



April 23, 2020 [Updated April 27, 2020]

The *Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice & Accountability* (CFOJA) is profoundly saddened and disturbed by the violent killings of at least 22 women and men by a lone male, armed with guns, this past weekend across multiple communities in rural Nova Scotia. We hurt for our fellow Canadians, and particularly those in Nova Scotia, who are both directly and indirectly shattered and impacted by this violent massacre, including survivors, family members and friends of the victims as well as the communities in which the killings occurred.

This past Dec. 6, 2019, as a country, we marked 30 years since another lone male, also armed with a gun, entered École Polytechnique at the Université of Montréal and successfully carried out his mission – to kill women *because* they were women and, in his view, feminists for whom he expressed his hatred. He left 14 women dead and 14 women and men injured before killing himself. It took 30 years before these killings were finally recognized for what they were – an anti-feminist attack and a mass femicide.

It is disturbing to recognize that it was two years ago today when 8 women and 2 men were killed and 16 injured on April 23, 2018, in what has been referred to most commonly as the ‘Toronto Van Attack’ – another misogynistic killing of both female and male victims by a self-identified member of Incel, a misogynistic men’s movement. Then, in July of the same year, an 18-year-old woman and a 10-year-old girl were killed and another 13 injured in the Danforth (Toronto) shootings – an attempted mass homicide. These killings at first appeared far removed from misogynistic motivations; however, police later found evidence of the perpetrator’s preoccupation with killing fantasies and the misogynistic Incel group.

And now, during the COVID-19 global pandemic, we are experiencing the horror of our country’s ‘new’ deadliest massacre in recent memory. While details have been painstakingly slow to be released by the RCMP, we know that one of the killer’s first violent acts – in this series of events, at least – was to assault and forcibly confine his longtime female partner. She thankfully escaped by hiding in the woods for hours. It was her vital information, in part, that enabled the RCMP to finally stop the killer. Motives for the killings of the remaining victims have not yet been clarified. This will take weeks or months to determine and we may never know for sure. We do not know whether all the women were targeted *because* they were women or whether the men were targeted specifically or were victims of a femicidal rampage. What we do know is that many of the victims were women, just like the mass killings described above in which women and girls were exclusively or predominantly targeted by the male killers.

In 2017, the CFOJA was launched to bring a visible and national focus to femicide – the killings of women and girls *because* they were women and girls as demonstrated by internationally-recognized sex/gender-based motives and indicators. During the past two years, the CFOJA has documented the deaths of over 300 women and girls in our country, killed mostly by men who were close to them.<sup>1</sup> It is often difficult to

<sup>1</sup> See reports at #CallItFemicide (<https://femicideincanada.ca/callitfemicide2019.pdf>) or #Cestunfémicide (<https://femicideincanada.ca/cestunf%C3%A9micide2019.pdf>). The CFOJA Inaugural report and related materials can be found at: <https://www.femicideincanada.ca/home/newsroom>





know at first if a woman or girl was killed 'because' of their sex/gender. In many cases, we may never know. However, as part of our education and awareness initiative, we continue to monitor the killings of women and girls to differentiate, where possible, those femicides influenced by sex/gender-related contexts or motives. We will do so with the Nova Scotia mass killings as the investigation of multiple crime scenes unfolds. Our focus is vital because official narratives about the killings of women and girls – whether one female, multiple females, or both female and male victims – may often obscure that at least some of these killings are femicide or occur as a result of femicidal motivations. That is why the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women has been calling on all countries to establish femicide observatories since 2015. Such observatories are equally crucial in the Canadian context as this most recent mass killing has highlighted.

As we wait for further details about this killer's rampage in the coming weeks and months, we remind Canadians that one woman or girl is killed every 2.5 days in Canada, mostly by men. On average, one woman a week is killed by her male partner. On April 18-19, 2020, in addition to nine men, another 13 women and girls were added to this total and there may be more. That is three mass killings and one attempted mass killing involving exclusively, or predominantly, female victims over the past 30 years in Canada. With the decades' long travesty surrounding missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in our country, it is a dismal and shameful global portrait of Canada, how we respond to male violence against women, and what value we place on the lives of our women and girls. It is time we do something about it. To begin, we need to #CallItFemicide, understand what it is, and focus our attention on the systemic and structural barriers to the safety of women and girls in our country.

The *Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability* and its Expert Advisory Panel reaffirms its commitment to bringing a visible and national focus to femicide and to working with all others dedicated to preventing further violence in our communities. For a list of the members of CFOJA's Expert Advisory Panel, please visit: <https://www.femicideincanada.ca/home/who>.

**With all Nova Scotians and Canadians, we mourn the loss of the women and men below:**

**Female victims: 13**

Kristen Beaton, Jamie Blair, Joy Bond, Gina Goulet, Lillian Hyslop, Alanna Jenkins, Dawn Madsen, Lisa McCully, Heather O'Brien, Jolene Oliver, Heidi Stevenson, Elizabeth Joanne Thomas, Emily Tuck

**Male victims: 9**

Tom Bagley, Greg Blair, Peter Bond, Corrie Ellison, Frank Gulenchyn, Sean McLeod, Aaron Tuck, Joey Webber, John Joseph Zahl

