix to the report.

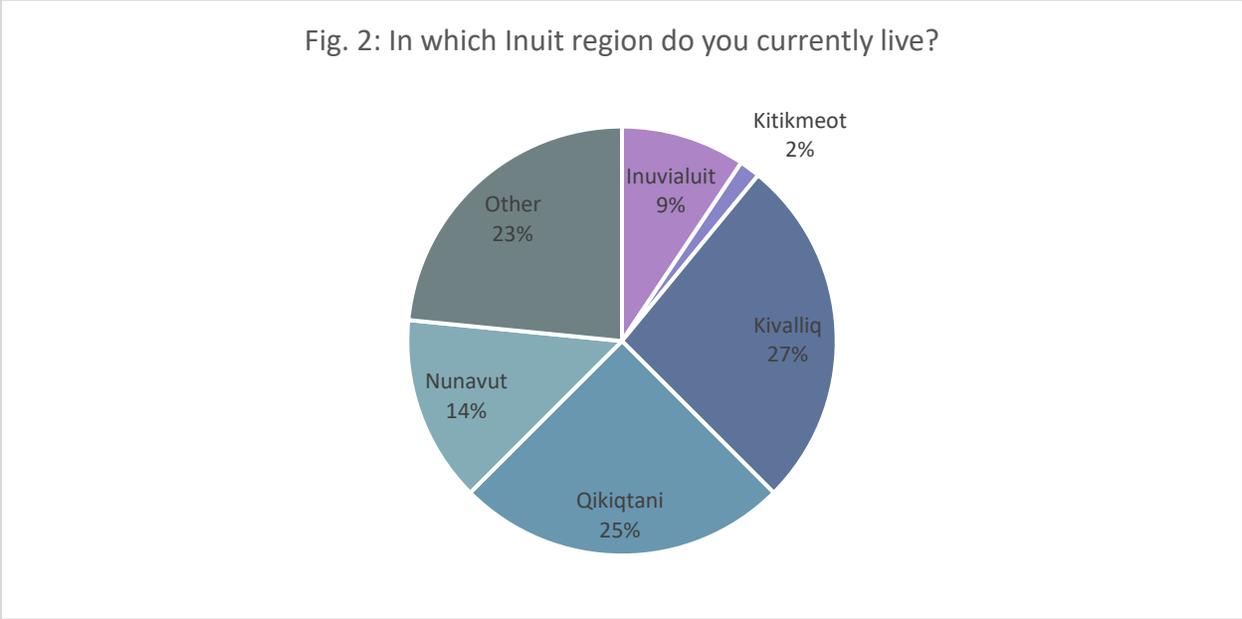
DEMOGRAPHICS

The intended survey audience included adult Inuit women currently living in the Inuit regions of Inuvialuit, Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, Qikiqtani, and Nunavik. In total, 70 online surveys were received by Pauktuutit, of which 64 (91.4%) respondents identified as an Inuk woman and six (8.6%) respondents did not identify as an Inuk woman. Based on survey data, it is unclear whether these six respondents are not Inuit women or simply do not choose to publicly identify as Inuit women; however, these responses have not been included in the results. In terms of age, more than half (56.3%) of respondents were between 25-44 years of age, while nearly one-third (29.7%) of respondents were between 45-64 years of age. Only eight (12.5%) respondents were under the age of 24 and no respondents were 65 years of age or older. One respondent did not identify their age. Given the online format of the survey, the lack of responses from Inuit women aged 65 years and older is not surprising. This result may reflect factors such as higher barriers to internet and technology access among this age group, or a lack of comfort sharing sensitive personal experiences online. When reviewing the survey data, it is important to keep in mind that the voices and experiences of this important demographic are not reflected.



Though the survey was promoted equally across the participating Inuit regions, one-quarter (26.6%) of respondents identified living in the Kivalliq region, one-quarter (25%) in the Qikiqtani region, 14.1% in Nunavik, and 9.4% in Inuvialuit. Only one respondent identified as living in the Kitikmeot region. Interestingly, nearly one-quarter (23.4%) of respondents identified living outside of the target regions, with 11 respondents living outside of Inuit Nunangat and two respondents living in the Nunatsiavut region. Due to complications and delays with the research ethics approval process in Nunatsiavut, Inuit women from this region could not be included at the time of survey publication so these two respondents have been omitted from the survey results. Two respondents identified their place of residence broadly as “Nunavut.” Throughout this report, regional breakdowns of the survey data have been included where possible and relevant between the most common geographical groups: Qikiqtani, Kivalliq, and Nunavik. In terms of language,

two-thirds (66.7%) of respondents reported English as the primary language spoken at home, while one-third (33.3%) reported Inuktitut as the primary language.



The survey demographics demonstrate more than three-quarters (78.3%) of respondents have children. This statistic is significant as having children may shape Inuit women’s experiences of violence or access to supports and services. For instance, having children in the home and fear of losing children to social services were identified as important barriers by survey respondents to reporting both physical (Question 12) and sexual violence (Question 13) to the police.

SURVEY RESULTS

AWARENESS OF RIGHTS AND AVAILABLE SUPPORTS

The second section of the survey addressed Inuit women's knowledge of their rights and available supports as victims of gender-based violence in Inuit communities by asking about the respondent's awareness and use of local services. Overall, the survey data indicate institutional supports and services are available across Inuit Nunangat for Inuit women experiencing physical and sexual violence and women themselves are generally aware of how to access and use these resources. However, the data identify critical barriers that prevent Inuit women from utilizing the supports and services available in their communities. These barriers arise primarily from the geographic context of small, close-knit Inuit communities and a broad lack of trust in policing to appropriately respond to address gender-based violence.

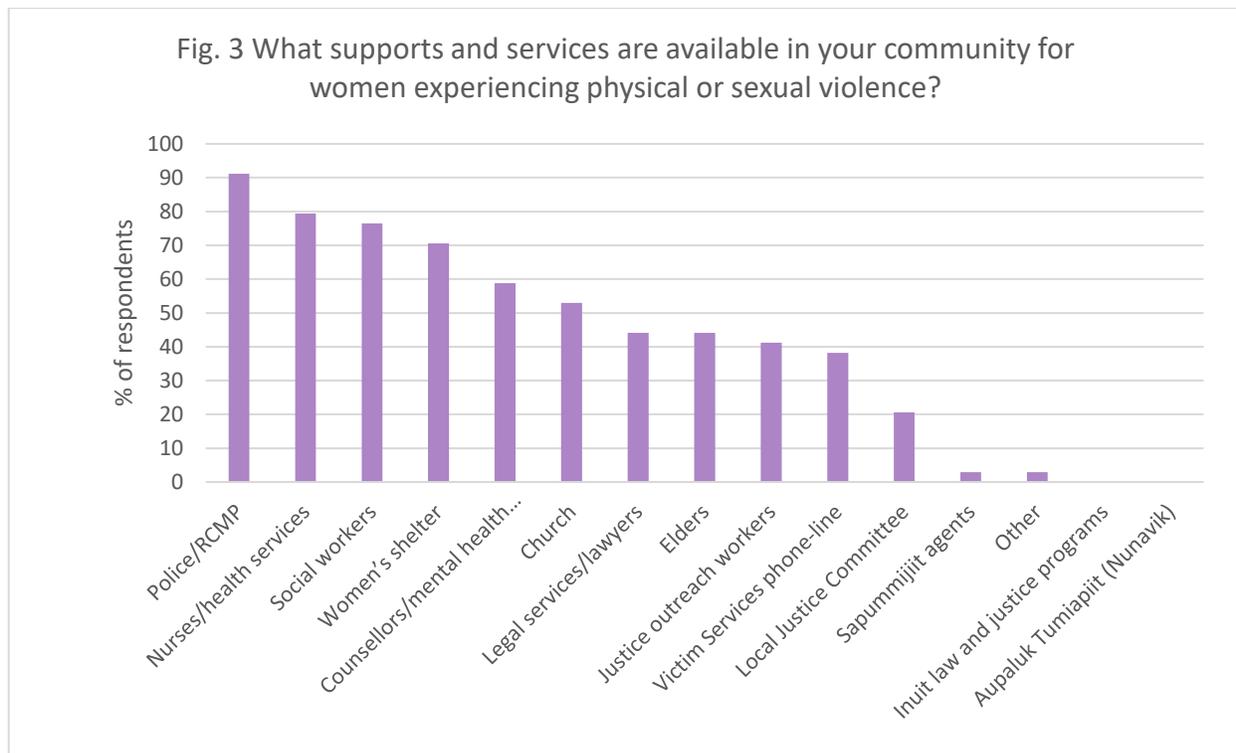
AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES

