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# Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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**EVIDENCE**

## Monday, November 21, 2016

## Chair

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu**

# Standing Committee on the Status of Women

**Monday, November 21, 2016**

● (1530)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)):** I call the meeting to order.

We have one item to take care of before we get to our witnesses. Last meeting we had a motion that was approved to add one session to talk about algorithms. The list of suggested witnesses for the algorithms was sent, so I believe Ms. Harder has a motion to bring to us.

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Yes, in order to move this study along, I have put together a list of witnesses. To the best of my ability I represented all parties at this table and the witness list that came forward. It is as follows:

> That, pursuant to the motion passed by the Status of Women Committee on November 14, 2016 related to the one (1) meeting designated on November 30, 2016, in order to examine the effects of automated algorithm based content curation as part of the study on violence against young girls and women in Canada, the Committee invite the following witnesses to present evidence:
>
> Dr. Diana Inkpen of University of Ottawa;
>
> Colin McKay, Head of Public Policy and Government Relations of Google Inc. (Canada);
>
> Thierry Plante, Media Education Specialist at MediaSmarts, Canada's Centre for Digital Media Literacy;
>
> Dr. Sandra Robinson of Carleton University;
>
> Kelly Acton, Director General of Communications and Marketing Branch of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; and
>
> Corinne Charette, Senior Assistant to the Deputy Minister at Spectrum, Information Technologies and Telecommunications.

That makes for a total of six witnesses, which would be three on each panel. All of these witnesses come with expertise with regard to algorithms. There is a mix of both private enterprise and public, and of course research-based groups more on the study side of things, but there is also the practical hands-on. I tried to go for a good balance there.

**The Chair:** Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** I'm a little confused. I didn't think we were doing committee business right now, and I thought we had submitted witnesses on Friday for this part of the study. Did I miss something by arriving late?

**The Chair:** Rachael is bringing a motion based on the ones that were all submitted to recommend which witnesses we need to call, because in order to get them here for November 30, we have to call them pretty soon.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Okay. I did miss something.

**The Chair:** Sorry.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** That's okay.

These are based on the witnesses that everyone submitted?

**The Chair:** Yes. You, Ms. Nassif, and a bunch of people submitted some, and then Rachael had a bunch of names. They're trying to make two panels, so that there's one for the first hour and one for the second. She has six there that are listed out of about 12 all told that were suggested.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Is there discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** All right, and now we'll go to the witnesses today.

We are very excited to have Twitter with us today. We have Patricia Cartes, who is the head of global safety. Welcome to you, Patricia. We're looking forward to hearing from you. You'll have 10 minutes to make your comments, and then we'll begin our rounds of questioning. You may begin.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Patricia Cartes (Head, Global Safety, Twitter Inc.):** First of all, I would like to thank the committee for giving us this opportunity to present the security policies we work with at Twitter.

[*English*]

I will continue in English.

As you pointed out, my name is Patricia Cartes. I have the privilege to represent Twitter's trust and safety teams. We're working very hard behind the scenes to prevent abuse and to fight any report of abuse we receive in the platform.

By virtue of being Spanish, I tend not to be brief so I'll try my best to follow the Twitter style and keep it to maybe a bit more than 140 characters, but to my 10 minutes. I will speak a little fast so we will have time to go through more details in the Q and A.

I wanted to start by explaining how the Twitter platform is different from other platforms. We are public, we are widely distributed, and we're conversational, so when you hear about abuse online, that tends to be equated to Twitter because we are public; and so people have access to content in our platform in a way that perhaps they don't have access to in other platforms or in their privacy layers.

That, of course, also means we have a greater responsibility to ensure that not just our users but also Internet users who may not be on Twitter, but who may see Twitter content beyond our borders, do not encounter abuse in the platform.

We have 313 million users, which might not seem like a big number compared to some of our sister companies; however, the issue with scale at Twitter comes due to the number of tweets that we're seeing flowing through the platform, which is one billion every two days. Just to give you an idea, it took three years, two months, and one day to see the billionth tweet, and now we're seeing 500 million tweets on a single-day basis.

We have 79% of our users based outside of the U.S., so even though we were born in San Francisco, we're by no means just an American company. That's why people like me, not being born in the U.S., can have the roles that we have.

We have offices in Singapore, Dublin, and San Francisco that are for the operational support of our users. The reason we have them there is so we can do 24/7 global coverage: so when Singapore goes to sleep, Dublin takes over, and when Dublin goes to sleep, San Francisco takes over.

We also look at providing support not just based on the abuse-type of expertise. As you can imagine, abuse comes in many ways, from spam to child sexual exploitation, gender-based harassment, and other types of hate speech and extremism, but we also look at the market specificities. That's why we work with a number of organizations on the ground that are experts in this field. They provide us with advice about abuse trends, but also about what users in those markets are saying are the main difficulties they are encountering with the platforms.

I did want to call to your attention the work we have been doing with MediaSmarts, High Resolves, Hollaback! Canada, which really have been instrumental in some of the changes we introduced as recently as last week.

We also have 82% of our users who are accessing the site via mobile. This is extremely important. The reason that we have 140 characters as a limitation is because we were born on mobile. Initially, when Jack Dorsey created the platform, you could only text to tweet, and at the time 140 characters was the text limitation. That's why it remains a 140-character platform.

This also means when we encounter persistent abuse we do not have the ability to use traditional methods such as IP blocking because the majority of our users are entering the site through dynamic IP addresses that are mobile, and therefore on an IP address you might have a bad user and a good user. That's why at Twitter when we talk about automating support and automating the detection of abuse, we have to think about patterns of behaviour. Are we seeing users we have previously suspended coming back with similar email addresses, similar names, using similar hashtags, and targeting the same accounts? When we see a combination of those patterns, it's easier for us to automate. We cannot simply block a word or block an IP address and hope the abuse will go away, because that's not going to happen, due to that mobile nature of our platform.

We also have rules. I know people tend to think Twitter is the Wild West. That's not the case. While we believe in freedom of expression and speaking truth to power, that really means little as an underlying philosophy if people are afraid to speak up. That's why over the last few years, and especially over the last year, we have introduced significant changes to the Twitter rules.

● (1535)

Today I want to walk you through some of those rules.

It's important to know these rules are public. We want our users to be aware of what the rules are, so that when they cross the line we can hold them accountable and we can show them not just the rules they have violated, but the specific tweets that were shared and that are in violation of the rules.

Let me be very clear. We do not allow our users to make threats of violence and to encourage terrorism or violence, especially when it comes to targeting the protected categories. When I refer to the protected categories, I refer to the UN charter of human rights. We really are talking about race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and disability.

On a platform such as Twitter, I could question an idea or I could question a notion, but I could not target somebody for following that notion or that idea. I could say something such as “I hate Spain”, but I could not say “I hate Spaniards, therefore I'm going to encourage violence against them.” That's where we have to draw the line, and what we're always looking at is the likelihood of content in the platform causing harm in the offline world. If that is the case, it's important that we step in and take action.

When it comes to harassment, we clearly state that you may not incite or engage in the targeting, abuse, or harassment of others. In some of the elements we're looking at, remember that with 140 characters, oftentimes we lack context. That's why we have to look at the intention of the account. Was the account set up only with the intention of harassing somebody, or is this an account that was tweeting constructively before something triggered it and it started tweeting in a way that violates our rules? That might come as surprise, but that is the majority of the cases we see. We don't see the worst kind of trolls, the Gamergate trolls. On a day-to-day basis, what we see are users who, for whatever reason, start tweeting in a non-constructive way.

The way we enforce our rules depends on the severity of the violation of the rule. If we see that a user created the account with only the intent to harass somebody or a group of people, we will suspend the account permanently and we will continue to try to detect new accounts that are set up as a follow up, which tends to happen. However, if we see that a user, who was tweeting constructively, gets triggered by something, and starts tweeting in a non-constructive way, we're going to look at whether taking an educational approach might bring that user back into compliance.

We think these methods work, so at times we can take action such as asking the account to delete specific tweets that violate our rules. We can also freeze the account for a specific time frame so they can't interact for whatever time limit we give to the account. We can also ask the account to verify certain pieces of information. You can use Twitter in an anonymous way, but we do not want the veil of anonymity to be used for abusive purposes. At times if we see that an account is trying to violate our rules through anonymity, we will ask it to provide to us either a phone number or an email address so we have that information.

It will probably not come as a surprise that the worst type of trolls, knowing that they might be held accountable, especially with law enforcement authorities requesting data from Twitter in criminal cases, tend not to engage back on the site once we have taken that step to request further information.

It's important to bear in mind that the types of actions we take are not just suspensions. There's a wider range that we can take. Abuse is not black and white; oftentimes you will have the grey in between.

I also want to mention the tools. We want to empower our users to tailor their experience on Twitter. To that effect, we have launched a number of tools.

As recently as last Tuesday we announced that our mute function has been broadened. Now you can mute not just an account, which enables you not to get notified when that account is tweeting for as long as you don't want to engage with it, but you can also mute words, hashtags, conversations, and emojis. That means, let's say I don't want to see content related to Trump, if I mute the hashtag "trump", I will not see content related to that within my notifications.

