

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
SUPPORT FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE VICTIMS

February 14, 2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the last sitting I drew the Assembly's attention to the findings of a report by YWCA Yellowknife. It's called "Hush Hush No More: Improving NWT Community Response to Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls." I pointed out a number of the report's troubling findings and its recommendations for improvements. The report documents a continuing culture of secrecy and non-disclosure surrounding violence. It's hush-hush when fewer than 10 per cent of victims report what happened to them to the police. Without reporting, victims say they feel powerless and blame themselves for what happened. To change this outcome, the report says it's important to non-judgmentally support people who disclose sexual violence, and government departments need to effectively respond to victims who report being assaulted.

Recently, a local woman came to me with her story of physical and sexual assault, of the intimidation she has suffered from her accused attacker, and of the ineffective response by police and the court. Despite being released on condition of staying away from her, the accused has repeatedly harassed and intimidated her. She has reported to the police about being intimidated a total of four times. The result? Nothing. The conditions of release are violated. The victim complains. The abuser continues to walk the streets.

I'll quote a few of the remarks given to me describing this situation:

"When I started this whole process of going to the police due to domestic violence, I was assured protection. I was naive. I didn't realize on how many levels I was not going to receive protection and feel victimized repeatedly."

Here is another quote:

"The people who are in place to protect me are sick of my reporting to them. I hear it in their voices. I see it in their eyes. I, in turn, am sick of being treated like a chronic complainer."

Another quote: "I now wish I had not gone to the police because the system's gross insensitivity towards the victim now makes me feel more vulnerable than ever."

Finally:

"Despite their 'domestic violence is a crime and we can help' posters that are everywhere, I cannot in good conscience send some poor vulnerable woman there because they will be more exposed than ever."

Mr. Speaker, Hush hush no more. It is hard to imagine a more damning indictment of the protection of victims. When a victim who reports is made to feel a nuisance, when conditions of release are violated with no consequence, enforcement practices must change. I will have questions for the Justice Minister. Mahsi.