



Ontario Coalition of  
Rape Crisis Centres

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**The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) stands behind Mandi Gray and her statement on her experiences with the Canadian Criminal Justice System.**

In July of 2016, in an unprecedented ruling, Mustafa Ururyar was found guilty of the sexual assault of Mandi Gray.

In a public statement at that time, Gray remarked upon the grueling 18-month endeavour, and her experience of the criminal justice system — which allowed for the introduction of rape mythology and victim-blaming from Uryurar’s defence lawyer, Lisa Bristow.

*“I am tired of people talking to me like I won some sort of rape lottery because the legal system did what it is supposed to...If we are told to be grateful for receiving the bare minimum, and that we should simply allow for social institutions to further...violate our rights, I am incredibly concerned”.*

OCRCC shares this deep concern. We are also incensed that within days of the conviction, Uryurar’s defence team appealed the conviction and asked for bail. This was granted by Superior Court Justice Michael Quigley, who, despite the extensive case law cited in Ontario Court Justice Marvin Zuker’s decision, suggested that academic texts on rape and trauma may have somehow informed an impartial ruling.

In the meantime, Mandi Gray now faces growing public scrutiny and backlash including death threats, rape threats and attacks on her character.

All this flies in the face of Gray’s efforts to do the so-called “right” thing by reporting her rape, testifying and using her real name. It also contradicts Zuker’s verdict, in which he acknowledged that the acquittal or immediate release of the offender would break the public’s confidence in the justice system.

As survivor advocates, we are *in no way* surprised by these developments in the R v Uryurar case. Nor do we believe that an appeal of the case, or the granting of the offender’s bail, suggests any indication of his innocence. We stress that a police investigation, charges laid by the office of the Crown Attorney, and Zuker’s decision found Gray “very credible and trustworthy”; while Uryurar’s version of what happened was noted as “a fabrication, credible never”.

On the contrary, we see the recent developments as yet another example of why sexual assault prevalence remains high, yet reporting remains low in Canada. The personal attacks, shaming and explicit victim-blaming rhetoric that survivors are exposed to within the criminal justice system are relentless, whether there is a conviction or not.

For all these reasons, OCRCC stands behind Mandi Gray and commends her courage in sharing the truths of her experiences, despite an abysmally low conviction rate for sexual assault in Canada. We also laud Ontario Court Justice Zuker’s July 2016 guilty verdict. We too hear these experiences reflected back to us in communities across Ontario by countless survivors of sexual violence. We hear from them every day at our Centres and on our crisis lines.

The expected appeal of Uryurar’s conviction will likely see him free on bail and will subject Mandi Gray to an additional two to three year wait for justice. Undoubtedly, during this time, she will continue to be subjected to scrutiny, questioning of her experience, and threats.

**We call on the media and all those concerned to respond to the ongoing treatment afforded Gray. This situation makes clear the cautionary and even frightening implications for those who choose to share their stories of sexual assault publicly.** Engaging with current sexual assault law and processes, unfortunately, continues to have consequences for survivors —these consequences are even tougher for racialized survivors, Trans communities, and young women.

OCRCC recognizes the impacts of sexual violence and its aftermath. Gray reflects the wishes of so many survivors of sexual assault when she states, “I never wanted to be in the media or become the public face of sexual assault”. Most survivors only wish, to be believed by those around them, and to be able to return to their community “without having to be confronted by this person [the offender]”.

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*The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) includes 28 sexual assault centres serving survivor-victims of sexual violence across Ontario. Sexual assault centres deliver free and confidential crisis, advocacy and ongoing support to survivors of sexual violence throughout all of Ontario. You can access a sexual assault centre in most communities across Ontario: go to [www.sexualassaultsupport.ca](http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca).*

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