We also have a tool to block, which we recommend for more severe situations where you're adamant that somebody should not interact with you on Twitter. If you block somebody, they cannot engage with you, they cannot tweet at you, and you will not get notified if they do try to tweet at you.

● (1540)

What's most important is to remember that, as a public platform, we don't want to give a false sense of security. If you really don't want somebody to see your tweets, we also recommend protecting them. You can block somebody, but to prevent them from seeing the content, whether they are logged out or looking at it from a search engine, you can also also protect your tweets to further prevent that.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That's your time.

We're going to begin our first round of questioning with my colleague, Ms. Ludwig.

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Can we take a picture first and tweet it?

**Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.):** *Patricia, buenas tardes. Me llamo Karen Ludwig. Yo soy en Cuba por siete años.*

I think I got that right, didn't I? I worked in Cuba for seven years.

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** Yes.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** I am very pleased to hear your presentation, and certainly with the work that's being done with Twitter.

Most recently, we heard from the soon-to-be First Lady of the United States. Regarding cyber-bullying, she said:

> It is never okay when a 12-year-old girl or boy is mocked, bullied, or attacked. It is terrible when that happens on the playground and it is absolutely unacceptable when it's done by someone with no name hiding on the Internet.

When celebrities or well-known people take on issues such as cyber-bullying, what impact does that have on making changes to the operational side of organizations as well as on greater awareness within the general public?

*Gracias*.

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** That's a great question.

I think the impact is the same as it would be if one of our safety partners or one of the governments that we work with were to make those statements.

With regard to that particular statement, I would like to remind not just the next First Lady but everybody that we do not allow children under 13 on our platform. We would hope that no one under 13 is bullied on the platform because they shouldn't be there to begin with, under the COPPA law, which is the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. Beyond that, I always appreciate the concern, whether it's from celebrities, politicians, or, as I said, non-profits that work in this space.

I think it is necessary for society to be aware of this as an issue. When there is abuse online, it rarely is just online. Online tends to be a reflection of what's happening off-line. What is quite interesting when it comes to the incitement of hate on Twitter is that, while of course we will do anything in our power to fight it on our platform, we have to remember that these ideas are floating around society.

We should open our eyes to how the world is, not how we want it to be. We think that a platform like Twitter can enable counter-narratives.

I welcome those remarks. We are looking forward to working with the new administration to continue to implement changes, but that doesn't change the work that we're already doing. More specifically, we refer to the experts. I referred to MediaSmarts before. You also have the Amanda Todd Legacy Fund in Canada, whom we work with on a very regular basis. I think they have the knowledge, and we would hope that every administration in the world would consult with them to gather the necessary insight.

● (1545)

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** Okay, thank you.

There probably isn't an easy answer to this question. With only 140 characters to extend a message, and lots of people trying to get likes, trying to get retweets, and trying to increase their following, is there a possibility that it might increase some of the sensationalism in the message?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** You correctly point out that there isn't an easy answer to that one.

It's possible. On Twitter, you can also add images and links. That's interesting because when we first started operating you couldn't do any of those things, and because you couldn't do those things, some violations of our rules hadn't even happened. When we started working, we didn't see violations of privacy to the same extent as now that you can share images, links, and so on.

At times, what you will have indeed is people who try to combine different platforms. They upload a link to another platform and then share it through Twitter for maximum reach. That's something that we continue to work on with our sister companies. When we see abuse on one of the platforms, how can we work with our sister companies to prevent it on the other platforms?

I think we have been quite successful in the different working groups that we have, but you're correct that the lack of space, so to speak, may leave some people misusing the platform. We are aware, and we try to continue to fight it, especially through providing report links, not just on our health centre, but also within the tweet. If somebody feels that a person is trying to be more abusive, precisely because they don't have that much space at the tweet level, they can click "report" through the three buttons they have and send it to us.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** On that, Ms. Cartes, you mentioned working with your sister organizations.

From the research perspective I'm wondering how the data is collected, how it's reported, and possibly how it's shared. In terms of other areas of violence that we've talked about in this committee, that's definitely been a central theme on the research side, as well as the lack of reporting. Is there any funding or are there any organizations or any university programs that you're funding right now to conduct such research?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** It's another great question because, due to privacy laws, we are restricted about the amount of information that we can share with our sister companies.

Let's say I were to see a case of abuse happening on Twitter that has a ramification on the ASKfm platform, I can give a heads-up to my counterpart at ASKfm, but I cannot share with her all the data about the user. That hasn't really impeded our collaboration because, as Twitter is a public platform, you can share the tweet that will contain enough information for the other platforms to take action.

When it's the other way around, it's a little more challenging. We might get a heads-up from Facebook about a specific profile. We will of course look at abuse reports filed within our platform or abusive content within that specific account. Beyond those case-by-case situations, we have found those working groups I referred to extremely helpful. We have one on self-harm and suicide. We see teenagers especially trying to use these platforms to encourage self-harm and suicide, using language that is not straightforward, that we wouldn't be familiar with. Sitting down with organizations like Lifeline and our sister companies to see what shape that takes in those platforms and in ours, we can learn a lot. That's been extremely helpful.

Another great example would be non-consensual nudity. We have one working group with the attorney general in California. We don't like to refer to it as "revenge porn" because it's not just another type of commercial porn. This content destroys lives and reputations. We're lobbying to have it renamed non-consensual nudity in every legislation in the future. Just hearing from them what shape that abuse takes in their platform or what shape it takes in ours has been extremely helpful.

Some groups we have worked with look at different platforms: the Dangerous Speech Project, Susan Benesch from the Berkman Klein Center would be a very good researcher; Danielle Citron as well from the University of Maryland School of Law. I'm happy to also share some beyond that who would be experts on this data.

● (1550)

**The Chair:** That's your time. We're going to go now to Ms. Harder for her seven minutes.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Thanks for taking time to be with us today.

I have a number of questions for you, and most of mine have to do with the idea of algorithms being used to direct online traffic. How does Twitter go about using algorithms to attract people to the site and to help facilitate use of Twitter?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** Clearly, we're not doing very well because we don't have that much growth.

Jokes aside, we're not really utilizing algorithms to bring people into the platform. At times we use certain algorithms to detect abusive behaviour, which is what I was referring to. We have used some tools that in the past have really helped us to flag certain patterns of abuse, for us to know when an account might be abusive. We're not really utilizing algorithms to attract people.

You may have seen how we present stories to current users. We have gone from a chronological model where before you would see any tweets, there had been no adulteration of the tweet stream; it was just chronological. Now we're using algorithms to figure out what stories you are most interested in, based on your interactions. If I interact with my colleague Will on a regular basis, now when I log in I might see a message that says "while you were away" that highlights his tweets, based on my interactions with him.

We have utilized some artificial intelligence, but it's more for current users to ease their navigation. It would not be exactly the same as Facebook's newsfeed, but it's a similar idea. It's not just chronological, it's based more on what we think your interests are.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Could you just briefly sum up what an algorithm is for those around the table?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** It would be like a program where you give it a number of factors, and when those factors coincide, the algorithm will alert you. A good example of how this is used for abuse-fighting purposes, if you look at sexual exploitation, you could say to the algorithm to flag any account that is contacting somebody who has provided their age to us and is a minor and is using certain keywords within a specific time frame. If you have a lot of these patterns of behaviour happening at the same time, it will let us know.

The algorithms are a very smart way to let the system alert you to specific situations that might be happening that you might not know unless somebody has reported it to you.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Right.

Is there a way that algorithms could unintentionally facilitate cyber-abuse or violence rather than being helpful? I recognize that it probably wouldn't be intentional, but is there a way that it could be unintentional?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** I have worked in tech for the last 10 years. I was at Google and Facebook before, always in this field, and I have always been very skeptical about just using algorithms. They won't necessarily lead to more abuse or violence in the platforms, but if you rely on just the algorithms to provide support to users, you can have a lot of collateral damage. You may have certain accounts and certain activities that are flagged by the algorithm that are not abusive and that you need to manually review.

I'll give you a perfect example. We started seeing abuse on hashtags on Twitter—a hashtag is a mechanism to have a conversation in a platform around a specific topic—and an example would be #stopIslam. We immediately thought there must be hate speech within this hashtag. When we started looking at the data—by the way, the Dangerous Speech Project helped us, and *The Washington Post* did a great article on this—we found that the majority of the tweets were actually positive tweets. It was people saying, “This hashtag is atrocious. You should never say this.” Or, on the word “bitch”, when we started automating our processes, we were looking at the word “bitch”— pardon my not-French—and we realized there is a whole demographic that is using bitch as a way to say hi. The majority of our systems nearly collapsed because we were looking at this content that was not abusive.

What we have to think about in government and in these companies is whether these measures are proportional. If you were just to rely on algorithms, would it be proportional to be looking at people's accounts without there being any reports or any abusive activity? That's why I would always advocate for algorithm plus manual action in order to automate the support.

