

representatives in the region are working together to combat violence against women. The project works on improving cooperation and the exchange of experience among regional and national representatives. It also supports cooperation with the private sector. Campaigns, studies and the dissemination of information are supporting a process of social change that rejects violence against women. Joint preventive measures are effective within the organisations themselves and beyond.

In Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Paraguay, studies carried out in conjunction with partners looked at the costs to businesses caused by violence against women by their partners. The alarming figures not only caught the attention of businesses; they also prompted cooperation between representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations. As a result of this, a state accreditation scheme was introduced in Peru and Paraguay, under which businesses can be certified as being safe and free from violence and discrimination against women.

More than 400 businesses in the region are running numerous campaigns and training programmes to combat violence against women. A particularly successful cooperation arrangement between Ecuador's largest telecommunication company and the project produced an app named Junt@s ('together'), with which women can alert the emergency services or a trusted person by just pressing a button.

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## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN CANADA**

If any country should understand this problem, it's Canada, where Dec. 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, marking the targeted massacre of "feminists" at the University de Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique in 1989; 14 women died, and 14 were injured, including men. Yet an April 2018 report by a United Nations Special Rapporteur found that violence against women in Canada remains a "serious pervasive and systematic problem" and "unfinished business that requires urgent actions." Canadian women's human rights are "protected in an incomplete and patchwork way,"

### **Family Violence Laws**

Under the Constitution, the Parliament of Canada has the authority to

make laws related to criminal law and determine the rules of criminal procedure. As a result, the Criminal Code applies to all Canadians. Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC) carries out prosecutions of the majority of federal offences, including drug offences, however it is the provinces that prosecute most Criminal Code offences in the provinces. In the territories, PPSC conducts all criminal prosecutions, including those under the Criminal Code.

### **Federal legislation addressing family violence in Canada**

While there is no specific offence of family violence in the Criminal Code, most acts of family violence are crimes in Canada. Relevant criminal offences could include:

Offences related to the use of physical and sexual violence such as:

- assault (causing bodily harm, with a weapon and aggravated assault);
- kidnapping & forcible confinement;
- trafficking in persons;
- abduction of a young person;
- homicide - murder, attempted murder, infanticide and manslaughter;
- sexual assault (causing bodily harm, with a weapon and aggravated sexual assault);
- sexual offences against children and youth;
- child pornography.

The Criminal Code also contains a number of special provisions that serve to protect victims. When charges relating to family violence have been laid, criminal courts have a wide range of powers to release or detain an accused person. They can provide for release conditions such forms as "no contact" until the trial or appeal.

Special consideration is given to the harm that comes from family violence. Because of the nature of the harm, sentencing provisions of the Criminal Code make it an "aggravating factor" for sentencing purposes when the offence involves abuse of a spouse or common law partner, abuse of a person under the age of 18 or abuse of a position of trust or authority. Puts limits on the use of conditional sentences that would allow an offender to serve a sentence in the community.

If the person who abused you is found guilty, the judge will decide on a sentence such as a fine, probation or jail time.

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