



Wednesday, May 27, 2020

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington St.  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Hon. Maryam Monsef, PC, MP  
Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development  
Women and Gender Equality Canada  
P.O. Box 8097, Station T CSC  
Ottawa, ON K1G 3H6

The Hon. Bill Blair, PC, MP  
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness  
Public Safety Canada  
269 Laurier Ave. West  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0P8

The Honourable David Lametti, PC, MP  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada  
Department of Justice Canada  
284 Wellington St.  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers,

As Members of Parliament, we are joining together to address the expiry of funding to organizations who provide front-line services to women and girls who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and human trafficking. We are asking that you immediately reverse this decision and ensure funding is delivered to these groups who are dedicated to serving Canadians through this important work.

The treatment of women and girls who are victims of human trafficking is unthinkable horrific and is alleviated in part by the work of local organizations dedicated to supporting and protecting women within this system of abuse and exploitation. The work of these groups is nothing short of heroic.

That is why your government's decision to lapse funding that enabled these groups to do their work is so disappointing. This fact is additionally bewildering in light of the common assertion by the Prime Minister and members of Cabinet that all decisions are made through a feminist lens. How such a decision could be made with a "feminist" approach seems questionable, to say the least.



The tangible impact of this decision is already being felt by local groups who will soon have to end programming dedicated to helping women and girls escape this degrading abuse. A coalition of organizations including the London Abused Women’s Centre, Concertation des Luttes Contre L’exploitation Sexuelle, and Reset Society of Calgary has said that, “The result [of this funding expiry] leaves federally funded programs geared to the protection of trafficked women and girls across Canada with no choice but to close”.

The existing funding in the government’s National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking has not outlined an adequate replacement for the Measures to Address Prostitution Initiative, leaving these organizations unable to continue their work in this area.

As you know, the ongoing pandemic has only exacerbated the issues women and girls face regularly. Violence against women has increased, and women trapped in abusive situations, including the sex-trafficking industry, face additional barriers to their safety.

Women and girls deserve justice and our support and protection. By allowing this funding to expire with no plan to replace it, your government is letting vulnerable Canadians down. We are pleading that your government immediately reverse this decision and deliver funding to organizations who are stepping up to meet the increased need at this time.

Sincerely,

Karen Vecchio  
Elgin—Middlesex--London  
Shadow Minister for Women and Gender Equality

Andréanne Larouche  
Bloc Québécois Critic for Women and Gender Equality

Lindsay Mathysen  
London—Fanshawe  
NDP Critic for Women and Gender Equality

Jenica Atwin  
Fredericton  
Green Critic for Women and Gender Equality



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jag Sahota".

Jag Sahota  
Calgary—Skyview  
Deputy Shadow Minister for Women and Gender Equality

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandre Boulerice".

Alexandre Boulerice  
Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raquel Dancho".

Raquel Dancho  
Kildonan—St. Paul

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice Wong".

The Honourable Alice Wong  
Richmond Centre