Across the regions, survey respondents reported high levels of awareness of government-run and institutional services and programs for victims of violence, suggesting these types of supports are widely available across Inuit Nunangat and well known by Inuit women. The most reported support available for Inuit women experiencing physical and sexual violence was the RCMP/Police, as identified by 91.2% of respondents. The second most reported support was Nurses/Health services, as identified by 70.4% of respondents, followed by Social Workers (76.5%), Women's Shelters (70.6%), and Counsellors/Mental Health Services (58.8%). These results are to be expected as institutional services are broadly available across Inuit communities and tend to be the most publicly visible and promoted. While the availability and access to women's shelters is an ongoing challenge in Inuit Nunangat, the high level of reported awareness may reflect shelters have received significant public and media attention and have been widely promoted by Inuit organizations as an important service for victims of violence. Beyond formal programs, approximately half of respondents identified informal community supports as available for women experiencing violence across the Inuit regions, including the Church (52.9%) and community Elders (44.1%).

The least commonly reported supports were Inuit-specific and locally run services. For example, Local Justice Committees were only identified by 20.6% of respondents as available in their community. Similarly, only one respondent selected Sapummijiit agents, and no respondents identified Aupaluk Tumiapiit, a Nunavik service, or Traditional Inuit law and justice programs as being available locally. This is an important finding as previous research and anecdotal evidence suggests Inuit-specific services are the most effective at addressing gender-based violence in the long run, in comparison to emergency response services, such as the police or externally designed and implemented programs. Based on the survey data, it is unclear whether these results reflect an actual lack of availability of these forms of support or limited awareness of them on the part of Inuit women. However, written comments in the survey suggest Inuit-specific and long-term services are lacking in many Inuit communities to provide a continuum of care and support for Inuit women experiencing violence. In the open comment boxes, survey respondents identified a need for comprehensive community supports for victims of violence, including trauma-informed

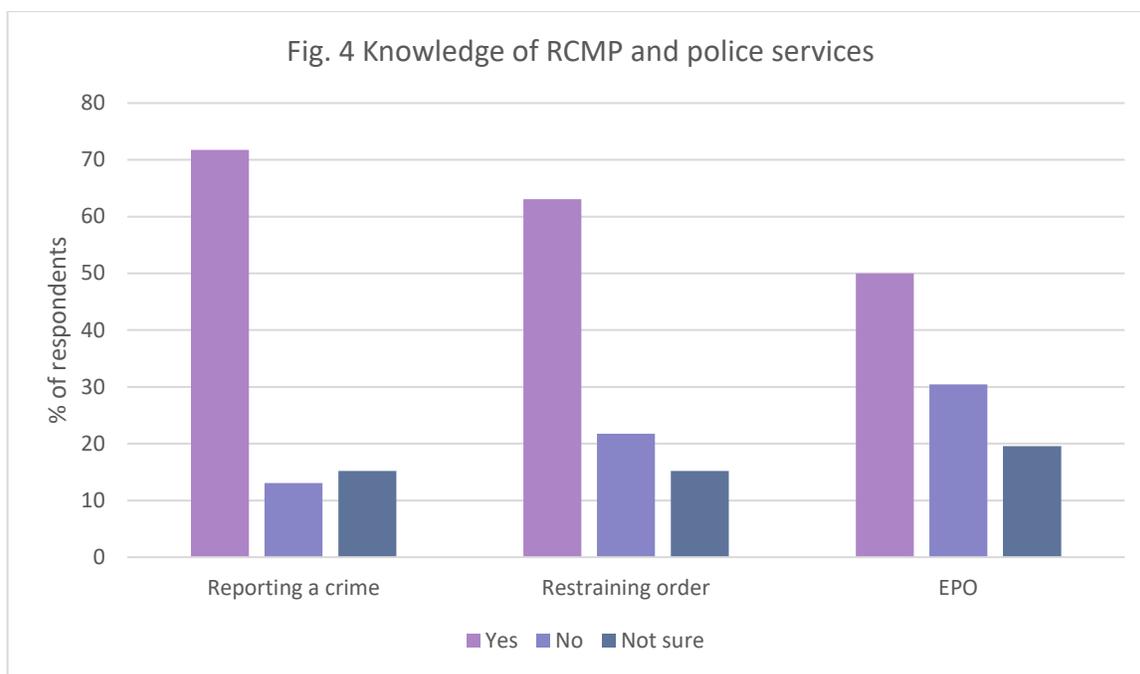
care, access to housing, and information on available resources before the violence escalates and emergency responses are required. The following comment summarizes the need to increase awareness and availability of resources so to provide an ongoing continuum of support for gender-based violence:

“I think women who suffer gender-based violence need to be more aware of the resources they have available to them before any type of incident happens so that they can seek those services when needed and for it to be more available... We also need the ability to get help and get to have follow-ups on how the situation evolved or deteriorated in her life after the fact so that we don’t end up with someone who feels alone in her problems.”



KNOWLEDGE OF RIGHTS AS A VICTIM OF CRIME

In line with the high reported availability and awareness of the RCMP and police, most survey respondents also indicated knowledge of how to interact with and use this service. Nearly three-quarters (71.7%) of respondents reported knowing what steps are required to report a crime to the RCMP or police, and most respondents (63.0%) also reported knowing how to apply for a restraining order. Survey respondents were less familiar with Emergency Protection Orders (EPO) to have a violent partner or family member removed from the home and half (50.0%) of respondents indicated knowing how to apply for an EPO. Across Inuvialuit, Kivalliq, Qikiqtani, and Nunavik regions, survey respondents indicated relatively similar rates of knowledge around reporting crimes. However, respondents from Nunavik appear to have a higher rate of knowledge of restraining orders, while respondents from the Kivalliq region have a higher rate of knowledge of EPOs.



