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Although all women are at risk of being subjected to violence, simply by being women, certain populations of women are at a significantly higher risk. In Canada, two populations of women have historically been and continue to be at higher risk of experiencing violence: Aboriginal Women and Refugee Women.

Colonization of the Americas has been recognized as being catastrophic for native populations. Through the continent colonization has resulted in the killing, displacement, and exploitation of native peoples. Aboriginal peoples of Canada have been subjected to systematic marginalization and isolation. This continues today. The massive numbers of missing Canadian aboriginal women are disproportionately larger than that of other population groups. Another group of women at higher risk of experiencing violence are refugee women. Displacement, citizenship (or the lack of), and in some cases, cultural and religious backgrounds, are among the factors that hinder women's opportunities and agency, resulting in heightened risk for violence.

The issue of violence experienced by both populations, Aboriginal and refugee women, has been discussed for some time now. Unfortunately, the allocation of resources to end violence against all women has continuously been inadequate. In light of the November 25th International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (designated by the United Nations General Assembly), we join in raising awareness and focusing on this subject in the current volume of our newsletter

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women



In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly designated November 25 as the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** (Resolution 54/134). The premise was to raise awareness of the severity of the problem that women globally are being subjected to rape, domestic violence and other forms of violence. The designation of November 25 exposes the actual scale and true nature of violence against women, evidence that is often hidden. In 2014, the official Theme framed by the UN Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women", was *Orange YOUR Neighbourhood*. Historically, the date memorializes the 1960 assassination of the three Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic; their killings were ordered by Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. In 1981, activists at the

Latin American and Caribbean Encounter marked November 25 as a day to combat and raise awareness of violence against women; on December 17, 1999, the date was officially validated by the United Nations (UN) resolution. [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign](#) starts from November 25 - the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women to December 10, Human Rights Day, and represents a time for galvanized action to end violence against women and girls around the world.

In 2016, the UNiTE campaign strongly emphasized the need for sustainable financing of efforts to end violence against women and girls towards the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One of the major challenges of preventing and ending violence against women and girls worldwide is the substantial funding shortfall. Resources for initiatives are severely lacking. Frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, which includes a specific target on ending violence against women and girls, offer huge promise, but requires adequate funding to bring real and significant changes to the lives of women and girls.

Join us! Commemorate this year by sharing with us your photos, messages and videos showing how you Orange YOUR World on November 25, 2017.

Middle Eastern Refugee Women: A Pathway to Violence Prevention:

Violence against women is a significant world health issue. Studies have reported that many women experience interpersonal violence (IPV) and suffer emotional and mental distress. Middle Eastern Refugee Women (MERW) are no exception. The intersection of IPV and resettlement can be a powerful double whammy that creates enormous emotional and mental distress on women. The Peel Institute on Violence Prevention is currently conducting a study aimed at exploring and better understanding the impact of gender, migration and violence on the wellbeing of MERW living in the Region of Peel for the past 3- 5 years. This study is a qualitative research that is comprised of women's life narrative/ storytelling and interviews with stakeholders and focus groups of refugee women. It includes a literature review and a needs assessment through a thematic analysis, aiming to understand the factors that perpetuate violence against refugee women and to identify the means to prevent it. The idea is to study and analyze the factors leading to violence to identify potential strategies to respond to the problem and assist refugee women in the settlement process.



At the time this article is being written, the study has not yet been concluded. However, with the data that is readily available, a few themes are identified in the stories the women have shared. They talked about the experiences of violence in their countries of origin. Some shared their analysis on how cultural and societal factors are at play in the perpetuation of violence against women. Another recurrent theme was about their journey through other countries and the hardships they endured, as families were separated before arriving in Canada. Some women arrived in Canada prior to their husbands and were required to take more of a leadership role in the family. This landed the couple into a role reversal to which it was difficult to adjust. MERW also talked about difficulties settling in and the pressure it places on the family as they struggle to adjust to their new situation. Women interviewed also talked about their hopes for the future and the new lives they hope to build for themselves and their families.

The study aims to identify and analyze the history of each woman, exploring the impact of gender pre-migration and resettlement factors at macro (migration policies), meso (community characteristics) and micro (family and personal) levels. It includes focus group discussions consisting of face-to-face interviews with women and service providers, data analysis and identification of challenges and opportunities faced by these women. The findings will help plan recommendations for violence prevention in Middle Eastern refugee community, adjustment process and building new lives in Canada. Emphasis is given to experiences and the impact of violence in their countries of origin, their paths in being a refugee in Canada and the resettlement process. As mentioned above, the study is still in progress. Once the study is completed, the results will be available for everyone at the Family Services of Peel website.

Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls

Following our previous article on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women (PIVP newsletter March 2017) we would like to provide a brief update of the interim report of the National Inquiry (ongoing) into ***“Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada”*** which was released on August 28, 2017. The Report elaborates on the vision of the National Inquiry. The vision is to help Indigenous women and girls reclaim their power and place. This will fulfill its commitment to truth, healing and justice for Indigenous women and girls. The three-part mission to find the truth will reveal to the world the devastating impact of violence from the perspective of Indigenous women and girls. The research is using a decolonizing, culturally specific, gendered, trauma informed and rights based approach to the Truth-Gathering Process. The attention is on finding the systemic causes of violence against indigenous women and girls, including underlying causes and vulnerabilities, and policies and practices aimed at reducing violence and increasing safety. The report indicates that the commissioners endorse and will build upon the existing recommendations that are under-resourced or ignored. They call for immediate action on those recommendations. The National Inquiry will help to fill the knowledge gap in understanding the root causes of all forms of colonial violence that continue to threaten the wellbeing of Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Commissioners of this inquiry stated: *“we can and must act together to create a better future for our women.”*



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