

June 30th Speech RE: The June 22nd Shooting in Montreal
Event Organized by the Canadian Centre for Research on Race Relations
Penny Rankin NCWC President

I stand before you today as President of the National Council of Women of Canada—and as one among many who are grieving the loss of Michel Mizrahi and Constable Mohamed Lamine Benredouane,—as well as holding a deep concern for all those personally impacted and traumatized by this tragedy.

Et vous? ... Vous êtes ici parce que vous vous souciez des autres...
 et que vous êtes prêts à être témoins.

And that matters. Being here matters

We gather in grief... in fear... and yes, in anger—
 deep and very human responses to a tragedy that should never have happened.

And we know this: when the flags—now at half-mast—are raised again...
 there will be no real change without action.
 Lives depend on it.

Gender-based violence-gun violence- All forms of violence—and the words and ideologies that fuel them—must be confronted.

En effet, toutes les formes de violence, ainsi que les paroles et les idéologies qui les alimentent, doivent être confrontées.
 And yes—protests, raising awareness, and laws are important.
 Mais ce n'est pas suffisant à lui seul.

While women and girls are most often the targets...
 safety must be for everyone.

La sécurité des femmes et des filles—qui sont le plus souvent les victimes—n'est pas négociable.

Prevention... must be our focus.

Those of us here tonight are already engaged-We are not indifferent.
 We are not held back by apathy.
 And that places a responsibility... on each of us.
 Nous ne sommes pas indifférents...
 et cela nous confère une responsabilité à chacun et chacune de nous.

So what does prevention look like—beyond laws, enforcement, and programming?
 What about us? What about you?
 It means stepping into uncomfortable spaces...having difficult conversations...being attentive...
 and acting with intention.

Même lorsque c'est difficile.

Too often, after tragedies like the one witnessed here last week, we hear:

“He was a good student... il était discret.”

And yet, somewhere, something was missed—a pattern... a deep need... growing into isolation, hatred, and violence.

En ligne—et dans les médias—trop souvent, la haine et l’isolement prennent racine sans être contestés...où des jeunes peuvent être attirés vers des espaces dangereux.

Much of this is now happening online.
And here, government responsibility is clear. Canada is falling behind.

Stronger regulation, real accountability for platforms, and meaningful protections are not optional—they are necessary.
And we—civil society—must demand action that is not only swift, but sustained and properly resourced.

We need to be honest: too many young people in Canada are struggling—with isolation... despair... and lack of support. And the consequences are real.
Canada ranks 33 out of 42 countries when it comes to youth opting for death over life-and toxic online environments deepen that despair rather than interrupt it.

And as brutal as this will sound- there is truth in saying that sometimes guns are first fired at others- before being turned on themselves- sometimes these actions are a perverse invitation to be killed.

Il suffit d’une seule personne, laissée sans être vue ni entendue... pour que la tragédie s’ensuive. Si nous voulons prévenir ces tragédies... nous devons aller plus loin.

We must listen—truly listen—and build relationships grounded in empathy.
As individuals, we need the support and resources to guide our children and youth. But this responsibility does not rest with us alone.

Governments must act decisively—through regulation, investment, and leadership—especially in the online spaces where so much harm now takes root.

I believe that it is urgent that our boys and young men are not left feeling disconnected or overlooked....so that fundamental values like respect, responsibility, and human dignity are not eroded or erased by harmful coercive narratives.

Nous devons bâtir une société plus attentive... plus inclusive...
où personne n’est laissé en marge.-backed up by our governments.
This is how we can help prevent violence... before it begins.

So let us leave here... not only with remembrance...but with responsibility—
de protéger... d’écouter... et d’agir...pour une société plus juste... plus humaine...et plus sûre pour toutes et tous.

Merci