● (1555)

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** You raised an excellent point in terms of algorithms probably not being enough on their own, so I appreciate you bringing up that point. That's certainly a good one.

In terms of then using manpower, as well, in order to monitor, you used the example of the hashtag “bitch”. That comes back to you through an algorithm as being bad, but then you take a manual look at it and realize it's not always bad. Sometimes it's appropriate. How do you respond, then? Do you keep the original algorithm in place in order to track that and flag it for you, and then manually go over it, or do you just loosen up your algorithm to allow more of it to go through? How do you respond to something like that?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** It's the latter option. You modify the algorithm.

What happens in those cases is that the algorithm is lacking the information it needs to be accurate, so you're looking at the action rate that the algorithm leads to. By the way, a lot of these are like bots. You're implementing bots in the platform through algorithms. If I create a bot that is giving me a 10% action rate, that means, of all of the content that is flagged to me, I'm only taking action on 10%. That means that the algorithm is certainly not accurate enough, but I can feed it more information.

I referred before to patterns of behaviour. I could say, “Only flag to me accounts that have been created within this time span in this IP address, trying to use this hashtag, trying to tweet to these people.” The more information you give it, the more accurate it is. We have found that for certain types of abuse, spam being a great example, we have been able to eliminate most of the support, based on very accurate algorithms. However, by no means does this happen from one day to the next. It has taken months and years to reach the right amount of information for those algorithms to be properly deployed on the site.

**The Chair:** Very good.

Now we're going to go to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Thank you for being here.

We heard from a witness earlier in this committee study that when she wanted police support around ending cyber-bullying, the police needed to be deeply educated by the victim herself around what a hashtag is. There was no cyber-literacy whatsoever on the enforcement side. That felt like a particularly unfair burden for victims, who were looking for support in simply having the violence and bullying end.

Can you talk about your perception of the police role, and what partnerships or education Twitter might be providing to fill that gap?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** It is a very valid point, and we have heard this time and time again from victims and from groups that are advocating support for them. There's a really big disconnect between the technology and the education within law enforcement and judicial authorities about that technology. We see this on a day-to-day basis. Actually, my colleague Will, who is here, and the rest of my team and I travel the world, educating law enforcement. I tend to spend my days in Mexico City, sitting down with the federal police to see if they can understand the processes. This is very common. We need to make it easier for them to understand.

We have guidelines for law enforcement, something that I didn't even get to speak about. There's a link that contains all of the information for law enforcement. It's within our help centre, and I recommend that you check it out. It has really helpful information, like how long does Twitter keep the information, what type of information do we keep, what does a valid legal process look like, what happens in emergency situations where you may not even have the time to provide a valid subpoena or court order because there might be a risk to life.

Our job is to sit down with those law enforcement agencies and work with them. There is one model that I find has worked very well. The United Kingdom has what's called a SPOC system, that is, a single point of contact system. Every law enforcement agency in the U.K. will have single points of contact. If you are sitting down in West London at a police station and a victim comes to you with a case, you don't need to navigate how to make a request of data from a tech company. You can go to your SPOC, who will help you do it. It's a really helpful system that we keep advocating for. We will continue to do more, but there's something that we can certainly do: make it easier for victims to get all of the information that they need at the point of report.

To that effect, we launched last year a mechanism that allows you to download the report when you report a threat of violence. That report will contain the specific tweet—so the text that was shared in the tweet—the URL of the tweet, the time stamp, the URL of the user who shared it, and the name as it's shown in the account, together with a link to the law enforcement guideline so that you can print it and bring it to the local law enforcement station.

We will continue to invest more in training law enforcement authorities. I would make this recommendation to the members of the committee: if you know of law enforcement authorities in Canada that are struggling with this, it's our job to engage with them and to train them as thoroughly as we can. We will continue to invest more in improving those processes.

I would also like to mention that, at times, those mechanisms get abused. You will have people who pretend to be law enforcement officers to try to gather information. That's why if you go to the reporting form for law enforcement, you'll see that you cannot submit a report without having an official email address, and we will still ask for valid legal identification to make sure that the valid legal process is being followed.

● (1600)

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Our committee would benefit from seeing your guidelines for law enforcement and the other models that you recommend to us. If you're able to provide that to the clerk, then it would be in evidence for the committee, and we can reflect it in our report.

We've heard quite a bit from witnesses about how some of the stigma around reporting and some of the profile of cyber-bullying and sexual violence has been removed. However, the front-line organizations that sometimes might be partnering with you to help support victims are increasingly underfunded, and they have an increasing workload. The worst thing would be for us to encourage young women and girls to ask for help more and then not have the help available.

Can you comment on your experience with the capacity of these groups, and whether their having access to more secure operating funds would allow them to meet this new demand?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** Yes, you're absolutely correct.

We're seeing that these organizations are under a lot of pressure when it comes to resources. When we start partnerships of this nature with organizations, we do two things. One, we provide them with operational support, because we acknowledge that, oftentimes, victims won't come to us. They don't trust the social media platforms. They don't know what happens after you click report, and that's something we're taking on board. We are working on increasing transparency around reporting.

In the meantime, we know that victims feel more comfortable with the organizations that, in their countries, are known for providing them with support. We want to continue to prioritize any of these reports that these groups provide and send our way. We have specific reporting mechanisms for them and therefore, if Hollaback! was to report a case of abuse, it would go to a specific queue that our team would look into. It doesn't go into the general queue. As you point out, they are, perhaps, getting more and more people to go to them and request help.

We also help them with the awareness piece. We have a #FoodforGood program, which is our corporate philanthropy program, and also run by our team. Oftentimes, we'll work with these organizations through ad grants and through our own platform, the Twitter blogs, and Twitter corporate accounts to provide more awareness.

We will also support them with requests they make for funding from governments and different programs by which they might qualify for more funding. We'll oftentimes document how we have been working with them. Twitter, in particular, is not in a position to provide funding because we are not profitable. You should see the way I flew here yesterday; it was remarkable.

We will continue to support them. A good example of this would be the Insafe network in Europe, which is funded by the safer Internet programme of the European Commission. Almost every year we provide letters of support. We have vast documentation about how we have worked with those groups, the number of reports that those groups have sent our way, how many of those cases have found a positive resolution, and our own recommendations for funding.

Whenever it happens that we do have any available funding, we also try to support them as much as we can. They really are essential to creating that safe environment.

● (1605)

**The Chair:** Ms. Damoff, you have seven minutes.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you so much for coming and sharing what you're doing. All of us, I'm sure, because we're on Twitter, have been subject to some form of harassment online, some of it worse than others. I really appreciate you coming here today.

I had a conversation with Facebook about what they're doing in terms of social media. Twitter allows fake accounts and anonymous accounts. Have you considered tightening up the rules around identification of who can have accounts? That was one of things they pointed out to me in their platform that they do require.

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** Yes, we allow anonymous use. We don't allow fake accounts, and that's a big distinction we want to make.

One thing is a priority account, which, by the way, happens a lot. It adds levity to the platform, and it was one of the first types of accounts that we ever saw being set in the platform. Something else is to impersonate somebody with an abusive intention in mind. We do draw the line there.

If I start tweeting right now, impersonating you, using your photo in the first person, mocking you, that would be a violation of our rules that we would take action on. We also enable bystanders to report on behalf of the person who is getting impersonated. We cannot just equate real name platforms with safer platforms.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** No, no—

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** I know you are not saying...In my experience, where a real name has its benefits, it also has a very negative impact on whistleblowers and activists who may not be able to communicate safely using their names, and we do want to cater to them.

When Twitter was first created, it was precisely to enable people to speak truth to power, and to provide people with a platform of communication to the higher levels of power that was unprecedented. We want to continue to encourage that use, but as you say, it's extremely important that we clamp down on fake accounts and impersonation, and that impersonation is not being used for abusive purposes.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** You sort of led into my next question about jurisdictions.

Do you have any difficulty upholding your terms of use across various jurisdictions? Obviously, you're worldwide, and there's only so much a government can do in terms of requiring things. Within your own terms of use, do you have trouble enforcing them?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** We want the terms of use to be as thorough as possible. As you point out, because we are global, we want to make sure that the terms of use and our rules are as fair as possible, that they enable speech, and that they prohibit abuse.

You also have different jurisdictions that will prohibit certain types of speech. I will give you the example of Turkey where you cannot criticize Atatürk, the founder of the republic. If you do, then you are in violation of Turkish law, and oftentimes we have to deal with a violation of our rules. When content is reported to us, we will look at whether there is a violation of the rules. If there is, we will take action. If there isn't, but it's a law enforcement or a judicial authority that is bringing it to our attention as violating a local law, then we will then look at whether we can block that content in that country. This is something we will do.

Another good example would be Holocaust denial in Germany. It's illegal in Germany. It's illegal in France. It's illegal in Spain. You will see some tweets that perhaps didn't violate our rules, but that we have blocked in that jurisdiction. The challenge there is how does this scale, and is it ensuring, as we spoke of before, that the law enforcement authorities and the judicial authorities know how to bring this to our attention.

