

**PRESS RELEASE**

**RAPLIQ launches a Quebec-wide awareness campaign and unprecedented battle**

**Women with disabilities beaten, raped, tortured…**

**Quebec-wide – Monday, March 8th 2021**

Annually, evaluations say [[1]](#endnote-1)10,000 women (27 every day) are victims of domestic violence. But these statistics do not take into account women with disabilities.

Why? RAPLIQ has investigated the 98 accommodation resources for women victims of domestic violence in Quebec to find out that about only a dozen offers some access to women using a wheelchair and only two, perhaps three, can accommodate a woman using a wheelchair so she can be housed safely and have access to all the services any woman would.

Precisely because so few shelters can accommodate them and have so few resources available to them, they do not dare to speak out. What would that give them? They are therefore isolating themselves more and more ...

**This excerpt from the [[2]](#endnote-2)"Women's Gazette" denounces the following: "At the Federation of Accommodation Resources for Women Victims of Violence, the President also notes that women with disabilities rarely call. “Our shelters are poorly or not at all adapted. Our accommodation resources are very lightly subsidized. The architectural adaptation is expensive and we cannot afford to do this work. However, disabled women are referred our way, we try to place them in the shelters that are most suited to their needs. "**

**This article dates from 1992 and little or nothing has changed since then.**

Women with disabilities are twice as likely to experience situations of abuse, whether physical, sexual and / or psychological (Statistics Canada 2014).

“There isn't even a police support protocol. This means that if a disabled woman, in a motorized wheelchair (heavy and not foldable) tried or rather succeeded in reaching 911 for help, the police could arrive at the couple's residence and have to leave the woman there and take the abusive spouse in custody… until he is released.” According to RAPLIQ, this solution should not really be a priority.

This is why RAPLIQ has surrounded itself with a team of professionals from different sectors and researchers specializing in this specific field.

**[[3]](#endnote-3)In 2010, the Office des Personnes Handicapées du Québec (OPHQ) published a 154-page report**

A real case story has been attached to this press release. We ask you to read it. Unfortunately, situations like that one occurs way more often than one might think.

It is on this tragic and immensely sad note that RAPLIQ is launching the "#it’senough" campaign, the first step to address the struggle of women victims of domestic violence.

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“We are starting this campaign with the deep conviction that we will not stop until everything that exists as resources for women without disabilities who are victims of domestic violence absolutely must exist for women with disabilities.

For some women with disabilities who may confide to close or loved one or friend, in many cases, they will be told to “hang on in there” and that they are "lucky to be in a relationship despite their disability ..."

For those who have children, they will in turn become hostages, scapegoats, allies of one or the other parent. These children will also experience this tragic situation which robs them of their childhood, their teenage years ...

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence has steadily increased and large sums have been injected from various ministries in Quebec. Programs, action plans were created. However, women with disabilities are rarely included

"This is why we are launching, as a first step and to kick off this campaign, this first impactful video, in order to sensitize our political decision-makers and society in general, by revealing these two taboos that are women with disabilities and domestic violence to which they are victims. "exclaims Linda Gauthier, president of RAPLIQ

Please note that this video has been translated into English, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic. Video description is only available in French and English..

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1V2N5eFR81BzHJ1k4khSWuInGUtVVbCQB?fbclid=IwAR3-PAQqBZ-wZ6OYV4kDgsq5G6Q1ooJlyA4rhNIsDgYcsBkEvGVGHcfh2es](about:blank)

*“I see that violence directed at women, especially women with disabilities, emanates from men. With my male colleagues from RAPLIQ, Allies of women, we are concerned, dismayed and determined to lead this fight alongside women with disabilities so that our society can protect them properly”* claims Steven Laperrière, RAPLIQ’s General manager..

“*It is high time to address all of the issues surrounding these atrocities. March 8 is the “International Women's Day”. Let us pay tribute to all women but especially to those eternally forgotten, disabled women who are victims of domestic violence and together let us kick off this new #it's enough! movement*” Implores Linda Gauthier.

**An important virtual press briefing will take place on Monday March 8, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the following Zoom link:**

[**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4529058561**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4529058561)

**For logistical reasons, we kindly ask you to confirm your presence.**

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[www.rapliq.org](about:blank)

RAPLIQ is a Quebec-wide organization that supports and assists people with disabilities who are victims of discrimination to defend and claim their rights and to promote them by aiming to eradicate this discrimination too often made against them.

1. <https://www.fmhf.ca/actualites/plus-10-000-demandes-dhebergement-refusees-chaque-annee-cri-dalarme-maisons-pour-ne-plus>

   <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/752259/femmes-refusees-maisons-hebergement-violence-responsabilisation-dejeuner-hommes-conjugale>

   -2- [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. [https://gazettedesfemmes.ca/5452/malgre-le-fauteuil-roulant/?fbclid=IwAR2Vs32AFVAgWc6AdBxsbyjdbORzjl1mbOQC2fJUtwukTii51VrA5dzjzys](about:blank) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. iii <https://www.ophq.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/centre_documentaire/Etudes__analyses_et_rapports/Rapport_EvaluationFinal_web.pdf>

   **CASE STORY**

   She comes to herself to realize that he is gone and that she is finally alone. This time, she knows it, he went too far, he hit too hard, he hurt her too much. Painfully, she tries to collect her thoughts on where to start. She has to act fast, because he can come back any minute ...

   She has to alert someone. But who ? The police ? Her friend ? Her sister ? The latter two she pushed away because "he asked her." Either way, they will understand. She looks for the phone that is over there on the table ...

   She wants to activate her motorized wheelchair, but the contact sound, the familiar "click" is not heard. She turns it off and on again and it is more desperate than ever when she reads on the controller case’s screen of her chair: "Batteries desactivated"

   Panic seizes her, because she realizes that he has deactivated the power supply to her batteries, knowing full well that her legs no longer carry her and that she will remain a prisoner of her chair until the moment he will come back.

   At that precise moment, he opens the door. She looks at him, terrified, numb by anguish and pain. He stares at her with a Machiavellian look and his cruel smile rips off her last hope ...

   Unfortunately, there are many more situations like this than one might think. People mistakenly think that a disabled woman does not have "lovers", is certainly not married, worse, she is categorized as "asexual" ...

   Moreover, we would not believe that the spouse is acting violently towards his or her disabled spouse, whether this violence is physical, psychological, sexual, financial, obstetric or other.

   This is the main reason why these victims do not come forward to denounce their aggressor and isolate themselves furthermore. Anyway, what would they gain from doing it if no shelter can accommodate them?

   -3- [↑](#endnote-ref-3)