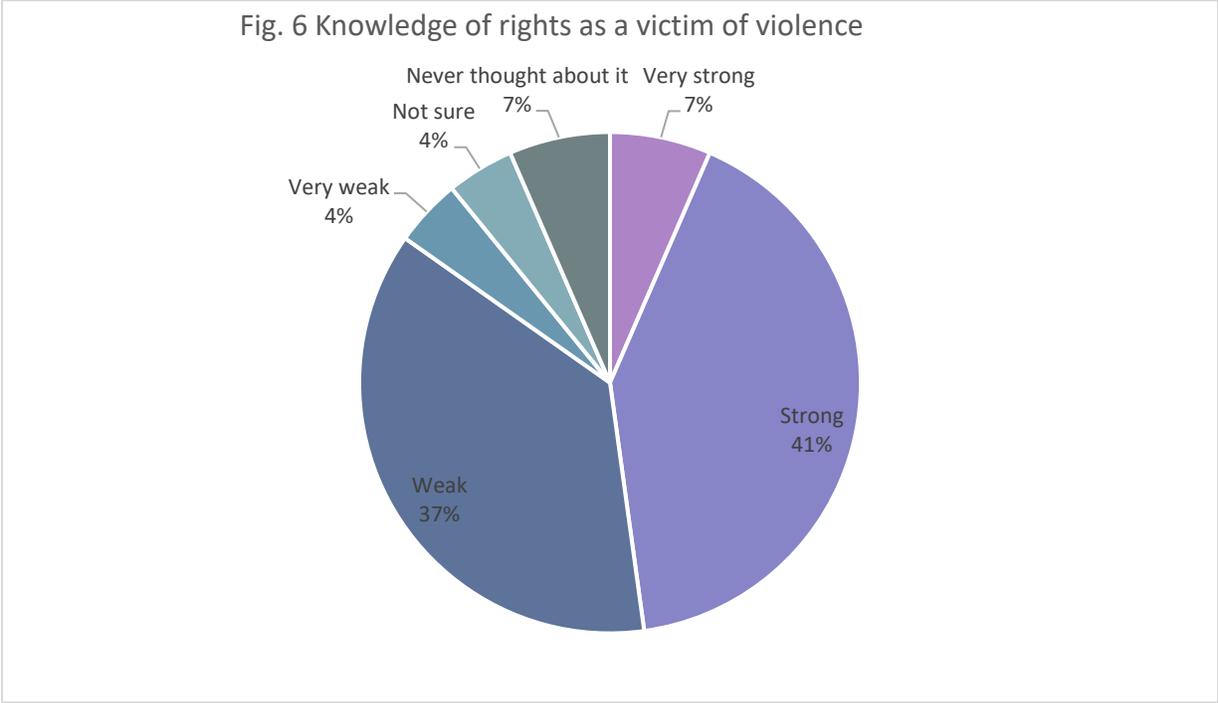
Similarly, most survey respondents demonstrated knowledge of actions that constitute a crime and should be reported to the RCMP or police. Respondents across Inuit Nunangat identified actions related to stalking (84.8%), threats (80.4%), and physical (93.5%) and online (73.9%) harassment as crimes at comparably high rates. The survey findings suggest Inuit women are more confident in identifying in-person crimes related to physical and sexual violence than online crimes. Increasing awareness of what constitutes an online crime and how to respond as a victim will be an important area of focus for developing informational resources and communications media for Inuit women.

Fig. 5 Awareness of what actions constitute crimes

Action	Yes	No	Not sure
Becky’s ex-partner keeps following her around town and showing up everywhere she goes.	84.8%	2.2%	13.0%
Mary is groped by her brother’s friend who grabs her butt and breasts.	80.4%	6.5%	13.0%
Suzy’s new partner is very jealous and tells her that he will kill her if she ever leaves him.	93.5%	2.2%	4.4%
Sophie’s co-worker keeps sending her sexually inappropriate Facebook messages.	73.9%	6.5%	19.6%

Although Inuit women appear confident to identify crimes and report them to RCMP or Police services, survey respondents report less confidence in their knowledge of women’s general rights as victims of violence in Inuit Nunangat. When asked to rate their personal level of knowledge around women’s rights as victims of violence, only 6.5% of respondents identified very strong awareness of their rights, while 41.3% identified awareness of their basic rights, 37% identified

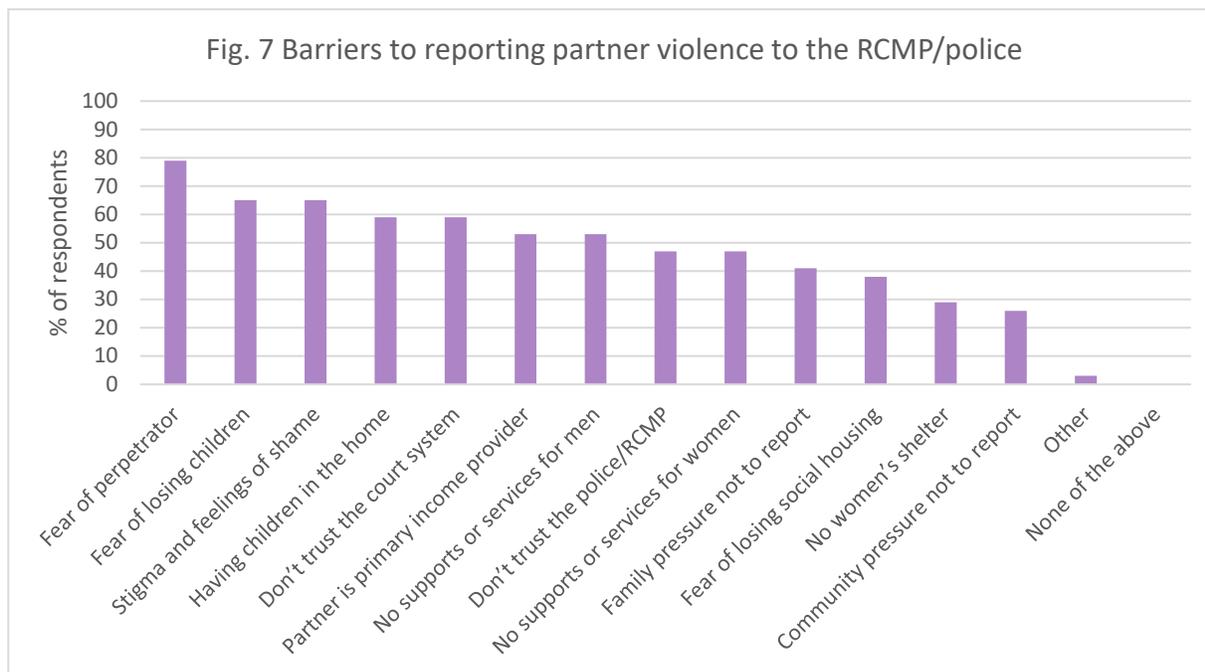
little awareness of their rights, and 4.4% identified not knowing about their rights. A further 10.9% of respondents identified as unsure or never having thought about their rights as a victim of violence. These survey results identify a clear need to increase Inuit women’s knowledge of their legal rights as victims of gender-based violence beyond their ability to report a crime to the RCMP or police once it has taken place. Inuit women need access to resources, including informational outputs, programs, and services, to build an understanding of victims’ rights and how to navigate these rights as an Inuk woman in Inuit Nunangat.



BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SUPPORTS

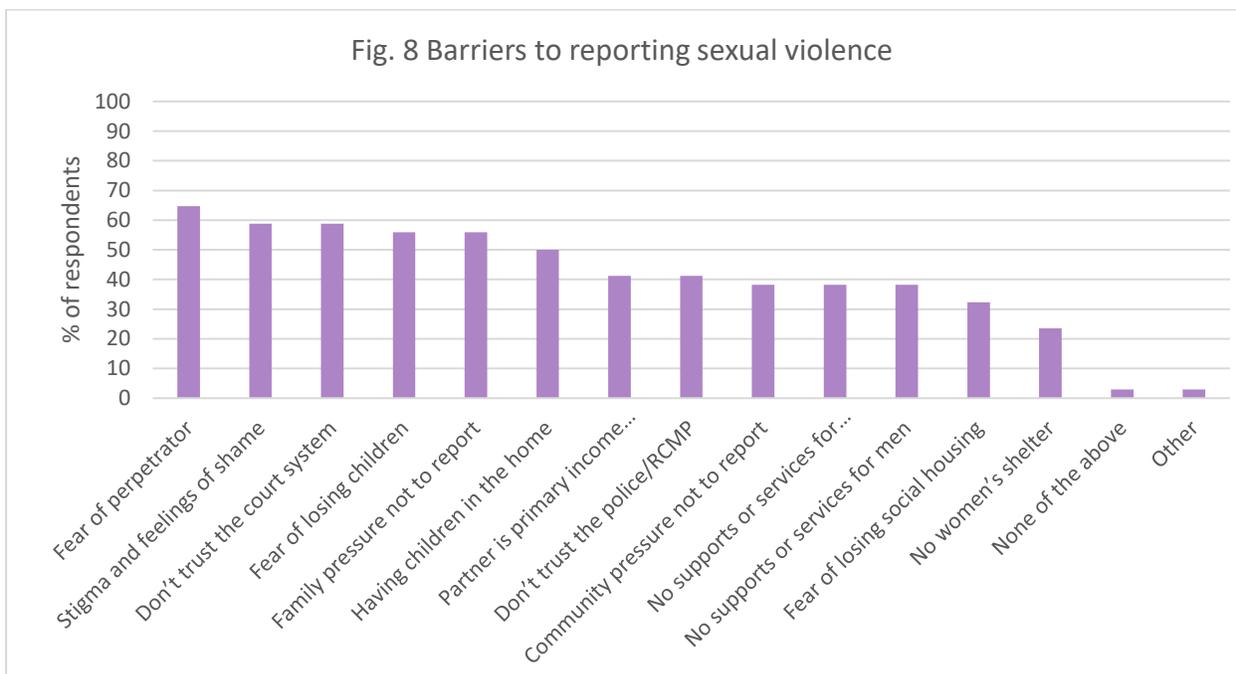
To gain a broader understanding of Inuit women’s knowledge of and access to supports for gender-based violence across Inuit Nunangat, the survey asked respondents about barriers to reporting physical and sexual violence, and how they would respond to specific situations of apparent violence. While the overall results suggest Inuit women are aware of a variety of institutional supports and identify the police as an important service, the findings from this section demonstrate critical barriers to using policing services as an emergency response to gender-based violence. When asked to select factors that make it difficult for Inuit women to report physical violence by a partner to the RCMP or police, the most important barrier identified was fear of the person who committed the violence (79.4%). This was followed by stigma and feelings of shame (64.7%), fear of losing children/child welfare services (64.71%), lack of trust in the court system (58.8%) and having children in the home (58.8%). Although fear of perpetrators is a common barrier to reporting gender-based and intimate partner violence nationally, this factor is more important in the context of small and geographically remote Inuit communities where interactions with the perpetrator and their family can be difficult to avoid. Similarly, stigma and feelings of shame may be exacerbated in close-knit communities where social networks are highly interconnected and privacy is limited.

The survey findings suggest that lack of trust in institutional supports is a significant inhibiting factor to reporting violence to the RCMP or police, including lack of confidence that child welfare services, the court system, or the police will respond appropriately and helpfully to gender-based violence in Inuit Nunangat. It is also important to note more than half (52.9%) of respondents identified a lack of supports or services for abusive partners as a barrier to reporting violence, suggesting that Inuit women expect cycles of violence to continue unless these types of resources are provided in Inuit communities.



Building on these factors, the survey then asked respondents about their willingness to contact the RCMP or police in reaction to witnessing intimate partner violence by a neighbour. The survey results demonstrate mixed feelings around personal involvement in reporting violence, with just over half (56.5%) of respondents indicating they would contact the RCMP or police and 43.4% of respondents reporting being unsure or unwilling to contact policing services. Interestingly, respondents from Nunavik were significantly more willing to contact the police (85.7%), possibly reflecting the use of locally run police services in this region (Kativik Regional Police Force) instead of the RCMP. In considering their own personal response to witnessing violence in their community, most respondents indicated a variety of reasons why they may choose not to call the police. Across all regions, the most indicated reason was not wanting to get involved, selected by more than two-thirds (68.4%) of respondents. Related to this desire to avoid involvement was fear of the perpetrator, as approximately half of the respondents identified both fear of the neighbour knowing who contacted the police (52.6%) and fear for personal safety (47.4%) as barriers to reporting violence. Further, the findings suggest a general lack of trust in the police to respond appropriately or be capable of addressing gender-based violence across the Inuit regions. Instead of the police or RCMP, many respondents reported they would contact the victim's family to intervene in the situation, suggesting Inuit women continue to rely on informal and social supports to cope with gender-based violence in Inuit Nunangat.

In terms of reporting sexual violence and assault to the RCMP or police, survey respondents identified similar barriers for reporting physical violence. Again, the most selected factor that makes it difficult for Inuit women to report sexual violence was fear of the perpetrator (64.7%), followed by stigma and feelings of shame (58.8%), lack of trust in the court system (58.8%) and fear of losing children/child welfare services (55.9%). An important difference between reporting physical and sexual violence, however, is the role of family pressure on Inuit women not to report sexual crimes to the police. More than half of respondents (55.9%) indicated family pressure to be a factor preventing Inuit women from reporting sexual violence and assault, suggesting stigma and feelings of shame extend beyond the victim to wider family networks and inhibits reporting. These findings demonstrate a need for resources to address stigma around experiencing sexual harassment, assault, and violence in Inuit communities and to direct Inuit women to appropriate services capable of supporting victims of these forms of crime.



Despite these barriers, when asked how they would respond to disclosure of sexual violence by a cousin, more than two-thirds (67.6) of respondents reported they would encourage their cousin to contact the police or RCMP. The second most common response to a disclosure of sexual violence was to advise the victim to end the relationship, selected by 61.8% of respondents. These findings appear to contradict previous results around fear of perpetrators and broad mistrust of institutional services as significant barriers to action on sexual assault and violence. Yet, in the context of support availability in Inuit communities, this data may reflect perceptions among Inuit women that police are the only widely available service to address sexual crimes, and that leaving the perpetrator is the only means of preventing sexual violence by partners from reoccurring.

Taken together, the survey results around awareness of rights and available supports for Inuit women experiencing violence point to a lack of confidence in policing services to respond appropriately to or address gender-based violence in Inuit Nunangat. While survey respondents appear to be aware of the intended role of policing as an emergency response to physical and sexual

violence and the processes required to use this service, they indicate a broad lack of trust in law enforcement in Inuit communities. The survey data shows this low confidence in the RCMP and police is based on the reliability and availability of these services, inadequate ability to protect women from violence, and limited willingness to take gender-based violence seriously. Most importantly, survey respondents indicated serious concerns around the compatibility of law enforcement with Inuit culture and values. Specifically, 39.1% of respondents reported the police or RCMP in their community never understand Inuit culture and values, while a further 37% reported police or RCMP are sometimes able to understand Inuit culture and values.

Fig. 9 Confidence in the RCMP and police

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Not sure
Women in my community can trust the police/RCMP to protect them.	9%	69%	16%	7%
The police/RCMP take violence against women seriously.	20%	50%	20%	11%
The police/RCMP in my community are available when needed.	28%	57%	11%	4%
The police/RCMP in my community understand Inuit culture and values.	7%	37%	39%	17%

The written comments in the survey provide additional depth to these results by describing critical challenges around RCMP and police misconduct when responding to gender-based violence, including slow response times, disrespectful treatment of Inuit women, procedural inconsistencies, lack of support for reporting crimes, and racism. For example, one respondent described a need for:

“Increased consistency of RCMP in response to reports of violence, abuse, sexual assaults and harassment. Often RCMP won’t take reports seriously if reporters are common callers or known to have issues with alcohol/substances.”

