



PCAWA
PEEL COMMITTEE AGAINST WOMEN ABUSE

**WE COUNT
FEMICIDE
BECAUSE...**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 4, 2023

RE: Femicide in Mississauga

August 4, 2023. Mississauga - The Peel Committee Against Women Abuse (PCAWA) is incredibly saddened and outraged to share that sometime between July 17th and 18th, Pitch “Polly” Phaunpa was murdered in her Port Credit apartment. Just 21 years old, Pitch lived in Mississauga and attended the Toronto Film School. A 29-year-old man has been charged with the murder, however, their relationship has not yet been confirmed. PCAWA sends our deepest condolences to her family and friends.

This is the second femicide in a month to be connected to the Region of Peel, and the 4th one this year. We are calling out for support and leadership from our political leaders at all levels of government. **We need urgent action and a response that adequately reflects the severity of this issue.**

As intimate-partner violence and gender-based violence has been declared an epidemic in 40 municipalities across the province, 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.

With 4 femicides connected to Peel Region in 2023, we have already matched the number of femicides in the region in 2022, with 5 more months still left in the year. We know femicide is on the rise, and we need every member of our community to stand in solidarity in our call to action.

“We need to raise awareness on the rising issue of femicide in our province. In order to prevent femicide, it is essential that everyone be educated on what femicide is and what warning signs we need to look out for. We need action from our political leaders to stand in solidarity with grassroots movements and elevate their messages to every corner of this province. We need everyone talking about this, because one way or another, gender-based violence impacts us all.” - Andrine Johnson, Embrace CEO & PCAWA Co-Chair

We continue to await an agreement from the federal and provincial government on implementing the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence in Ontario. However, the timeline of these negotiations don't reflect the urgency of the matter and the calls from community organizations, survivors and advocates. **We need support NOW.** According to the current trends, every week we wait, another person will be killed in a femicide in this province.

PCAWA will continue to echo the call of communities and advocates across the province to the provincial government to declare intimate-partner and gender-based violence an epidemic in Ontario.

WE COUNT FEMICIDE BECAUSE:

- Indigenous, Black and 2SLGBTQ+ women, girls, gender-diverse individuals and women with disabilities are at increased risk and experience disproportionate levels of gender-based violence.
- Every life lost to femicide tears a hole in the fabric of our communities. We honour their lives and commit to making changes to prevent future femicides.
- Naming men's violence as the problem is part of the change we need to make as a society. We can't change it if we can't name it.
- For every femicide, there are more survivors who are not safe in their homes, workplaces and communities. We can do more to reach out and support them. We can engage their intimate partners, family members, friends, coworkers and acquaintances to end the violence.

WE CAN CHANGE THE OUTCOMES

There is no urgent commitment to prevention in Ontario or Canada. For 20 years domestic homicide death reviews have provided recommendations that can move us toward prevention. It is time to review our progress and invest in the evidence to see stronger social returns. There are successes to build on. There are experts and advocates in every community who can help.

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.

“It is not until each and every member of our community recognizes their role in ending gender-based violence that we will make any significant and meaningful progress in preventing gender-based violence at a systemic level. There are so many incredible resources available to support this essential education, including resources from PCAWA. We need our community’s support at this critical time,” said Rebecca Pacheco, the Coordinator of the Peel Committee Against Women Abuse (PCAWA).

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. Both of these resources are available on the PCAWA website. We will be prioritizing the creation of additional education resources to share with our community in the coming months.

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@embrace.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@embrace.ca

If you are a survivor of violence in need of support, please contact Embrace: 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 a related media article here:

https://www.mississauga.com/news/my-lovely-daughter-father-childhood-friend-share-grief-over-mississauga-woman-s-death/article_18d982db-a62a-5f1c-b41f-5c68bda4556f.html

<https://www.cp24.com/news/our-hearts-are-broken-father-speaks-out-after-21-year-old-daughter-found-dead-in-mississauga-apartment-1.6501356>

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9873582/man-accused-mississauga-murder-on-probation/>

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