Some organizations that are non-profit also do have a government mandate to bring hate speech to the attention of platforms like ours. That is the case of Jugendschutz in Germany, or the diversity centres in Belgium, or the Movimiento contra la Intolerancia in Spain. We will work with them on that, too.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Do you have any recommendations that the federal government could make that would assist you and other social media platforms to deal with harassment online? Is there anything we could be recommending as part of our study that would assist in the things you are already doing, or that would be over and above that?

● (1610)

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** The most helpful thing will always be to empower those organizations that you have in the country that are the experts on this. I know that I keep saying this, but you really have an incredible unprecedented level of knowledge in this country. MediaSmarts alone has led the way in digital citizenship in this country. They started Media Literacy Week 12 years before the U.S. did.

You have organizations that are very knowledgeable that may not be as well equipped to fight abuse, due to a lack of resources. I always recommend working with them, because the public tends to trust those organizations more than they trust the platforms or the government. That is the reality, and working with them, or providing them with the funds that they need at times, or the mechanisms for them to grow, does help us. Similarly, if you are finding that there is abuse in the country about which we are clueless, providing us with reports, whether that is through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or through a specific hotline that is run by the government—we work a lot with Get Cyber Safe—to ensure that we have that knowledge, so we can act on it, would be very helpful.

It really breaks my heart when I see governments and media thinking that we don't care about abuse, because we do. It's just that the world is a really big place. We are a very small company. Google Ireland has more employees than Twitter worldwide, and so oftentimes we just lack the ability to act on everything, but the majority of the time we're just not aware, and we're working with somebody who is an expert and who is providing us with ongoing feedback.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I only have about a minute left, and I have a quick question. You've talked about adding new features where you can block and mute specific words, but all that does is stop me from seeing it. That doesn't stop it from being out there.

For example, in the case of the lady who testified and who had filed a suit against a harasser and lost, it doesn't mean that material is not out there. As another example, someone could be harassing me and putting the period in front of my name, and it's public for everyone to see. They could have 10,000 followers. How do you deal with that kind of harassment?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** The tools that we strengthened and relaunched last week are just a means for us to empower the user, but you are correct that we also don't want to put the burden on the user. We want regular users to be able to control their experience, but we have also significantly changed the way we enforce our hateful conduct rules and how we look at the targeting of not just groups, but also individuals. Those two go hand in hand where there is abusive content on which we have to act. The user should feel empowered to use these tools, not to have to engage further, and not to have to see the content that may be triggering it at times, but we do have a responsibility to act on the content.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

Over to Ms. Vecchio, for five minutes.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Thank you very much.

I'm just going to continue on that line with Pam. We often hear from women that the wrong thing to say, "get offline and go offline". Similarly, the answer shouldn't just be to get a private account, because we've heard, as well, that you shouldn't accept things. Twitter is a little bit different, because it's really not a private account that you can compare to Facebook.

What is the answer for women who have been continually harassed, but want to keep using your service? What are some of the techniques that they could use?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** I know I keep saying great question, but they really are all great questions.

You're correct. That idea of getting offline or stopping using the platform doesn't work, and by the way, I rarely share this publicly, but I was a victim of a high-profile harassment case in Ireland, and the first thing that the *An Garda Síochána*, which is the Irish police, said to me was, "Well, you need to get off these platforms." I said, "Well, I work in them, so I can't just get off the platform."

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Yes.

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** I know how terrible it feels when that is the only word of advice you get, especially because you're made to feel like you were in the wrong, and also, by no means should you change the way you have been interacting. That's something that people like my family would say. They'd say, "Well, just don't tweet publicly." That shouldn't be the case.

We have just published a guide with the National Network to End Domestic Violence, NNEDV, which I will also share with the clerk for the purposes of the committee, that really highlights all of the options that you have. You can protect your tweets so that you're not tweeting publicly, but you can also do other things like not sharing your geo-location data if you are worried that somebody may be tracking your movements. Actually, on Twitter, by default we strike the geo-location data of your images, so unless you change the settings, if you were to share an image here right now, it wouldn't share that geo-location data, and that's something that we do precisely to protect the privacy of the users, but also to protect victims who have said time and time again that their location had been disclosed unnecessarily by using images.

We also recommend using your community to support you. That's why we launched the bystander reports. I know how triggering it can be to have to go through each one of those abusive tweets to report them yourself manually, and that's why we now enable the community to report on behalf of the person who is being abused. In that line, within the block function that I mentioned before, you don't have to manually block the people who are abusing you or making you feel uncomfortable. You can also ask others to block them, and you can now export the list of blocks. We designed that feature precisely with communities in mind that are being targeted on a regular basis. In my case, I asked my sisters to go through all of the accounts, block them, and then my sisters exported the list that I was able to import to my account. That's something you can do from your account settings on block.

● (1615)

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Awesome.

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** We will continue to look at features like this, how to report the violent threats to law enforcement in a way that you have all of the information printed by the time you go to law enforcement. These are just small tweaks within the features that we think make it easier for the victim.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Excellent.

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** I think what's most important is to continue to work with groups like NNEDV, and sit down with victims to go through the experiences that they've had, and see what educational materials we can build, but also how we can modify the features so that victims can still feel safe and at home using this technology.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Excellent. Thank you very much.

I know I used them, probably a week after I was elected, so we understand those things.

What do you think is the role of the government when it comes to social media, algorithms, and a variety of things like that? Since you are global, have you seen some best practices? I love the SPOC, that's exceptional, but is there anything that other countries are doing that we should be adopting so that we can make it better for Canadian women and young girls?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** A lot of countries have felt this pressure, and maybe have been tempted to legislate against online bullying and abuse. I think it's very hard to legislate because it's not always black and white, and you don't always know who is in the wrong and who is in the right, especially if two parties are engaging in an online battle.

One country that I think has followed the right approach is Australia. In 2014 they were discussing the criminalization of cyber-bullying, and after some discussions in the house of Parliament, that led to the creation of an eSafety commissioner. The eSafety commissioner's office was initially going to look at abuse reports and have a very specific time frame for companies to respond to those abuse cases. I think they very quickly realized that they could be really overwhelmed by the number of reports, just like we feel on a daily basis.

What they do now is they provide a public hotline. You can report abuse to them, and then they will work with the platform. We have a specific mechanism for the eSafety commissioner in Australia to bring abuse to our attention. We take action on the cases, but also on an ongoing basis we look at the creation of documentation to educate, based on the issues we see Australian society has experienced. If we see abuse against aboriginal communities, if we see a rise of hate speech, we look for ways to fight that through education.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Awesome.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

Now we're going to go to Mr. Fraser for five minutes.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I am going to yield a few moments of my time to Mr. Serré before I begin.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you so much for coming.

You mentioned freedom of speech. You mentioned lack of staffing. We've heard here by victims—by mothers, by teenagers, young people—that the Twitter platform has re-abused them, re-victimized them. I know you have done some work here in the last week. You have announced the blocking and the muting. That's good progress moving forward. It's the first time you have actually made some major changes. But there's more to be done.

I was just wondering. Are you looking at more? Because it's not right to say, “Oh, it's freedom of speech” or “Oh, I had a lack of staff.” You have a platform. It's out there in the public. It's being utilized to victimize young children, time and time again. You have a responsibility.

We have a responsibility, too, as legislators. I think legislation might be important if a private company doesn't do some of the work.

Can you expand a bit about that?

● (1620)

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** I don't think the day will ever come when we say that we're done with safety, that we are a safe platform now, so everybody just enjoy it.

I mentioned before that when we first launched you couldn't upload images. Therefore we were not seeing the violations of privacy that we would see in this day in age.

I think Twitter as a company was maybe surprised by the reach of its platform. The platform grew in a way that the company didn't grow in. Perhaps we were not “safety by design” from the get-go. I actually find myself being the party-pooper in the meetings with engineering at times, where, if they say we're going to enable the sharing of images in direct messages, I am the one who has to put up a hand to say, how about child sexual exploitation?

I think there's been a really big shift within the company where we now think about safety first. This is for any feature that I have seen discussed in the last year, and I'm not just talking about safety, I'm talking about anything that is rolled out on the site. When we rolled out Twitter Moments, we asked, how can Twitter Moments be abused? How do we make sure that they don't get abused? How do we build a reporting mechanism within Twitter Moments? That shift has taken place, and I think it's a normal shift.

I mentioned having worked at Google and Facebook before. When I joined Facebook I was the second person in Europe. There were no rules. There were no reporting mechanisms. I do think they're one of the safer platforms out there right now. I think this is the regular progression of a platform. I completely agree that we have a responsibility not just to our users but to people who encounter our content. My grandmother is not on Twitter, but is following hashtags left, right, and centre, and pinging me about hate speech that she sees on those hashtags.

We need to empower the users with better controls, but we need to take more severe actions when violations have taken place.