Similarly, another respondent described their own frustration and vulnerability related to the RCMP not taking their experiences seriously:

“Emergency Protection Orders can be useful if taken seriously. In my experience with my EPO, the RCMP did not take breaches of my EPO seriously which left me feeling vulnerable and worried for my own safety. The RCMP were inconsistent in their responses to breaches, and often depended on the officer I was dealing with.”

The written comments suggest a need to increase numbers of Inuit and women RCMP and police officers, and to provide education and training to officers around mental health, substance use, and domestic issues in Inuit communities. These results suggest while resources are still needed in Inuit communities to increase awareness of women’s rights as victims of crime,

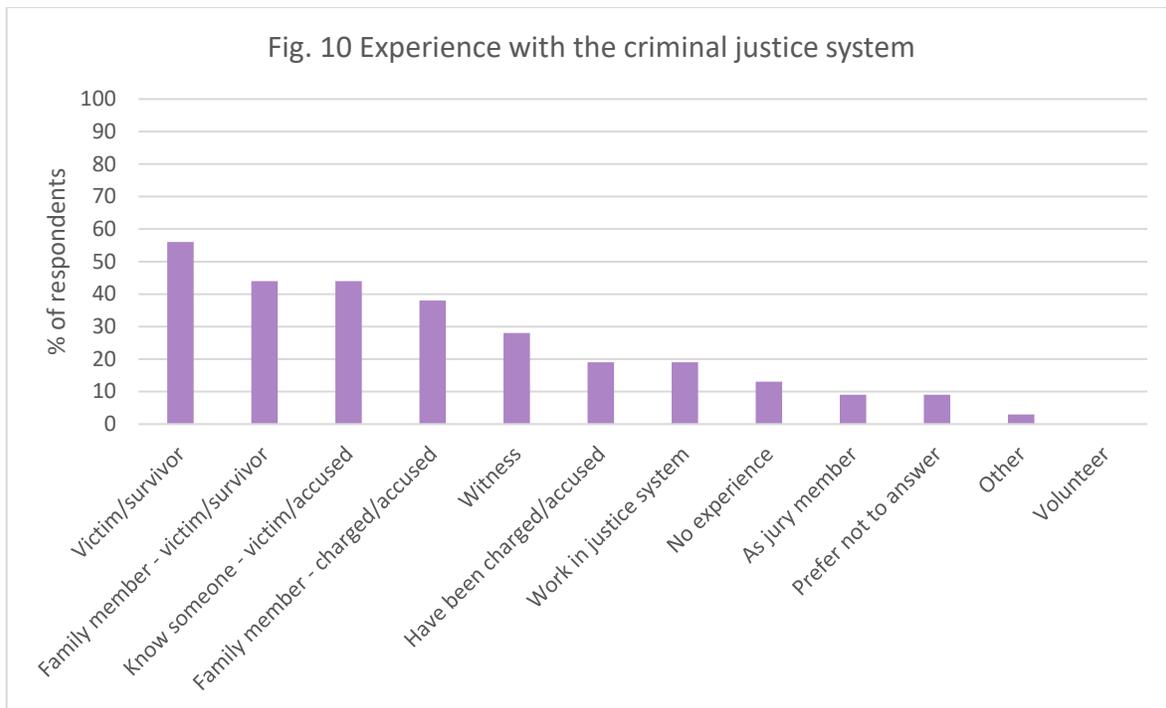
increased attention is required regarding how Inuit women may, or may not be provided support when they choose to report violence, as well as what types of support Inuit women may be seeking. Overall, the survey data shows more information is required in Inuit communities around culturally safe and appropriate supports for gender-based violence, while also demonstrating a need to facilitate increased trust between Inuit women and law enforcement.

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The final section of the survey addressed Inuit women's personal understandings of justice and perceptions of the Canadian criminal justice system by asking for the respondent's experience with and opinions of legal responses to gender-based violence. The survey data suggest many Inuit women across the North have direct personal experience with the criminal justice system, as a victim or support person for a victim, and so are well informed about the challenges of interacting with and navigating legal processes. Overall, survey respondents expressed limited trust in the court system to appropriately and adequately respond to gender-based violence in Inuit Nunangat and voiced serious concerns around outcomes, efficiency, and safety of the system. Finally, survey data indicate a preference among respondents for stricter sentencing in combination with access to Inuit-specific healing and mental health services for perpetrators of violence.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

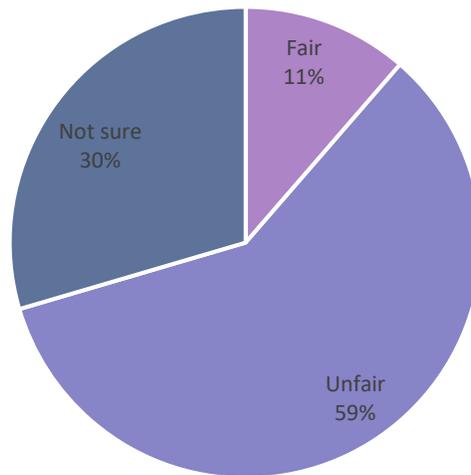
Survey respondents reported high rates of personal experience with the criminal justice system in Inuit Nunangat. More than half (56.3%) of respondents indicated direct experience with the justice system as a victim/survivor of violence, while another 43.8% reported experience as the family member of a victim/survivor. Similarly, over one-third (37.5%) of respondents reported having a family member charged or accused of a crime, and 18.8% reported being previously charged or accused of a crime themselves. Given the prevalence of gender-based violence across Inuit Nunangat, these high rates of direct experience with the legal system may be representative of Inuit women's lived realities; however, these results may also reflect that Inuit women who have a personal connection to violence may be more likely to complete this survey. Regardless, these findings suggest survey respondents are well placed to provide evaluations, perspectives, and comments on the criminal justice system and its effectiveness for Inuit women and communities.



PERCEPTIONS OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The survey results suggest Inuit women do not feel current laws provide an adequate or appropriate response to gender-based violence across Inuit Nunangat. When questioned on the fairness of current laws around violence against women, only 11.4% of survey respondents described current laws as Fair. In contrast, nearly 60% (59.1%) of respondents indicated they believe current laws are Unfair. Also, important to note is nearly 30% (29.6%) of respondents reported being Not Sure about current laws, likely due to many Inuit women not being familiar with or knowledgeable of Canadian laws around gender-based violence. Taken with the previous finding around limited self-reported knowledge of women's rights as victims of violence (Question 8), this data indicates a need for resources to increase Inuit women's awareness of current laws, their intended outcomes, and how they are applied in the Inuit regions, as well as victim's rights within this process. Across Inuit Nunangat, survey data shows important regional distinctions as respondents from Nunavik reported current laws as Unfair at a much higher rate (85.7%), while respondents from Kivalliq were more likely to report being Not Sure (50%) than the other regions.

