



General Tom Lawson, Chief of Defense Staff,
Canadian Armed Services,
101 Colonel By Drive,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 0K2

May 5, 2015

Dear Sir,

The Institute for International Women's Rights – Manitoba has read with interest the recent report by former Chief Justice Marie Deschamps regarding the inquiry into sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Services (CAF). We would urge you, in your remaining time, to implement the recommendations, which, among others, call for an independent review process of all allegations of sexual harassment and misconduct. Further, CAF should reflect and model the values and diversity of Canadian society. Canadians expect this of our Armed Forces. Changing the culture of intolerance toward women and LGBTQ members is a move toward this.

Creating an independent center for accountability for sexual assault and harassment outside of the CAF with the responsibility for receiving reports of inappropriate sexual conduct, as well as prevention, coordination and monitoring of training, victim support, monitoring of accountability, and research, and to act as a central authority for the collection of data will in fact bring an outside oversight to this very real problem for women and LGBTQ members.

The Institute for International Women's Rights – Manitoba, with a focus on education, awareness and advocacy for women's human rights, want those in the CAF to be treated fairly and with dignity. There is no excuse for sexual harassment, sexual violence, and innuendo to be allowed to continue, after being reported. Marie Deschamps heard from over 700 and what she heard confirmed that there is a culture that is supporting totally inappropriate behaviours. There is a "disjunction between the high professional standards established by the CAF's policies on inappropriate sexual conduct, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, and the reality experienced by many members day-to-day."

Sir, this has gone on for much too long. Action, not words are needed. We note the 10 recommendations from the report (as shared on the CAF web site) and encourage you to take these seriously and move to implementation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Scott, Co Chair IIWR-Manitoba

CC Lt. General Jonathan Vance, Chief of Defense Staff
Hon. Jason Kenny, Minister of National Defense, Government of Canada
Leaders of Canadian Political Parties

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