



# Greater Sudbury Coalition to End Violence Against Women La Coalition du Grand Sudbury pour éliminer la violence faite aux femmes

Co-chairs  
GINETTE DEMERS  
FRANCINE BOUDREAU

Member Agencies

Better Beginnings Better  
Futures

Centre Victoria pour  
femmes

Crisis Intervention Program  
& Domestic Violence/  
Sexual Assault Treatment  
Program - Hôpital régional  
de Sudbury Regional  
Hospital (HRSRH)

Crown Attorney's Office –  
Division Court

L'Association des jeunes de  
la rue Inc. Foyer Notre Dame

N'Swakamok Native  
Friendship Centre

North Eastern Ontario  
Prevention for Elder Abuse

Ontario Provincial Police

Probation & Parole Services  
Office

Sexual Assault Crisis Centre

Greater Sudbury Police  
Service Sexual Assault  
Domestic Violence / Victims  
& Youth / Criminal  
Investigations

Shkagamik-Kwe Health  
Centre - Mental-Health  
Program

Sudbury and Area Support  
Link Service

Sudbury and District Health  
Unit

Sudbury Counselling Centre

The Children's Aid  
Society of the Districts of  
Sudbury and Manitoulin

The Salvation Army  
Victims / Witness  
Assistance Program

VCARS-Victim Crisis Assist-  
ance & Referral Service

YWCA - Genevra House

Honourary Lifetime Member  
Ida Loftus

For more information:  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 29<sup>th</sup> 2009

**The Honour of Being a Woman:** Local women's group says, "We believe that by using the word 'honour killing' the media perpetuates commonly held myths about immigrants and minority groups while furthermore silencing the voices of women who are trapped and sometimes killed in the cycle of violence."

On June 30<sup>th</sup> the bodies of four women were discovered in a vehicle submersed in water in the Rideau Canal. Police were faced with conducting a puzzling investigation in hopes of determining what exactly happened to sisters Zainab Shafia (19), Sahar Shafia (17), Geeti Shafia (13) and their "aunt" Rona Amir Mohammed (50). At the time, it seemed as though there was no logical explanation for the tragedy whose family grieved openly. Just last week, Kingston police charged the father, brother and mother of the four deceased women with first degree murder.

The Greater Sudbury Coalition to End Violence Against Women is outraged by this senseless event and the media labelling the murders as "honour killings". Certainly, police have not yet released every detail surrounding this case however this mass killing strikes us as misogynistic – that is, a premeditated act of violence against women for the simple fact they are women. Use of language "honour killings" leads to confusion and discounts the fact that this was gender specific murders of women and children.

The Greater Sudbury Coalition to End Violence Against Women actively works towards eliminating the social, political, systemic and economic conditions that perpetuate violence against women. Media attention on "honour killings" portrays this is a cultural issue instead of accurately reflecting it as gender violence, the true reality of the crime. We believe it is the media's responsibility to accurately report news and information. We believe that by using the word "honour killing" the media is in fact perpetuating commonly held myths about immigrants and minority groups (which contribute to racism and oppression) while furthermore silencing the voices of women who are trapped and sometimes killed in the cycle of violence.

Violence against women is the most pervasive human right violation in the world (United Nations). It occurs in all religious, ethnic, social and economic groups in every country. We know that some women are more vulnerable to experiencing violence in their intimate relationships; this includes women with precarious immigration status, women with disabilities and First Nations women. In Ontario alone, 21 women and 3 children were killed by a male perpetrator in 2007 (Annual Report) of the

Domestic Violence Death Review Committee 2008). Nearly all of these victims were intimately connected to their killers.

Every woman and child has the right to live free from violence and abuse; it is everyone's responsibility to take a stand on violence against women. We urge the media and all of society to recognize that gender violence exists regardless of religious, ethnic, social and economic background. To report it in any other way continues to perpetuate the cycle of violence against women.

In Peace,

Ginette C. Demers and Gaëtane Pharand  
Executive Members of the  
Greater Sudbury Coalition to End Violence Against Women

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