Fig. 11 Current laws around violence against women



To gain further understanding of Inuit women’s perspectives of current laws, the survey asked respondents about their awareness and perception of the use of Gladue reports in determining appropriate sentencing. While Gladue reports have an important role to play in ensuring Indigenous peoples receive fair consideration and sentencing in the criminal justice system, some concerns have been raised in Indigenous communities around the application of these reports to cases of violence against Indigenous women. Despite the public attention Gladue reports have received, the survey results demonstrate only one-third (29.6%) of respondents are aware of them and how they are applied. Seventy percent (70.5%) of survey respondents reported either not being aware or not being sure about Gladue reports. Of those respondents who reported knowledge of Gladue reports and how they are used to determine sentencing, the vast majority indicated these reports sometimes lead to fair sentences in cases of physical or sexual violence against women. One written comment by a respondent familiar with current laws and Gladue reports described how the application of the law can leave Inuit women feeling the offender has more rights than the victim in the criminal justice system:

“Jail should be a punishment which an abuser deserves, I think this is forgotten. Sentences are way too lenient. It is understandable why many victims of sexual offences don’t come forward because they are treated like the criminal by the defence during a trial. Gladue is sometimes abused, abusers take advantage of it. The justice system is so short staffed that criminal lawyers hired by dept of justice often need to rush through cases as they don’t have the time and they make deals with defence thus the lenient sentences...Criminals have more rights than others it often seems.”

Overall, the survey data suggests Inuit women have low confidence in the effectiveness of the court system and related legal processes. This reported lack of trust in the court system is based on factors such as its treatment of Inuit, its efficiency, and its fairness in sentencing perpetrators of

gender-based violence. The majority (59.1%) of survey respondents reported the courts do not take violence against Inuit women seriously to provide fair sentences and indicated the courts are not fair to Inuit in general (55.8%). Respondents’ most serious concern with the court system involved its ability to provide organized and timely legal processes. Specifically, more than three-quarters (77.3%) of survey respondents indicated they do not believe court processes are organized and timely.

Fig. 12 Perceptions of the court system and process

	Yes	Maybe	No	Not sure
The courts take violence against Inuit women seriously and gives out fair sentences.	4.5%	27.3%	59.1%	9.1%
The courts are fair to Inuit.	4.7%	30.2%	55.8%	9.3%
The court process is organized and timely.	2.3%	11.4%	77.3%	9.1%
Inuit can trust lawyers to represent their needs in court.	9.1%	36.4%	43.2%	11.4%
I am concerned about repeat offenders in my community.	84.1%	11.4%	0.0%	4.5%

Written comments in the survey further describe serious concerns with lengthy court processes, ongoing delays, and disorganization that respondents believe are jeopardizing the safety of Inuit women and their ability to use the criminal justice system. As one comment explained:

More efficient and regular court proceedings. Some cases drag on for 2 years or more because court arrives only twice a year, not enough time to go through docket, lack of evidence, no shows, weather delays, whatever... then gets moved to next circuit. The dread of having to face a judge takes a toll on one’s mental health, having it linger on and on, it’s terrible.”

Similarly, another respondent described how the temporary nature of circuit courts and their lack of safe physical space leaves Inuit women feeling unprotected:

“I did not feel like the lawyer had any interest in protecting me or offering supports as a victim. Having to go to the hotel and wait in the same space that my abuser was in with no information about the process forced me to leave before the trial even started.”

As a result of these issues with the court process, the data suggest Inuit women have limited confidence in the criminal justice system to adequately address violence in Inuit Nunangat, either by the removal or rehabilitation of perpetrators. Eighty-four percent (84.1%) of survey respondents demonstrated concern about cycles of violence and repeat offenders in their community. Interestingly, respondents from Nunavik and Inuvialuit expressed negative perceptions of the court system at higher rates than the three regions of Nunavut. One-hundred percent (100%) of respondents from Nunavik indicated concern about repeat offenders and the organization and

timeliness of the court process. One comment from Nunavik summarizes these frustrations and the traumatic impacts they can cause for Inuit women and girls:

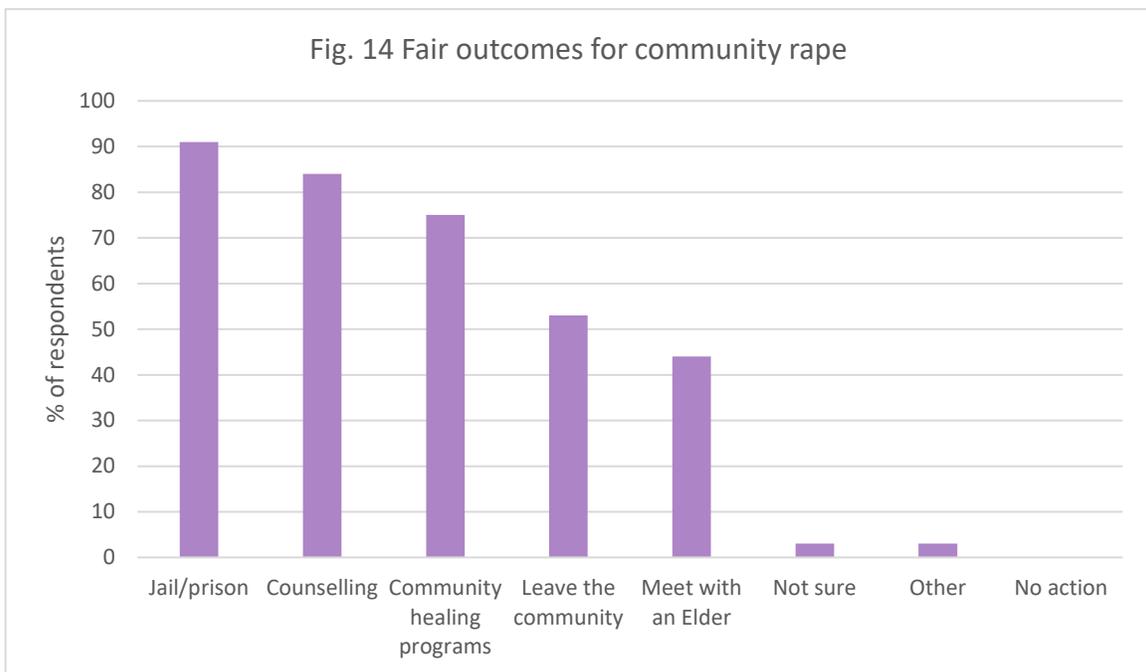
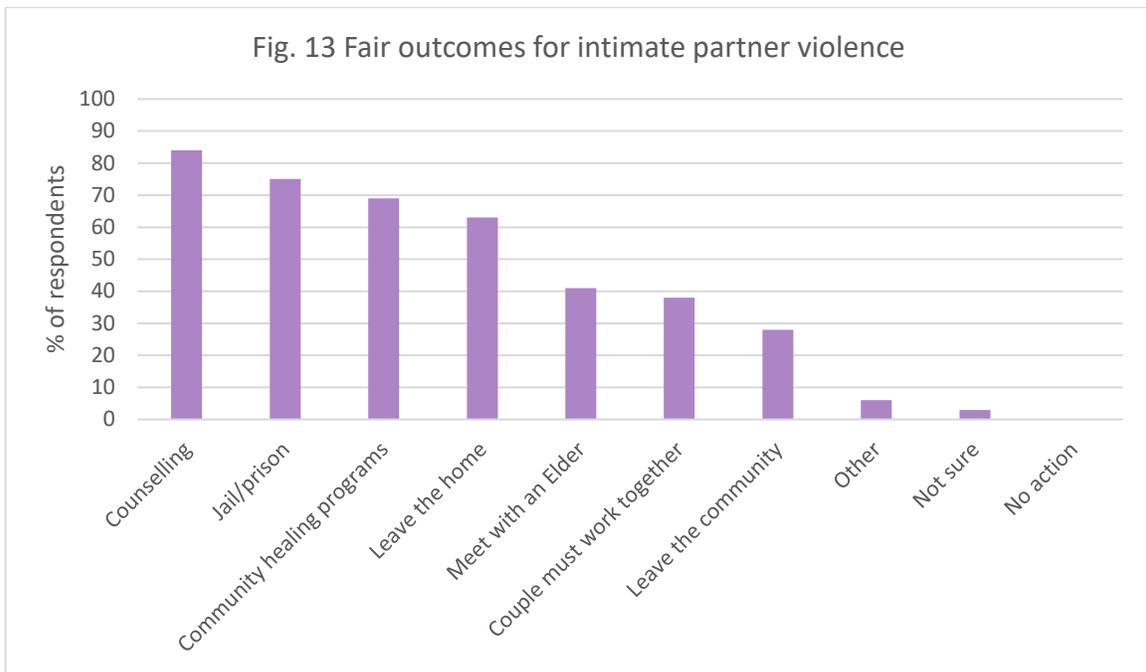
“I would like to see the criminal justice system in Nunavik get more organized. Cases take 2,3,4,5, and more years to go through court. And my friend who has been waiting to be a witness in her rape case has been going through this for over 5 years and it just keeps getting postponed. My daughter was sexually assaulted when she was only 11 years old and the things, they put her through, only to not even take the offender to court was completely unacceptable. I really don't have much faith in the justice system in Nunavik after what they put my poor daughter through!”