I started talking about the rules explaining that while we empower people to speak truth to power, that means little if they are scared. You can expect to see more changes in the next six months. It's a severe overhaul of how we have processed abuse reports before. I mentioned working on transparency of reporting. We want to make sure that the users know what happens when they click “report”, what action we're taking so they can appeal decisions. It's only going to get better.

I know that we have asked the world to be too patient. It's been too long. It's not acceptable. We did not want our platform to become a platform of abuse. I can assure you that every time I'm back in San Francisco, and I sit down with the abuse team, and I escalate content to them, it breaks their hearts. These people are working 24/7 to make sure that the abuse is not online, it's not live on the platform, and their own families don't have to see it.

I apologize for any re-victimization and anybody who has been abused through the platform. I think working constructively with civil society, and government is what's going to lead to a safer platform, and most importantly, to a safer society because unfortunately some of these prejudices do exist offline. They are very hard to eradicate.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Just quickly, we have less than a minute to go.

You mentioned there was some success with MediaSmarts and Hollaback! Could you perhaps very briefly describe some of the best partnerships you've had with community organizations and provide anything supplementary by way of follow-up in writing?

**Ms. Patricia Cartes:** Absolutely.

By way of writing, we just published today a blog post about position of strength. It's our women and safety empowerment initiative that we brought to Toronto last month. We're looking forward to bringing it to Ottawa, and to continuing the movement in Canada. You'll be able to see more about that on the link that we will provide.

With MediaSmarts we have worked a lot on media literacy. We are now working on the creation of guides. We have a number of one pagers that we have been able to distribute in Canada in French and English with the help of MediaSmarts.

I mentioned that they're really leading the way on digital citizenship, most importantly, empowering young people to share how to use the technology in a safe way, which will be very important.

And also there's a new non-profit that you should all be aware of, High Resolves. They were born in Australia. They look at doing counter-narratives with young people. With them we're looking at how to fight specific incidents of hate speech with young people using or harvesting the power of Twitter.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Excellent. Thank you very much. We appreciate so much of your testimony and the work that you are doing to make the platform safer and to address the issues that we have. I wanted to let the committee know that we did hear from Hollaback! We will be hearing from MediaSmarts, so you'll have a chance to ask some more questions.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Did we already hear from them?

● (1625)

**The Chair:** I thought they were coming for the algorithms.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** No, MediaSmarts is coming for the algorithms.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We're now going to suspend while we change up for the next panel.

● (1625)

(Pause)

● (1625)

**The Chair:** I'll call the meeting back to order.

For our panel discussion this afternoon we're really pleased to have a number of witnesses with us. We have from the Canadian Council for Refugees, Loly Rico, the president, who is with us today by video conference. We have from the Native Women's Association of Canada, Lynne Groulx, Marilee Nowgesic, and Francyne Joe, who is the president. From Babely Shades we have Awar Obob.

We are going to give each of our groups seven minutes to speak and we'll start with the Canadian Council for Refugees.

● (1630)

**Ms. Loly Rico (President, Canadian Council for Refugees):** Good afternoon.

My name is Loly Rico and I'm the president of the Canadian Council for Refugees. We are a national organization and we accommodate more than 180 members. We do most of our work as an advocacy group for the rights of immigrants and refugees.

Thank you for the invitation. Our focus today will be in relation to policies and practices on immigration. I want to bring up different points. One is on the conditional permanent resident status. We welcome that the government is going to remove it for next year, but one of the things we have been seeing is that in the meantime they are still implementing the regulation and on that, as you know, there are even reports saying it makes women and children more vulnerable.

We in the CCR are asking the government publicly to commit to stop pursuing this and to remove the condition, even though it is going to be finished next year. Maybe they can stop doing that.

The other issue we want to bring up is about the spousal sponsorship issue, which I want to focus on a little bit more, because the processing time in Canada is too long. Sometimes we have reports from our members that the women stay in abusive relationships because there are no other options for them to get out of abusive relationships without being deported.

We also want to bring up the human trafficking situation, especially focused on youth, on young women who are the victims of human trafficking, and especially in international cases. The government has a temporary protection form, the temporary resident permit, but there is no option for permanent residency. This limits them and puts them more in a situation of vulnerability to stay in the trafficking situation. We are looking for the government to have legislation where they can give more permanent residence.

I would like to deal with family reunification, for the long term. I want to bring up that when the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act was implemented in 2002, there was a consideration of gender-based analysis in the policies and there was involvement of the community. In the past, the Canadian Council for Refugees has been in communication because even Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada had a gender-based analysis unit and started talking about different regulations. At this moment there is no unit and they lost that possibility and they stopped doing this analysis. I've given you the examples about spousal sponsorship and conditional permanent residence. We are recommending to the committee and to the government to go back and have a gender-based analysis unit in Immigration and to have a consultation with the community.

The other item that we want to bring up is about enforcement, which we are looking at with the Canada Border Services Agency. I can give you an example, a case where a woman is without status because she's in a spousal sponsorship and that's how the abuse starts. When the police is called, because the person doesn't have status, she is immediately reported to the Canada Border Services Agency. At the end sometimes there's no protection for the woman. She is deported.

We have been asking the Canada Border Services Agency to have a violence against women policy. We are looking for a possibility that you can bring into your study that there has to be a violence against women policy in relation to the Canada Border Services Agency and in relation to Immigration.

That's our position. Again, we thank you for the invitation.

● (1635)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We're going to hear now from the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Lynne and Marilee, you have seven minutes.

**Ms. Lynne Groulx (Executive Director, Native Women's Association of Canada):** Actually Francyne, our president, is going to speak.

**The Chair:** All right.

Francyne.

**Ms. Francyne Joe (President, Native Women's Association of Canada):** Good afternoon, Madam Chairperson, committee members, distinguished witnesses, and guests. My name is Francyne Joe, and I am the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

I am a proud member of B.C.'s Nlaka'pamux Nation, and while I have worked for Canada Border Services for over five years, I'm experienced in human resource management, economic development, entrepreneurship, and insurance, in an effort to educate and encourage aboriginal people to pursue their aspirations.

I'm here today with Lynne Groulx, NWAC director—more notably, she holds two degrees in law—and Marilee Nowgesic, NWAC's special advisor and liaison.

First, I would like to acknowledge the Algonquin Nation in whose traditional territory we are meeting here today.

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. I bring with me the voices of my ancestors, the concerns of aboriginal women from across Canada, and the hopes of our future leaders, our youth.

The Native Women's Association of Canada is the only national aboriginal organization in Canada that represents the voice, the interests, and the many concerns of aboriginal women. NWAC is made up of 12 provincial and territorial member associations from across the country, since 1974. Our network of first nations and Métis women spans across the north, south, east, and west into urban, rural, on- and off-reserve communities.

There are three key messages I would like to deliver today.

First, violence against indigenous women and girls is not new. From a traditional understanding, indigenous women cannot be separated from the impacts of colonization, systemic issues, and the policies and laws that have reduced the stability of our environment, the practice of our spirituality, and the expression of our inherent right to self-determination.

Violence takes on many forms—physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and financial. This often results in vulnerability and self-harm, such as depression, alcoholism, substance abuse, and suicide. Indigenous women are eight times more likely to be killed than non-aboriginal women. The rates of spousal assault are more than three times higher, and the spouse is not necessarily an aboriginal person.

As indigenous women, we have seen and witnessed the impacts of poverty, lower educational attainment, and overrepresentation of our children in the child welfare system, which is more than those who were in the Indian residential schools. Canada has only learned of the impacts of that through the work of the TRC. This list of vulnerable populations provided by Health Canada places indigenous women and children within most or all of the categories of vulnerable segments of the Canadian population to be negatively impacted by climate change.

NWAC has continued to fill a knowledge gap about indigenous women by looking beyond academic literature, gathering comprehensive evidence, and exposing how the police and justice systems have responded to women.

The second message is that we have a need for current indigenous and gender-specific perspectives in the development of policies, legislation, public safety, prevention strategies, and social campaigns that resonate with current population trends.

In 2005, NWAC began to raise awareness of the violence against indigenous women. Unfortunately, the voices of families and communities in need were ignored. From 2005 to 2010, NWAC began to document all the known cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We discovered 582 in addition to the current numbers and cases collected by law enforcement. In 2014, the RCMP released its report documenting well over 1,000 indigenous women had gone missing or had been murdered. Of these incidents, 164 were missing, and 1,017 were homicide victims. There are likely more, but their ancestry or origins were not known and not recorded.

NWAC holds the only national database on the number and circumstances of missing and/or murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada. As per our fact sheet, 225 unsolved cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls; 105 missing for more than 30 days as of November 4, 2013, whose cause of disappearance was categorized at the time as unknown, or foul play suspected; 120 unsolved homicides between 1980 and 2012.

Within Canada it is crucial that indigenous women be included as a meaningful partner in the discussions on prevention and safety. NWAC is the organization that has the ability to provide the expertise on indigenous and gender-specific perspectives.

