



PCAWA
PEEL COMMITTEE AGAINST WOMEN ABUSE

WE COUNT
FEMICIDE
BECAUSE...

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 31, 2024

RE: Femicides in Mississauga

May 31, 2024. Peel Region - The Peel Committee Against Women Abuse (PCAWA) is incredibly saddened and outraged to share that on Monday May 20th Rihab El-Mahdi, 58, was murdered by her 25-year old son at a Mississauga Motel. PCAWA sends our deepest condolences to her family, friends and community.

As intimate-partner violence and gender-based violence has been declared an epidemic in 95 municipalities across the province, including the Region of Peel, the City of Mississauga, the City of Brampton and the Town of Caledon, we know that femicide is not an isolated incident but the results of systemic inequities and patriarchal systems that condone, normalize and encourage acts of violence towards women and gender-diverse individuals. It is a systemic public health issue being experienced across the province at an alarming rate.

PCAWA was present on April 9th 2024 at the Ontario Legislature when the provincial government reversed its decision and expressed its support for Bill 173, which would declare intimate partner violence and gender-based violence an epidemic in Ontario. Having universal support among the parties in the Ontario Legislature is significant progress. However, we need the government to act now to pass the bill, and send the message to all Ontarians that the Legislature is serious about bringing an end to gender-based violence.

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy has been tasked with studying Bill 173 to reduce further recommendations for actions. PCAWA and community advocates across the province are very concerned about any process that might delay the government to move with urgency to address this very real public health crisis. We are confident that the many studies, inquests, inquiries and commissions that have already made hundreds of recommendations to the government about what is needed is more than sufficient in moving forward with an action plan to end gender-based violence. **Survivors need action, not more research.**

As frontline service providers for survivors of gender-based violence, we know all too well that while more money and time is taken to conduct more research and develop recommendations we already have - intimate partner violence and femicide will continue to happen to women across the province, just like it did to Rihab El-Mahdi. **Survivors need action, not more research.**

PCAWA will be sending out a letter to all of the MPPs in Peel Region urging their support to ensure that Bill 173 passes before the legislature rises for summer break. We will also be inviting all the MPPs to join PCAWA in a meeting to discuss how we can better address gender-based violence in our community to better prevent femicides from happening.

WE MUST DO BETTER

Most femicides are preventable. ***We Count Femicide Because...*** is intended to mark the

tragic loss of each life, to raise a public alarm and to engage everyone in working together toward prevention. Professionals, coworkers, neighbours, friends and family members can learn to recognize the warning signs and how to respond safely and supportively. It is a call to action to prevent future deaths. Ask us what you can do to contribute.

Education is a key part of prevention and PCAWA has created a series of resources to support these prevention efforts. The [GBV Allyship Resource](#) outlines tangible ways to get involved in GBV advocacy, and the [Understanding Femicide Infographic](#) provides education and information on femicide. The [2023 PCAWA Peel Regional Snapshot](#) is now available, which shares more information about gender-based violence within the context of the Region of Peel. All three of these resources are available on the PCAWA website.

PCAWA also has training opportunities available on the [Enhanced Gender-Based Violence Protocol](#) for the Region of Peel. This training is available to all community members and will provide you with information on how to best support survivors and respond to disclosures of gender-based violence. Please contact Rebecca Pacheco at rebeccap@embrave.ca to schedule this training.

If you would like to join the PCAWA mailing list to receive newsletters and updates on events and advocacy efforts email rebeccap@embrave.ca

If you are a survivor of violence in need of support, please contact Embrave: Agency to End Violence's 24-hour Crisis Line at 905-403-0864 or 1-855-676-8515. You can also seek support from any of the PCAWA member agencies. Visit their website at www.pcawa.net for more information. **Remember that you are not alone. We are here if you need us.**

You can find a link to related media here:

<https://www.insauga.com/murder-suspect-related-to-woman-who-was-stabbed-to-death-at-mississauga-motel/>

<https://www.peelpolice.ca/Modules/News/index.aspx?feedId=d6aa0ab4-eb5f-4b5e-a251-0e833d984d68&page=2&newsId=30f3ad9b-a03e-4791-9e4e-3e84126ebf02>

CONTACT:

Rebecca Pacheco (She/Her)
PCAWA Coordinator
rebeccap@embrave.ca