The survey findings thus demonstrate that challenges within the criminal justice system are limiting its ability to effectively respond to and address the needs of Inuit women experiencing physical and sexual violence. In answer, respondents identified a need for increased access to legal aid services, improved training for judges around the social fabric, geographic context, and culture of Inuit Nunangat, and greater representation of Inuit women, traditional laws, and language in the criminal justice system.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF JUSTICE

To examine Inuit women’s personal understandings of justice, the survey asked respondents to assess fair outcomes in situations of physical and sexual violence. In both cases, most respondents identified a preference for the perpetrator to be sentenced to a correctional facility, while being provided access to counselling and community healing programs to support rehabilitation and reintegration. In terms of intimate partner violence, the most selected fair outcome by respondents was mandatory counselling (84.4%), followed by incarceration (75.0%), community healing programs (68.8%), and removal from the home (62.5%). In terms of fair outcomes in response to rape in Inuit communities, the most selected option was incarceration (90.3%), followed by mandatory counselling (84.4%), community healing programs (75.0%), and removal from the community (53.1%). Although similar outcomes were defined as fair for physical and sexual violence, it is interesting to note Inuit women preferred harsher sentencing for rape at a higher rate than for regular intimate partner violence. This result may suggest Inuit women perceive community sexual crimes to be worse than intimate partner crimes, or that intimate partner violence can be more readily addressed through counselling than community sexual violence.

The written comments in the survey provide additional detail around Inuit women’s preferences with respondents describing a need for both stricter sentencing and increased access to healing supports for offenders. Respondents identified a desire for higher rates of conviction and longer sentences for perpetrators of gender-based violence, particularly for sexual violence and crimes against children. At the same time, many written comments requested mandatory and ongoing counselling for Inuit offenders, particularly in cases of intimate partner violence. Respondents suggested these programs should be holistic, Inuit-specific, on-the-land and involve Elders to address underlying mental health challenges related to violence.



SURVEY LIMITATIONS

Given the complexity and sensitivity of gender-based violence across Inuit Nunangat, there are important limitations to undertaking an online survey on this topic. First, the survey format and quantitative methodology cannot capture the depth and nuance of Inuit women’s experiences with gender-based violence, the criminal justice system, or related services and supports. While the survey aimed to broadly describe Inuit women’s knowledge and perceptions of their legal rights as victims of violence in the Inuit regions, the quantity and detail of written comments included in the survey are surprising and suggest Inuit women are seeking opportunities to qualitatively

explain their personal experiences with the criminal justice system. In total, 66 written comments were included in the survey. Second, many Inuit women may not feel comfortable answering questions on such a sensitive and potentially triggering subject matter through an online medium, such as a Survey Monkey survey. While the online format increased ease of dissemination and response, it may have resulted in lower response rates. In particular, survey demographics demonstrate respondents were primarily from younger age groups, suggesting older demographic groups were less willing or able to respond to an online survey, either due to the topic or lack of comfort with the technology. It is important to note, however, most survey respondents identified as a victim or survivor of violence, showing Inuit women with direct experience on this topic are determined to share their experiences, opinions, and needs regardless of the format. Third, online surveys may have greater challenges with completion rates as respondents can close, skim, or skip questions with ease. This survey experienced a progressive drop-off in responses toward the end, particularly for longer questions with a variety of answers that required the respondent to select all relevant options. Finally, this survey intended to compare findings across the regions of Inuit Nunangat to understand differences in available supports, perceptions, and needs. Unfortunately, regional analysis was limited by highly uneven response rates, specifically low response rates from Kitikmeot and Inuvialuit regions.

APPENDIX A

MEETING SURVIVORS' NEEDS: ONLINE SURVEY

Attention: Research permissions across Inuit Nunangat

Please note that in order to conduct research in Inuit Nunangat, research projects are required to undergo a research vetting process. For the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, a research license for this study was granted by the Aurora Research Institute. For Nunavut, a research license was granted by the Nunavut Research Institute. Nunavik has no formal approval process for conducting research in the region, so no license was required. Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain the approval from the Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee to conduct our study in that region. **As such, we are unable to include responses from Inuit women living in Nunatsiavut for this survey.**

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada wants to know more about your understanding of and experiences with the criminal justice system in your community. We created this survey so we could hear directly from Inuit women about how they feel about their safety, legal rights, and access to justice. The survey has 35 questions and should take you no more than 30 minutes to finish.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and completely confidential. The survey will not ask for any identifying information and there will be no way to link your survey answers back to you. The information collected from all the surveys will be stored for up to seven years on a secure network at the Pauktuutit office in Ottawa and will only be accessed by Pauktuutit employees and consultants working directly on this project. By completing the survey, you are consenting to your responses being used by Pauktuutit to develop informational tools to increase Inuit women's understandings of their rights and the criminal justice system. You may close the survey at any time and your responses will not be saved.

The survey asks questions about sensitive subjects around violence and the criminal justice system that may be difficult or triggering for some people. If at any time you need support or someone to talk to, there is a list of supports provided at the end of the survey. If you have any questions or experience any issues with completing the survey, please contact Raha Ravasian at Pauktuutit by phone at 1-800-667-0749 extension 263 (toll-free) or by email at rravasian@pauktuutit.ca.

Thank you for your participation and for sharing your knowledge and experiences with us. At the end of the survey, there will be an opportunity to enter into a prize draw for one (1) of two (2) Lenovo Tablets (<https://www.lenovo.com/ca/en/tablets/android-tablets/lenovo-tab-series/Lenovo-TB-X606Smart-Tab/p/ZZITZTMST0X>).

Section 1: Background Information

1. Do you identify as an Inuk woman?
 - Yes
 - No

2. In which Inuit region do you currently live?
 - Inuvialuit region
 - Kitikmeot region
 - Kivalliq region
 - Qikiqtani region
 - Nunavik
 - Other

3. What is the primary language spoken in your home?
 - Inuktitut
 - Inuinnaqtun
 - Inuvialuktun
 - Inuttut
 - English
 - French
 - Other

4. How old are you?
 - 18-24 years old
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-64
 - 65 or older
 - Prefer not to answer

5. Do you have any children?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer

6. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?
 - Grade 8 or less
 - Some high school
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Trades certificate or diploma
 - Some post-secondary (not completed)
 - College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Graduate degree
 - Prefer not to answer

Section 2: Knowing Your Rights and Supports

This section asks questions about sensitive subjects around physical and sexual violence that may be difficult or triggering. If at any time you need support or someone to talk to, there is a list of supports provided at the end of the survey. You can quit and close the survey at any time or take a break. All of your answers are confidential.