● (1640)

The third message we want to bring is that the meaningful consultation with indigenous women needs to be done in compliance with and respect to the principles set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, first of all, article 18 and article 21(2) of UNDRIP, with respect to indigenous rights to participate in decision-making and the state's obligation to take account of particular rights of indigenous women. The policy of the legislation must be informed by evidence and by those who are impacted by it. Legislation must be reviewed so that the justice and conviction or sentences are increased where violence has been committed, and this would include, but is not limited to, the recent incidents at Val-d'Or. As well, increased public awareness is needed of the human rights crisis in terms of lack of safety and protection of indigenous women.

We need to look at the investment factor of indigenous women in Canada through skills and development, employment and education, and opportunities to participate in the economy. As indigenous women, we contribute 90% of our income back to our families and our communities.

While we are currently working on addressing the procedures and processes that will drive the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry commission, we are the lead organization for indigenous women to bring their issues, their concerns, and sometimes their missing voices to effectively address the crisis of violence against indigenous women and girls. It will be through raising public awareness aimed at changing attitudes which devalue indigenous women and girls and the contributions of indigenous peoples as an educational tool for violence prevention.

*Kukshem*. Thank you very much for your time.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now we're going to hear from Awar Obob, of Babely Shades. You have seven minutes.

**Ms. Awar Obob (Member, Babely Shades):** Hello, and thank you for inviting me and the collective.

My name is Awar Obob. I'm a writer, activist, and general show booker within the collective, Babely Shades. We are made up of marginalized genders and minority status people. We do a lot of art and positive things within the Ottawa community.

I wasn't quite sure what I had gotten myself into by coming here. I don't have anything prepared, but it's going pretty well. I'm liking it so far.

One of the main things I would like to bring up is the treatment of LGBTQ youth—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer youth—within Canada, and also the current treatment of people of colour due to the violence going on in the U.S. and the current election, and what it has spurred within the country.

Though racism in Canada is not a very new thing—it's not new at all, it's kind of what the country was built upon—it has recently seen a new wave of targeted and very vocal violence against any person of colour, mainly people from middle eastern backgrounds and south-Asian countries. A lot of anti-Semitic violence has been brought forth, a lot of anti-indigenous and anti-black violence has been seen throughout Canada, spurring from this thing that happened in the U.S., which we like to think we're not really that attached to, but it has a huge effect, and factors in on the proceedings that go on within this country.

The pain that the majority of the minorities are feeling within the country really needs to be addressed and heard, and dealt with properly; just dealt with, period. There needs to be some type of vocal outrage that is not just from the lower working-class people who have most of this pain on their backs. It also needs to come from above, from the government, from high-standing officials to show that they do not approve of this, to say that this is not a proper Canadian thing to do, and this is not who we are as a people. I feel that's a very major thing that needs to be addressed.

That also does connect into the treatment of LGBTQ youth. Yesterday was the International Transgender Day of Remembrance. I'd like to remember all of those who we've lost, and those who are still with us who deserve all the love that they are not quite getting at the moment with a lot of the hate crimes, and it being one of the most deadliest years in a very long time for a trans woman.

There is a lot of negativity, and a lot of quiet brewing that goes on. It affects youth, especially the youth of today, the youth of first- and second-generation new Canadians who came here a while ago. It affects their children, and it affects their children's children. Everyone who I know personally has not only intergenerational trauma from the pain that their family members and ancestors have faced but they also have their current traumas going on due to what they face within their own lives, and what they've had to deal with just day to day.

● (1645)

No one should deal with these things at any point, especially when just going through one's day. I don't feel these things are properly addressed in Canada; they are seen as more of an American issue, though they are just as loud and prevalent as anywhere else.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** That's excellent.

We'll start our round of questioning with my friend Monsieur Serré for seven minutes.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** *Merci*, Madam Chair.

I'll be sharing my time with Mr. Fraser.

Thank you so much to the witnesses for your presentations and your commitment.

Ms. Joe, thank you for mentioning that more needs to be done on the messaging to include indigenous women and girls in the conversation.

We heard earlier about Bill 132 from the Province of Ontario. Other provinces, such as Manitoba and Nova Scotia, are looking at trying to incorporate some of the education at the provincial level.

Have any of the provinces approached your organizations? You have quite a bit of expertise and knowledge. Are you working with any other provinces to try to ensure that the curriculum is reflective of indigenous women and girls?

**Ms. Francyne Joe:** Excuse me. I just got back from Morocco on the weekend, so I'm just becoming familiar with any changes.

At this time we haven't been formally contacted by some of these provinces. You're right, though. We do have a lot of resources that we are more than willing to share.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Talking about the research and some of the data that is missing in some of these conversations—and I would ask that you share that research with the clerk—do you have anything right now when we look at women and girls? We had a lot of witnesses to talk about cyber. We had Twitter. We had other social media. When we specifically target indigenous women and girls in social media, how has that had an effect?

● (1650)

**Ms. Lynne Groulx:** We have somebody in our office who specializes in taking a look at that question, but the research has just started, so we haven't progressed much on it. We could certainly get back to you with what we do have unless, Marilee, you know about anything else.

**Ms. Marilee Nowgesic (Special Advisor, Liaison, Native Women's Association of Canada):** We have worked through the years with some of the provincial-territorial member associations and their external stakeholders in addressing this very issue and making Internet and public surfing safe. We're showing how to protect the webcams at home, making the home much more Internet-savvy, and looking at campaigns that would help address this at school without scaring our youth or the teachers, but helping them with information to make informed decisions about how long and where you're going to serve, how to look at safety mechanisms, and how to plug up certain words so that the parents can catch it if they can.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Ms. Rico, earlier you talked about spousal sponsorship and the long processing times. As the government right now we're trying to see how we can reduce some of the wait times. From your experience, can you elaborate and expand a bit on what effect the long processing times has had for the spousal reunification program?

**Ms. Loly Rico:** Right now it's taking 26 months to receive permanent residence from the spousal sponsorship. In the majority of cases either the person has a visitor's visa or is without status. In that case, when they go through the process with the emotional strength they put in the relationship, there is also a power dynamic because the abusers are using that as a control in the relationship. When the process takes that long, and if you are in the middle of the process and the sponsorship breaks down, the person stays without any other solution to continue an immigration process here in Canada.

There could be a Canadian baby, and the mother is facing deportation because the spousal sponsorship is over. There is another process, the humanitarian compassionate grounds, but it doesn't stop the deportation.

That's why we are saying the process is too long. When it started in the nineties with Prime Minister Paul Martin, it took eight months. Now it's taking 26 months. For us, that's a long process.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you.

Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Ms. Joe, you mentioned an interesting economic statistic, that about 90% of the money spent by indigenous women goes back into communities.

Has there been an economic assessment or analysis done on the cost of violence against women to indigenous communities in Canada?

**Ms. Marilee Nowgesic:** Yes, Mr. Fraser, there has been.

However, we haven't given much credence to it, because of the numbers that have varied between what has been collected by law enforcement, what has been collected by Statistics Canada, and what has been collected or reflected by our resources at Native Women's Association.

Some of the things that I think become cumbersome are what is actually reported—the extra monies that women bring on the side vis-à-vis cooking, crafts, child care, these types of things—versus those things that sometimes don't get reported. We mentioned 90%, by looking I guess at the aggregate data of some of those sources.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** I think that's fair. By no means should this be an economic issue. I think it's the right thing to do. However, for whatever reason, sometimes that helps impact policy change, and I'll use any tool I have.

I have only about 30 seconds left. I'm wondering if there are any initiatives that you're aware of to help men choose non-violence in indigenous communities.

● (1655)

**Ms. Marilee Nowgesic:** We have a couple of them in Ontario, but mostly in central Canada. In Ontario, I'm aware of a program, “men in hide”. They learn how to deal with domestic violence, intimate partner violence.

This is also another issue or topic that is being dealt with in some of the mainstream organizations vis-à-vis men. One, in particular, is the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada. They have learned how to deal with indigenous intimate and domestic partner violence guidelines in looking at how to have healthy relationships.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

We're going to go now to Ms. Vecchio, for seven minutes.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Hi, and thanks very much.

I'm going to start with the Canadian Council for Refugees.

You noted the permanent residence and some of the changes you're advocating for, and that this government has spoken for. I worked in Citizenship and Immigration for 11 years. I recognized the need for some of the policies that I saw.

Do you think there is a way of having a policy that would fit, so that it's not held over a woman that she'd have to be deported or anything like that? I worked with a number of cases where men came to Canada to get here, and then left their wives immediately. That was from the out-of-country sponsorship, because there are two types, of course.

Is there a program or a way that we can check both boxes, to make sure there's not fraudulent immigration, as well as making sure we're being cautious and our female victims are being protected?

**Ms. Loly Rico:** One of the things is that the policy shouldn't be done on the basis of looking at it as if it will be a fraud. If you see, even in the percentage of the reports....

At IRCC, we have been asking for the statistics. In the majority of the reports of fraud, when they send a letter, there is a way that we can look at the exceptions for domestic violence, because the person had been reporting to police, the person had been in a shelter. That's when they meet the exception. The percentage of the fraud that we can see could be 1%.

