

MEMBER'S STATEMENT — JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
SEXUAL ABUSE IN SPORTS

February 28, 2020

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Last year, I rose in this House to draw attention to a CBC investigation about sexual abuse in sports. Before I get into the details, I want to note the tireless work by many coaches and volunteers who protect, train, inspire, and teach our children. This is not about them or the great work that they do. My statement today is about protecting our children from the abusers among us.

Mr. Speaker, the CBC investigation found that at least 222 amateur sport coaches in Canada have been convicted of sexual offences in the last 20 years. Those convictions involved more than 600 victims under the age of 18. Because sexual abuse is an underreported area, experts say there could be thousands of cases we don't know about. No sport or individual is immune. Convictions have come from roughly 37 different sporting activities.

It seems that the onus is still on individual organizations to vet prospective coaches and educate their athletes on what constitutes inappropriate behaviours and how to report them. Most organizations do not have the capacity to handle all of this in-house, leaving the justice system to address this issue once something has already happened.

Anti-abuse policies exist at the national and subnational levels, but transparency is lacking. There is still no list maintained at the territorial or federal levels which tracks volunteers and coaches who have been banned, charged, or convicted. We need easily accessible ways to report and track suspected abusers.

Mr. Speaker, all of this makes me wonder what the situation is here. There are clear common-sense steps that can be taken that do not require a lot of resources to implement. MACA, working with Sport North and other organizations, could supply clear rules around sexual abuse prevention and promote training for coaches, parents, and players. We need to ensure our players are protected from psychological and emotional trauma that comes with abuse. I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.