7. What supports and services are available in your community for women experiencing physical or sexual violence? (Select all that apply)
- Police/RCMP
 - Justice outreach workers or specialists
 - Local justice committee
 - Victim Services phone-line
 - Counsellors/mental health services
 - Nurses/health services
 - Legal services/lawyers
 - Social workers
 - Women's shelter
 - Church
 - Elders
 - Sapummijit agents
 - Traditional Inuit law and justice programs
 - Aupaluk Tumiapiit (Nunavik)
 - Other:
8. How would you rate your level of knowledge around women's rights as victims of violence in Inuit Nunangat?
- Very strong – I know my rights
 - Strong – I know my basic rights
 - Weak – I know a little
 - Very weak – I don't know anything
 - Not sure
 - I've never thought about my rights
9. Do you know what steps are required to report a crime to the police/RCMP?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
10. Do you know how to apply for a restraining order to have someone stop contacting, annoying, harassing or threatening you?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
 - I've never heard of a restraining order

11. Do you know how to apply for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) to have a violent partner or family member immediately removed from your home?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
 - I've never heard of an EPO
12. Do any of the following factors make it more difficult for women in your community to report **violence from a partner** to the police/RCMP? (Select all that apply)
- Having children in the home
 - Fear of losing children/child welfare services
 - Spouse/partner is primary income provider
 - Fear of the person who committed the violence
 - Community pressure not to report
 - Family pressure not to report
 - Stigma and feelings of shame
 - Don't trust the police/RCMP
 - Don't trust the court system
 - Fear of losing social housing
 - No women's shelter
 - No supports or services for women experiencing violence
 - No supports or services for abusive partners (ex. mental health, substance abuse)
 - None of the above
 - Other:
13. Do any of the following factors make it more difficult for women in your community to report **sexual violence or sexual assault** to the police/RCMP? (Select all that apply)
- Having children in the home
 - Fear of losing children/child welfare services
 - Spouse/partner is primary income provider
 - Fear of the person who committed the violence
 - Community pressure not to report
 - Family pressure not to report
 - Stigma and feelings of shame
 - Don't trust the police/RCMP
 - Don't trust the court system
 - Fear of losing social housing
 - No women's shelter
 - No supports or services for women experiencing sexual violence/assault
 - No supports or services for perpetrators (ex. mental health, substance abuse)
 - None of the above
 - Other:

14. For each of the statements below about the police/RCMP, select whether you think the statement is true **Always**, **Sometimes** or **Never**, or select **Not sure** if you do not know.

Women in my community can trust the police/RCMP to protect them.	<input type="radio"/> Always	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Never	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
The police/RCMP take violence against women seriously.	<input type="radio"/> Always	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Never	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
The police/RCMP in my community are available when needed.	<input type="radio"/> Always	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Never	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
The police/RCMP in my community understand Inuit culture and values.	<input type="radio"/> Always	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Never	<input type="radio"/> Not sure

15. One night while you're entering into your house you hear a lot of noise and yelling coming from your neighbours' house. The noise sounds like a man and woman are fighting and you can hear that the woman is crying.

Would you contact the police/RCMP?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

16. If you answered no or not sure, why would you **not** contact the police/RCMP? (Select all that apply)

- Don't want to get involved
- It's a private matter
- It happens all the time in my community
- Afraid my neighbour will know it was me who reported it
- Afraid for my own safety
- The police/RCMP can't do anything to stop it
- Don't trust the police/RCMP
- Other:

17. Would you contact someone else? Who would you contact?

18. Your cousin is over visiting when she tells you that her new partner forced her to have sex after he'd been out drinking. She is afraid it will happen again and asks you what she should do.

What advice would you give to your cousin? (Select all that apply)

- Report him to the police/RCMP
- Go to a nurse or health services
- Go stay at the women's shelter
- Go stay with a family member
- Come stay at your place
- Break up with him/end the relationship
- Talk to a community justice outreach worker
- Talk to an Elder
- Call the Victim Services phonenumber
- Talk to a counsellor
- Talk to a social worker
- Talk to the church pastor/priest/minister
- Wait longer to see if the sexual violence continues
- Do nothing
- Other:

19. For each of the examples below, state whether you think the action is a crime that should be reported to the police/RCMP.

Becky's ex-partner keeps following her around town and showing up everywhere she goes.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
Mary is groped by her brother's friend who grabs her butt and breasts.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
Suzy's new partner is very jealous and tells her that he will kill her if she ever leaves him.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
Sophie's co-worker keeps sending her sexually inappropriate Facebook messages.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure

Section 3: The Criminal Justice System

20. Do you have any experience with the justice system? (Select all that apply)

- As a witness
- As a jury member
- As a victim/survivor
- Have been charged/accused
- As a family member of a victim/survivor
- Had a family member charged/accused
- Know someone who is a victim or accused
- Work in the justice system
- Volunteer in the justice system
- No
- Prefer not to answer
- Other:

21. Do you think that current laws about violence against women are:

- Fair
- Unfair
- Not sure

22. What do you think is a fair outcome in the case of a man who has been regularly violent and abusive towards his wife/partner? (Select all that apply)

- He goes to jail/prison
- He must leave their home
- He must leave the community
- He must go to counselling
- He must meet with an Elder
- He must participate in community healing programs
- The couple must work together
- No action should be taken
- Not sure
- Other:

23. What do you think is a fair outcome in the case of a man who has raped a woman in his community? (Select all that apply)

- He goes to jail/prison
- He must leave the community
- He must go to counselling
- He must meet with an Elder
- He must participate in community healing programs
- No action should be taken
- Not sure
- Other:

24. For each of the statements below about the court process, select **Yes** if you always agree with the statement, **Maybe** if you sometimes agree with the statement, **No** if you disagree with the statement, and **Not sure** if you don't know.

The courts take violence against Inuit women seriously and gives out fair sentences.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> Maybe	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
The courts are fair to Inuit.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> Maybe	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
The court process is organized and timely.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> Maybe	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
Inuit can trust lawyers to represent their needs in court.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> Maybe	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
I am concerned about repeat offenders in my community.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> Maybe	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure

25. A Gladue Report allows a judge to take into consideration an Indigenous person's background when determining an appropriate sentence, such as whether the person is a survivor of abuse or the residential school system, or whether they have substance abuse or mental health challenges.

Are you aware of Gladue Reports and how they may be used by judges to determine sentences for Indigenous offenders?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

26. If you answered **Yes**, do you think that Gladue Reports are useful for determining fair sentences in cases of physical or sexual violence against women?

- Always – Gladue reports lead to fair sentences.
- Sometimes – Gladue reports can lead to fair sentences in some cases.
- Never – Gladue reports do not lead to fair sentences.
- Not sure

27. What changes would you like to see to the criminal justice system?

28. Do you have any other comments, concerns or experiences you would like to share?

Conclusion

Thank you for completing the survey. Pauktuutit appreciates your willingness to share your knowledge and experience with us.

If you would like to be entered into the prize draw for a Lenovo Tablet (<https://www.lenovo.com/ca/en/tablets/android-tablets/lenovo-tab-series/Lenovo-TB-X606Smart-Tab/p/ZZITZTMST0X>), please enter your contact information below. Two prize Tablets are available. Only one prize entry per person is allowed. Your entry into the draw and the contact information you provide will not be linked to your survey responses. All of your survey answers will be completely private and not traceable to you.