

SUBMISSION REGARDING:

The Government of Canada's Response to
Questions 10 and 16 of List of Issues
(CRC/C/CAN/Q/5-6)

SUBMITTED BY:

The National Right to Housing Network
and The Women's National Housing and
Homelessness Network

VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO HOUSING IN CANADA

Regarding violations of articles 3,
16 and 27 of the Convention on
the Rights of the Child

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I. Overview

This submission addresses Canada's response to the following two questions:

Question 10 (c)

Requesting information on:

(c) the impact of the National Housing Strategy on children including measures taken to ensure coordination across provinces and territories to address child poverty and homelessness;

and

Question 16

Requesting updates on:

(a) new bills or laws, and their respective regulations;

(b) new institutions (and their mandates) or institutional reforms;

Overview: The human rights crisis in housing facing families with children

The effects of the homelessness, unaffordable housing, and evictions crisis for low-income, Indigenous, and women-led families with children are probably the most serious systemic issues affecting the human rights of children in Canada.

It is important that in this periodic review, the Committee provide explicit and concrete recommendations on how this human rights crisis for children can be addressed to protect and ensure children's rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Canada's response to questions 10 and 16 of the List of Issues omitted critical information that will be important for the Committee to identify key concerns and helpful recommendations.

Canada neglected to identify widespread concerns that the *National Housing Strategy (NHS)* has, to date, failed to adequately address the housing needs of low-income families and Indigenous households with children, and failed to implement clear goals and timelines for the elimination of homelessness among families with children.

In addition, Canada neglected to inform the Committee of the historic [*National Housing Strategy Act* \(NHSA\)](#) adopted federally in 2019, which, for the first time in Canadian legislation, recognizes the right to adequate housing as defined in international human rights law. This legislation is distinguished from the *National Housing Strategy* itself. Indeed, the NHSA requires the NHS to be revised to conform with international human rights. The NHSA is therefore a critical means through which Canada can achieve compliance with children's right to housing under articles 3, 16 and 27 of the CRC. If properly implemented, the NHSA should ensure that the *National Housing Strategy* is revised and enhanced to realize the right to adequate housing of families with children.

This submission will focus on two particular areas that we hope the Committee will address in its review:

i) ensuring that the historic recognition of the right to adequate housing in the 2019 *National Housing Strategy Act* is implemented in good faith and in accordance with the CRC so as to fully protect the rights of children;

and

ii) ensuring that all administrative decisions affecting children's housing, including eviction proceedings, consider and address the best interests of the child, the right to protection of home and family, and the duty of relevant governments to take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child.

The following are key recommendations that would be particularly helpful in addressing the crisis of homelessness and inadequate housing facing children in Canada. These recommendations pertain to both federal and provincial/jurisdictions, noting that the federal government has an obligation to ensure these changes are made at the provincial/territorial level.

Key Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Conduct a review of systemic violations of children's right to adequate housing under the *National Housing Strategy Act*.

Pursuant to their mandate under the *National Housing Strategy Act* (NHSA), the Federal Housing Advocate or a Review Panel appointed by the National Housing Council should conduct a thorough review of systemic violations of children's right to adequate housing. The Review should provide opportunities for children to be heard regarding their views and experiences of homelessness, eviction, and precarious housing. Findings and recommendations should be submitted to the federal government, in alignment with the NHSA, and to other orders of government to ensure that homelessness among families with children is eliminated on an urgent and priority basis.

Recommendation #2: Commit to eliminating all forms of homelessness, not just "chronic homelessness," and adopt a definition of chronic homelessness that is inclusive of children and families, including through a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) approach.

Revise the federal government's commitment to eliminate "chronic homelessness" to include hidden homelessness among lone-parent families, women fleeing violence with their children, and families with children under the age of 18, with clear goals and timelines for the elimination of all forms of homelessness by 2030 or sooner. Given the unique and disproportionate experiences of hidden homelessness among women-led families, this will require a GBA+ approach with specific targets and timelines for women and gender-diverse families and children experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation #3: Ensure that federally financed housing is affordable for low-income families and reflects the diverse needs of families with children.

Change affordability requirements in federal rental housing financing and co-investment funding to ensure that any supported housing development includes a sufficient number of units and a

range of unit types that are affordable for, and meet the adequacy needs of, low-income families with children.

Recommendation #4: Address the financialization of housing and prevent the loss of affordable housing for low-income families.