The policy should be done in a way where there is a kind of balance, and the majority is to be the protection for the most vulnerable. We have been seeing very few cases—and not because I work directly with women—where the man is the one who has been brought to Canada and has left the relationship. We had that before.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Excellent.

Now, on to the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Recently we have had different organizations—the BC Lions was one we had in last week—talking about men not being bystanders and being part of the solution. Has there been anything through the Native Women's Association of Canada to get men to be part of the solution, and have there been any funded programs for that as well?

**Ms. Francyne Joe:** At this point, we have are looking to work with the Moose Hide Campaign, organized by Paul Lacerte, the original executive director for the B.C. aboriginal friendship centres.

**Ms. Marilee Nowgesic:** We have had an opportunity to work with the Canadian Federation of Students in the past. Some of the issues got bogged down, of course, by their studies, which we want them to do, but at the same time, by other issues that were much more pressing at the time.

We are still somewhere on their radar. We still come up every so often as an important concern. They're addressing it I think through sexual reproduction or sexual education campaigns.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Yes, that's fantastic.

I want to ask a few questions of the representative from Babely Shades. Maybe I'm just ignorant, and I'm happy to say that. Coming from smaller communities...I'm from a rural community and my son has just moved to Toronto. It is a different lifestyle.

Do you think part of the issue that we have today is the generation gap? Do you find when we talk about violence and we talk about harassment, it is coming from a particular age group? Is it coming from a group of uneducated persons, like myself, who may have grown up without understanding such issues?

I've gone to many different things for gender equality. I think that they're doing a much better job than we've ever done before when it comes to gays, lesbians, transgender people, and such.

Do you think we're not educating properly? Do you feel that the same age groups that are harassing and that the violence is coming from those age groups? What demographics are we looking at?

● (1700)

**Ms. Awar Obob:** I feel it spans all age groups. Personally, I've seen it from all age groups and I've also read plenty of stories and publications of experiences where the violence was introduced within the home. It stems from the parents and the society around us in any size of town. I'm also from a small town. I'm from Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Oh, that's awesome.

**Ms. Awar Obob:** It's very small.

I've seen it face-to-face quite often and it really does cover all age groups.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** The reason I ask is that I look at my generation. I'm in my forties. We were at the cutting edge. There were some social changes happening. Racism used to be a big thing, especially at that time. Nowadays, it's great because when I speak to my children, maybe they're just really special kids, but I'm finding that there's not a racist or a sexually negative bone in their body. They are very accepting. That's what we need to do.

Do you think there are ways we can do that? Maybe it's just my family. I feel like this new generation is much stronger and much more aware of the social issues and the fact that they can't be ignorant about them. Do you think there's more we can do? What are some of the techniques we should be doing for even our older generations?

**Ms. Awar Obob:** Well, I think there's definitely a positive lean in this generation. I think a lot more is coming from collecting and organizing themselves to stand up against all the injustices that they face and we face. A good way to teach people who do not live these experiences is to recognize their own microaggressions against people who are not like them.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Thank you.

One final question for the Native Women's Association. If we're looking at stats comparing on-reserve versus off-reserve, what is the difference in stats for aboriginal women being abused? Do you have those stats available?

**Ms. Marilee Nowgesic:** The short answer is no. Sometimes we know that, in the cases that get brought before either the law enforcement, or to a triage unit in a hospital or a clinic, the questions about your ancestry or your origins are not ones that are going to be prevalent. It is going to be about drugs or medications or if there is someone they should be contacting.

The questions about where do you come from come after the fact, when the hospital administration or clinic administration is chasing someone down to pay the bill. That's the only time the issue about ancestry or origin arises.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** All right, we'll go to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm really grateful to the witnesses. I'm going to reflect a lot on the testimony of the Canadian Council for Refugees and Babely Shades in our final recommendations. I'm also going to really focus on the work that NWAC has done. Thank you so much for the work that you've done. You have pushed so hard over 10 years. You're changing the country and will change the country. I salute your stamina.

I'm going to ask you to answer really briefly, so I can maximize my time.

Is your operational funding adequate for the work that the country is asking you to do?

**Ms. Francyne Joe:** No.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I note that in the context of the discussion around building new domestic violence shelters, especially focused around indigenous women, there is a recognition that the rate of violence is so much higher. We've had information that indicates that 70% of Inuit communities do not have access to safe shelter. There are only 15 shelters for the 53 Inuit communities across the country, and there are no new domestic violence shelters proposed for them in the budget money that's been announced already.

I also note your information. Right now we have a network of only 41 shelters on-reserve across the country. The new government's proposal is to build five new shelters over the next five years.

Is that adequate to meet the demand that's been identified?

● (1705)

**Ms. Francyne Joe:** Do you want to answer that?

**Ms. Marilee Nowgesic:** Sure.

I can't speak for my Inuit partner organizations. However, I am aware of the statistics, and I am aware of the, shall I call it, applaudable effort of their wanting to address something. That's better than nothing.

At the same time, five shelters over five years is, again, going to be a band-aid solution. It will be inadequate, and it will not address the issue. It's a matter of asking, what are we really looking at here? This is putting them into a room and saying, “suffer quietly”, or “suffer in pain”, but saying nothing about programs or services for when they get out of there. It's a matter of a quick fix, and then telling them to be quiet.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Is there any additional funding that you've seen that's proposed for domestic violence shelters to meet the needs of indigenous women off-reserve?

**Ms. Marilee Nowgesic:** We have just had a conversation with some of our external partners who are looking at urban and rural programs. The need is not only for shelters in the cases of violence, but also in cases where women are being thrown out of their homes because of substance, alcohol, or drug abuse, or because there are financial complications. They may have spent all of the welfare cheque, and then they're being beaten up because there isn't enough food or there isn't enough of something else.

We are trying to work closely with all of the partners as best we can because of the limited resources we have to operate nationally. We're spreading ourselves very thin, so it's better for us to just try to focus on the one thing that we can do well, rather than to try to bring a false light to too many.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** This is the last question that I have so, I encourage you to be more conversational if you want.

**Ms. Marilee Nowgesic:** Okay.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** On Friday, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women issued a report. They do this only once every five years for Canada, so this is a very focused look at how we're doing as a country.

I note that in recommendation 27.(b) they're speaking specifically around Canada's efforts. This is their recommendation:

> Ensure that all cases of missing and murdered indigenous women are duly investigated and prosecuted.

In 27.(c), they recommend that the government:

> Complement the Terms of Reference of the national inquiry to:
>
> (i) Ensure the use of a human rights based approach;
>
> (ii) Ensure that the mandate of the inquiry clearly covers the investigation of the role of Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Provincial police, Municipal police, and public complaints commissions across federal, provincial, and municipal jurisdictions;
>
> (iii) Establish a mechanism for the independent review of cases where there are allegations of inadequate or partial police investigations.

Do those recommendations align with what you have been hearing from families and survivors of violence against indigenous women?

**Ms. Lynne Groulx:** Yes, they do. They definitely align, and in particular on recommendation 27.(c)(III) regarding the independent review.

In the last few days, we've heard about the situation in Val-d'Or and the “independent review” that was undertaken. What we've heard is that the Val-d'Or review was inadequate, that it, basically, was not independent. We had one police body investigating another police body. This certainly doesn't address the kind of investigation that needs to be done.

We agree with this wholeheartedly, and we hope that these recommendations will be followed because the families are calling our offices, and they are expressing their discontent with what's going on.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** NWAC made similar recommendations, or some alignment with these recommendations, when the terms of reference were being set.

**Ms. Lynne Groulx:** Yes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** The terms of reference don't yet explicitly or sufficiently echo these recommendations. Are you continuing to push for an adjustment of the terms of reference, so that we get the best outcome at the end of the day?

**Ms. Francyne Joe:** NWAC did present in Geneva to the committee, and we are actually going down to Washington in the beginning of December to present to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to discuss missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and the suggestions we would like to make, including CEDAW's 38 recommendations, of which only one has been included in the missing and murdered inquiry so far.

● (1710)

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thank you very much. That's my time. I really thank you for your work.

**The Chair:** Now to Ms. Nassif.

[*Translation*]

You have seven minutes.

**Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thank all of the witnesses for their presentations.

I think Ms. Obob needs the earphones to hear the simultaneous interpretation.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** If you need translation, you can put your earpiece in.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** What are the causes of violence against young women and girls? In your opinion, are the causes of violence against minority women and girls, including women of colour and members of LGBT communities, different from the causes of violence against women in general? If so, what are those differences?

[*English*]

**Ms. Awar Obob:** They can be different at certain points in time. It really depends on the violent occurrence at hand.

Of course, they all play a role, hand-in-hand together. It's all very intersected because the violence brought onto the people is usually brought on by those who are from intolerant communities, intolerant backgrounds. It's not necessarily that the violence is brought on by those they know. It does play a part sometimes, but not often.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** In your opinion, has the use of the Internet and communication technologies increased the scope, the nature and the consequences of violence against women and girls? If so, to what extent?

