



safe in our  
lives



**December 6th** marks the anniversary of the tragic murders of fourteen young women in 1989 at the École Polytechnique in Montreal because of their gender. These murders shocked Canadians into acknowledging that physical, psychological and emotional violence is a daily reality for women and children.

There have been in Ontario two crucial inquests into the issue. One followed the murder of Theresa Vince in her workplace by an harasser and the other the murder of Gillian Hadley in her home by her ex-husband. What made the inquests unique was that they went beyond standard recommendations of preventive and supportive measures for women who experience domestic violence. The inquests were the first ever to advocate specific measures to address violence in every aspect of a woman's life: in the home, on the streets and in the workplace. The inquests were also the first ever to address the issue of domestic violence pursuing women out of their homes and into their workplaces.

Violence against women is a critical problem. It invades every part of the lives of women and children.

The deaths of Theresa Vince and Gillian Hadley are only two examples of the terrible violence against women in all

sectors of our society. Theresa Vince encountered the violence in her workplace. Gillian Hadley in her home. Both women had few options for safety.

As long as the issue of violence against women is not given priority and prominence, women will continue to live in danger. The threat of violence is a constant reality for all women. We must not blind ourselves to this condition. The violence is there in our workplaces and in our homes.

Here are the facts:

- since June 1995 160 women have been murdered in Ontario by their partners
- 21 children and 8 family members or friends were murdered in the same period
- in Ontario 40 women per year are murdered by their male partners
- between 2000 and 2001 the number of men accused of murdering wives or ex-wives rose by 25%
- 69% of sexual assaults are by men known to the victims





- 24% of assaults occurred in homes
- 21% of assaults occurred in public places
- 63% of reported assaults involved girls under the age of 18
- 83% of women with disabilities will be assaulted in their lifetimes
- eight in 10 Aboriginal women have experienced violence

Violence against women is not infrequent and it doesn't have a season. It is constant and unrelenting. On December 6, 1998, 14 young women were murdered in Montreal. The crime became a catalyst for action.

Violence against women is not a personal or private matter. It affects all of us. It affects our health, justice and social service systems. It is particularly damaging to children and through them it spreads its corruption into the future.

To protect ourselves in the present and to protect our children's future we must raise the issue of violence against women till it ranks high on our social agenda. All women have a fundamental right to live free from the threat or effects of violence. We all have a right to be **SAFE IN OUR LIVES.**



**Let us** raise the issue in our unions.

- listen to and support organizations which help abused women
- get information on the subject of violence out to members
- work with women's groups, the White Ribbon Campaign (Men working to end men's violence against women)
- get into collective agreements language which provides support for women
- conduct anti-violence audits of workplaces

Let us also raise the issue of violence against women with our governments, federal and provincial.

- lobby for increases to social assistance, low-income housing, child care, health care, education and legal aid
- improve and enforce laws which safeguard women and children
- establish and maintain independent, women-controlled shelters, sexual assault centres, neighborhood women's centres and specific services for diverse communities of women

The time is now.

The protection of ourselves and our children must be immediate. We have a right to be  
**SAFE IN OUR LIVES.**

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliated unions and the women's movement have developed a kit, *No Longer Silent*, to assist union locals on the issues of violence against women. The kit is provided free of charge. To request it call

**1. 800. 668. 9138**

or visit

[www.ofl-fto.on.ca](http://www.ofl-fto.on.ca)



**ONTARIO FEDERATION  
OF LABOUR**

15 Gervais Drive  
Suite 202  
Don Mills, ON  
M3C 1Y8



Our vision  
of equality  
must lead to  
a world  
in which  
girls and women  
are safe  
in homes, schools,  
streets  
and the workplace.

It is  
a world  
we can  
create.

1. 800. 668. 9138



[www.ofl-fto.on.ca](http://www.ofl-fto.on.ca)