

For Immediate Release

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PRESS RELEASE

Toronto, Ontario – March 8, 2020: In honour of International Women’s Day, Aura Freedom launches “Relentless Resilience” – a bold report on the impact of gender-based violence on Canadian society.

Aura Freedom is a grassroots Canadian organization based in Toronto that works to end gender-based violence for good.

‘Relentless Resilience’ is a series of interviews with social workers and survivors of gender-based violence in Canada. The report is raw, real and bold. It does not sugar-coat anything, but paints a sobering picture of the current situation for countless women and girls in Canada and what has to be done.

Currently, there is no National Action Plan for gender-based violence in Canada. The report calls upon the government to implement an urgent Action Plan that PREVENTS gender-based violence as opposed to solely reacting to it. *“Women’s organizations, shelters and rape crisis centres will simply keep chasing their tails unless a concrete, proactive plan is implemented. Unless the violence is prevented, starting NOW,”* says the report’s author, Marissa Kokkoros.

- Every 3 days, a woman or girl in Canada is killed. Many of them, by their partners.
- Indigenous women are killed 12 TIMES more likely to be killed than any other women in Canada.
- On any given night, 6000 women and children sleep in emergency shelters because it is not safe at home.

On International Women’s Day, as we celebrate women, we must recognize that in order for women and girls to live healthy and vibrant lives, the violence against them must **end**. But, ending the violence won’t simply benefit women and girls - it will benefit everyone.

Imagine a Canada free from gender-based violence. *“Very often, women are the traditional caregivers of their families and custodians of their communities. So, when you break a woman down, you break down everyone around her. Gender-based violence is robbing us all of infinite talent and love,”* says Marissa.

This is not just a feminist issue. Men and boys must be part of the solution. While we know that not all men are violent, we also know most violence against women is committed by men. So, it’s a men’s issue, too.

While governments scramble to put together action plans to address COVID-19, women and girls are being raped, beaten, and murdered every day. Right now, hundreds of women and their children are being turned away from shelters because there is no room. **Where is the national emergency?**

When we look at ending the violence, we must look at its connections to inequalities of gender, race, class and ability. *“The only way forward is for all of us, in Canada and around the world, to invest in the way each child is treated, taught, protected and valued equally from day one. Equality is everything,”* says Marissa.

This International Women’s Day, let’s all stand up and say **enough** and work together to end gender-based violence. *It is possible.*

The ‘Relentless Resilience’ report is available for free at www.aurafreedom.org