[*English*]

**Ms. Awar Obob:** I feel like it has heightened the scope and made it more visible. It has given people a broader view as to what goes on in the lives of young women, and young people of colour. It's not only that you see what goes on in your school or your workplace. You can now see what goes on all across the country and all across communities, like the one you are in, so you have more examples as to what to do and what not to do. I feel like it's a very positive step toward ending the violence.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** What initiatives could the federal government put in place? If you were to suggest initiatives and interventions to the government, what would they be?

[*English*]

**Ms. Awar Obob:** I would start with police enforcement and those who work within the mental health area, mental health hospitals, and just hospitals in general, and give them training that not only covers the health of a middle-aged cis white man. Health covers trans bodies and bodies of people of colour. Medically, I know there are a lot of studies that show people of colour have less pain tolerance and handle pain differently than non-people of colour. That is a complete myth, and a lot of their medical research done on that stuff just needs to be updated.

As well, police training needs to be brought in to help deal with the mentally ill, how to actually deal with mentally ill people and people of colour instead of being reactionary. They need to learn how to be proactive instead of reactive, they need more training, and they need to bring in better people to facilitate such training.

● (1715)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** You have two minutes left.

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** I still have some time left, good.

My question is now addressed to the witnesses from the Native Women's Association of Canada.

According to a report published by your organization in 2015, aboriginal women are more at risk than non-aboriginal women of becoming victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. You already mentioned that the risk of being murdered is eight times greater for aboriginal women. Could you please tell the committee what factors explain the vulnerability of aboriginal women, in your opinion?

[*English*]

**Ms. Francyne Joe:** When you look at indigenous women's history, for the longest time we had equal respect between our men and our women. Then we faced colonization. With colonization we had a devaluation of our women take place. This continued with our residential school situation. I grew up on-reserve with my grandparents. The family atmosphere was quite different compared to when my own mother and my uncles came home. There was a difference in society of how women were treated. Over the years, we have seen women become less respected, less accountable to women's councils on different reserves and different nations, and we've seen the impact on our young women now. If our men can't value their own sisters, their own aunts, their own wives, and their own daughters sometimes, then these women fall into depression and despair, and they allow others to treat them without the respect that every indigenous women, every woman across this country, fully deserves.

There are people out there, men and women, who will take advantage of these young indigenous women, who these women feel are treating them with respect, but they're not. It's all about taking advantage of these young women.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go now to my colleague Ms. Harder for five minutes.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Ms. Rico, the topic at hand for us right now is actually two things. We're focusing on cyber-violence and on campus violence. I'm wondering if you can comment with regards to these two things, cyber-violence and campus violence. Are we seeing these types of violence take place within our immigrant communities, and to what extent?

**Ms. Loly Rico:** I don't have statistics about that, but one of the elements that we can see with cyber-violence is more from a human trafficking perspective. On campus, one of the elements that we can talk about with international students is that it is one of the challenges that they can face. Especially with human trafficking through the Internet, there is recruitment either for forced labour or even for sexual exploitation. The retention fee for international students is so high and the hours they are allowed to work are so limited that sometimes they get in a very vulnerable situation, and they can be exploited on campus. I can give you an example of the exploitation. They come as an international student, they meet someone, and they can be either trafficked or sexually exploited because they need to survive to continue with their studies. They are allowed to work only 20 hours a week, while you can work full-time.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Thank you very much, that's helpful.

I would ask the same question to Ms. Joe. What would your comments be with regard to cyber-violence, as well as violence on campus towards women within the aboriginal women's community?

● (1720)

**Ms. Marilee Nowgesic:** Francyne would like me to help you with that answer.

In regard to cyber-violence, once again, we're trying to make sure that there's information for the homes where Internet is available—recognizing that there are economic factors with families being able to afford it, so the luxury of having Internet in the home is one consideration. When it is available, though, it's making sure that the parents or the schools have information about Internet safety and putting in the types of measures or parameters so that children are not being subjected to the perpetrators who are going to be watching them over the Internet. It's showing you how to put a band-aid over your webcam and how to shut down the Wi-Fi in the home so that the kids will turn it off and go to sleep and not text until two o'clock in the morning, and therefore jump out of their rooms, that kind of stuff.

As far as campuses are concerned, we're looking at how the education on human trafficking and sexual exploitation is occurring on campus. However, more so, we're working with the Canadian Federation of Students, and the native student associations within the universities and colleges, and making a presence. The provincial education counsellor associations work with the transition of taking high school students from their communities into college and university environments, where, for the first time, they're going to see buses, street lights, people moving, sliding doors and escalators, those types of things. They are dealing with all of that and trying to figure out how to stay safe, how to get back to their dorm, their campus, or their room.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Thank you.

My last question would be to Awar. With regard to the LGBTQ community in terms of seeing both cyber-violence as well as campus violence, would you be able to comment with regard to the extent to which these things are taking place?

**Ms. Awar Obob:** The reach is quite far. Being an LGBTQ person can be very strenuous and difficult on a day-to-day basis. You see violence in your daily life, even if it's just a microaggression, or you overhear a conversation where someone says a homophobic slur or something like that, or you get chased down and bashed by people, or you get doxed online. That's where all your personal information is brought up and posted online. That's happened to a few people in my collective. It's very hard to deal with because then you feel completely exposed. There's just a lot of intersectionality with the violence being online and also on campus.

**The Chair:** All right, that's your time.

We're going to go to our final five-minute round with Ms. Vandenbeld.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** I want to thank all of you for being here today.

We've talked a lot about violence against young women and girls, but, of course, intersectionality means that certain women and girls are more vulnerable than others. I think that all of you have brought that to the fore today.

My specific question is for Babely Shades and Awar Obob. I'm representing Ottawa as an MP. As we all know, this has been a difficult week in our city with a number of graffiti racist attacks. I wanted to note something that you said, which is that high public officials need to also show vocal outrage. I was at the March for Solidarity yesterday, and I know a lot of public officials were at some of the solidarity meetings over the weekend, and we are with you. I want you to know that.

**Ms. Awar Obob:** Thank you.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** I would ask you to elaborate on something you said a couple of times now about microaggressions. We know that violence comes in many forms, but it's the first time I've heard that term, so could let us know what you mean by that?

**Ms. Awar Obob:** A microaggression is a very small aggression, usually racial or sexuality-based, or even sexually based. For example, it's when you're talking to people from a different background and you mention that they speak good English or that they're accent isn't that strong. Any way to “other” somebody is a microaggression. Asking black people if you can touch their hair and things like that are microaggressions. There are a lot of examples.

● (1725)

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

It's basically ways of diminishing somebody that are not necessarily overt.

**Ms. Awar Obob:** Yes.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** I have one question for clarification before I hand over to my colleague Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Rico, you mentioned in your statement that the Immigration department had gender-based analysis and that this section no longer exists. We just did a gender-based analysis study and we actually pointed to immigration as one of the success stories. I wonder if you could let us know what you meant by that.

**Ms. Loly Rico:** In 2002, there was a whole gender-based analysis unit, with communication with the NGOs such as CCR, and also with organizations that work with women. That's when we presented. If you remember the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, there was a paper that did a gender-based analysis in relation to the IRPA.

As time passed, the unit was reduced, and in the last few years the unit didn't have any impact. We knew there had been one person, but there isn't anyone now. If you see the conditional permanent residence that was implemented by the government, it didn't have any gender-based analysis. As well, on the family reunification, there is a regulation that, if for any reason the person didn't include the name of a child, that child cannot come back to Canada; that is section 117.

When we do the gender-based analysis, we ask why they didn't include them. It could be misinformation, but also, especially in the spousal sponsorship, it could be the husband who filled out the forms. Sometimes they don't include the children because they have to have a certain income when there are children involved. With the spousal, you just need to prove that you have an income.

I can give you more examples of there being no gender-based analysis. For example, in the refugee reform, with the short time limits now, where the refugee hearing will be in two months, they haven't considered the most vulnerable people, especially women who come with husbands and the husband had been the abuser. After the refugee hearing, they listen only to the principal applicant and he is the man. There is no space for a woman to come and bring the violence or the abuse, and sometimes they are deported back and the abuse continues in the country of origin.

Also, there is the ban they put on the pre-removal risk assessment and on the humanitarian and compassionate grounds for one year. That's also a result of there being no gender-based analysis, because sometimes when the person receives the pre-removal risk assessment, the woman can speak up and bring up the violence, because she has been living here in Canada. Sometimes she has been looking for support. She might have the police involved, or church support, or community support that she didn't have in her community and she can speak out. That's why I say that in the last changes we didn't have a gender-based analysis, and we need to bring that back.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

Unfortunately that's the end of our time today, but I want to thank all our witnesses for doing an excellent job.

You've heard the questions. If there are things that you think you'd like to share with the committee, I invite you to send your comments to the clerk and we certainly would review them. Thank you again for your time and for all the work that you do.

The meeting is adjourned.