

CSW Communications Procedure Human Rights Section UN  
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To whom it may confirm:

I am writing as a Canadian citizen very concerned that the rights of females are being eroded in my country. Much of this has happened because of the conflation between gender and sex. After C-16 was passed in 2017 there have been a variety of policies that have been brought forward which have directly negatively impacted women, despite our rights based on sex being enshrined in our *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that protects all persons in Canada from discrimination.

Policy changes have impacted female prisoners who have had their prisons turned into mixed sex prisons (see Bulletin 586 at <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/policy-and-legislation/584-pb-en.shtml>) no matter if males are on hormonal treatments or have even had sexual reassignment surgery. This has resulted in female prisoners being sexually harassed and intimidated from male cellmates. There are also indications that there have been sexual assaults from these transfers. Corrections Canada does not keep track of sexual assaults.

While there are a lot of different violations I could be writing about, my submission is mostly concerned with the violation to freedom of expression and impunity for violations of the human rights of women .

Policy changes have also included changing the definition of woman from “adult human female” to “everyone who identifies as woman, whether cisgender or transgender”

([https://www.justice.gc.ca/socjs-esjp/en/women-femmes/Definitions?](https://www.justice.gc.ca/socjs-esjp/en/women-femmes/Definitions?fbclid=IwAR1Gx_ORDuk3EL2zXtbFMt5X2lu5meBIOJmphk1i8l)

[fbclid=IwAR1Gx\\_ORDuk3EL2zXtbFMt5X2lu5meBIOJmphk1i8l](https://www.justice.gc.ca/socjs-esjp/en/women-femmes/Definitions?fbclid=IwAR1Gx_ORDuk3EL2zXtbFMt5X2lu5meBIOJmphk1i8l)

5d-rz3LuEyiplVpqr#woman). It is unknown when this change had first taken place, but this was something that had been in place since the end of April without notice to any citizens. Please note that when this was first noted in April only the term “woman” was included. The word “man” was only added this month. (Please refer to the archived website page from the end of April here: [https://web.archive.org/web/20210423164155if\\_/https://www.justice.gc.ca/socjs-esjp/en/women-femmes/Definitions](https://web.archive.org/web/20210423164155if_/https://www.justice.gc.ca/socjs-esjp/en/women-femmes/Definitions) . Aside from the fact that this was a change pointed directly at women (otherwise it would have been put in writing at the same time), it has resulted in the silencing of women. That has meant being able to speak and hear about issues that are unique to us based on our biology – whether that is a medical condition (ie. PCOS) or something that is unique to women (ie. hiring discrimination based on the fact that a woman may become pregnant at some point in the future).

The creation of these policies has made referring to just females as women has become contentious different levels of government from municipal (Mayor John Tory referred to women as “menstruators” on May 28, 2020: see the image in Appendix “A”) to the federal government. Common words that are now used to refer to women include, but are not limited to, “non-male”, “cervix haver”, “vulva owner”, “gestator”, birthing body”, “non-trans women”, among others. Not only is this completely dehumanizing, but this is problematic when targeting information, like health information, towards women because many women do not know the technical terminology of their physiology to understand that the information is aimed at them – for example advocating for women to get pap tests done. Note that men are still called men.

The problem, however, goes much further than dehumanizing women and communicating with women

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about important information we need to know. These policies and changes that have taken place since 2017 have impacted on our freedom of speech and ability to speak about ourselves and our problems in clear and unambiguous terms. In Canada and many countries the pandemic has had a major affect on females economically. This is because, as your organization is likely aware, sectors that tend to mainly employ females were most heavily affected by lay-offs and females also tend to be the caretakers in the family meaning even if the female still could work she would have had her work most adversely affected with children doing their schooling at home with schools shut down. It has been coined as a “she-cession” or “pink recession” as a result.

In February I found out that WAGE (Ministry of Women and Gender Equality – formerly the Ministry of the Status of Women – a federal government department) put out an open invitation for citizens to participate in their “Feminist Recovery Response Summit”, which I signed up for. It was billed as a panel discussion and gave the impression that questions would be able to be asked. On March 8, 2021 I attended the session that was about women with disabilities. The only thing of note from that session was that there was not a lot of future-looking information or ideas beyond what could be done for people with disabilities in office jobs.

The following day I attended the session that was about the future of the feminist movement. I had heard that there were some issues with a session I had not attended on the previous day from Inge, someone who I am acquainted with but did not know she had attended – as well as another woman I had not had contact with until after that first session. I was concerned and opted to record that session. The panellists were fine, albeit they only discussed past feminist initiatives (not future). The issue came with the chat.

Inge, whose first language it turns out is not English and is an immigrant, was asking what definition was being used for both “woman” and “feminist” given the changing definitions and wanting to understand what was being talked about. She wound up being kicked out of the session.

As for me? I was censured. As I was given the impression it was supposed to be about trying to find solutions for issues women had I was asking things like:

- How can we increase medical research for females since it is so far behind compared to males
- Heart and stroke research for females is far behind males (the first publication that only had female participants was in 1997 and to this day doctors still cannot really tell females what to look out for with respect to heart attacks
- No one still knows what causes preeclampsia (a potentially deadly condition that pregnant women can develop).
- Female genital mutilation is still an issue.
- Hiring/promotion discrimination based on the fact a female may get pregnant as some point in the future. I was using the word “female” instead of “woman” so that there would be no confusion as to what I meant, since I knew that any language involving females was being diluted. This was a government facilitated forum that was meant to (or so I thought) bring up issues that women still face, like discrimination, and to come up with solutions. Instead, what I found was silencing, bullying, and being shamed about sharing concerns about issues unique to females in a place that I thought was a place for our government to hear ideas and discussion. How do we fix problems with sex-based discrimination and oppression

on the basis of sex if we cannot use clear and unambiguous language? That we cannot even describe what is happening to us in our own terms? Please see Appendix “B” for the screenshots and Appendix “C” for the apology email sent after the first day's session. Please find the recording of the session here:

[https://mega.nz/file/8MFDWCYT#e6ILyDG4yUexG-](https://mega.nz/file/8MFDWCYT#e6ILyDG4yUexG-JRqjhGJyGvd9YB1Pu1wEcbZr8Uh6I)

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*JRqjhGJyGvd9YB1Pu1wEcbZr8Uh6I*

My experience is a small portion of what women have been going through in Canada (and globally). Women are terrified to lose their jobs. Dr. Kathleen Lowrey, in Alberta, for instance, had administrative portions of her position at a university removed because she expressed that women are affected by their biological reality. Ms. Amy Hamm, in British Columbia, is currently facing the BC College of Nurses and Midwives with the possibility of having her license for nursing removed because she has been outspoken about how women's rights have been affected since C-16 came into force. Women have been shamed in groups and public forums for talking about things like high risk pregnancies and being told they are being awful because they are not being inclusive. In settings that are meant for women to speak about such issues. Without our language our issues and anything that is happening to us can be hidden. And just because we lose the language does not mean that those issues are gone. Instead those issues are allowed to grow and get bigger.

Women are now being sidelined in the very debates that matter most to them at the expense of activists with very radical views who want to write both country-specific and international law that have removed the basic human rights of dignity, respect, and equality for females from policies that have been put in place through stealth. Our biology is not a social construct and it still continues to affect us in every aspect of our life. It has been so

impactful that I personally know women who have had those rights stripped so badly from them that they are no longer able to participate fully in public life.

Thank you for reading about my experience. I welcome the chance to speak further about my experience.

Sincerely,  
A woman in Canada