Adopt necessary measures to regulate private market investment and housing development to preserve affordable housing stock and inclusive communities for low-income families. Implement measures to address the financialization of housing, including through the removal of tax subsidies for Real Estate Investment Trusts and other financial actors.

Recommendation #5: Ensure provincial/territorial and municipal compliance with children's right to housing through bilateral and funding agreements.

Through its bilateral housing agreements and conditions of federal funding for provincial/territorial or municipal housing programs, the federal government should require accountability to the right to housing and the full protection of children from homelessness or precarious housing. Funding provided to provinces, territories, and municipalities should be conditional upon measures to eliminate homelessness among families with children.

Recommendation #6: Ensure that provincial/territorial social assistance rates for families with children reflect the actual cost of housing and other basic necessities.

Provincial and territorial social assistance rates should be raised for families with children to ensure they sufficiently cover the actual costs of obtaining adequate housing in the area in which recipients reside. These rates should also reflect the actual cost of other living expenses incurred by families, such as transportation and childcare. The federal government should lead a national initiative to ensure that this is done in provinces and territories across the country.

Recommendation #7: Revise all provincial/territorial laws governing evictions to ensure that the best interests of the child are given primary consideration in all eviction matters and that all avenues for eviction prevention are pursued prior to termination of tenancy.

All provincial and territorial laws governing termination of tenancy or evictions should be revised to require that:

- i) the best interests of children be a primary consideration in all decisions affecting families at risk of eviction and/or homelessness;
- ii) a representative of the responsible government or agency be a party to any eviction proceeding affecting children, and the tribunal or court be authorized to order the provision of necessary assistance either to prevent an eviction or to ensure that adequate alternative housing is available; and
- iii) all avenues for eviction prevention and housing retention be pursued prior to eviction, particularly in instances where there is a risk of child apprehension or child welfare involvement.

Recommendation #8: Adopt and robustly fund an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy that articulates clear goals and timelines for the elimination of homelessness and reduction of core housing need.

Adequate funding should be provided for an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy co-developed with Indigenous nations, organizations, and communities. This Strategy should articulate clear goals and timelines for the elimination of Indigenous homelessness and reduction in Indigenous households in core housing need, including households with children. It should also apply a clear GBA+ approach, in line with the National Housing Strategy's gender-based commitments and the 2019 National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which revealed that a lack of safe and affordable housing posed a significant barrier to fleeing unsafe situations and increased risks of violence and harm for Indigenous girls, as well as women with children.

Introduction: Families with children and the human rights crisis in housing in Canada

Canada faces an unprecedented housing and homelessness crisis that has disastrous consequences for children. More than 235,000 people in Canada experience homelessness in any given year, and 25,000 to 35,000 people may be experiencing homelessness on any given night.¹ These numbers are expected to rise in the coming year. Importantly, the Canadian Housing Survey found that 13% of homeless people are under the age of 16 and a further 13% are between 16 and 24 years of age. Approximately 90% of adults with children in shelters are women.² Indigenous families are disproportionately represented among homeless families. Indigenous Peoples make up approximately 30% of the homeless population in Canada while representing just 5% of the general population.³

There are several significant issues facing children who are homeless or precariously housed in Canada today. Homeless and gender-based violence shelters for families, primarily for women with children, are often at capacity. A 2019 Statistics Canada report found that on a national snapshot day across Canada, "669 women, 236 accompanying children, and 6 men were turned away from residential facilities for victims of abuse. The most common reason reported for a woman being turned away was that the facility was full (82%)."⁴ The data suggests that few women and their children transition from shelters into safe, affordable, and adequate housing. In fact, 1 in 5 women—often with their children—return to live with their abuser.⁵ Further, women and children in transitional housing lack any protection of security of tenure.

¹ Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada. Highlights: Preliminary Results from the Second Nationally Coordinated Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness in Canadian Communities. 2019, online at: http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/weekly_acquisitions_list-ef/2019/19-37/publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2019/edsc-esdc/Em12-25-2018-eng.pdf.

² Stephen Gaetz, Erin Dej, Tim Richter, & Melanie Redman (2016): *The State of Homelessness in Canada 2016*. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

³ *Everyone Counts: 2018 Highlights Report*, online at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/homelessness/reports/highlights-2018-point-in-time-count.html#3.4>

⁴ Statistic Canada, Canadian residential facilities for victims of abuse, 2017/2018, online at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190417/dq190417d-eng.htm>

⁵ Statistic Canada, Canadian residential facilities for victims of abuse, 2017/2018, online at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190417/dq190417d-eng.htm>

Data in Toronto show recent increases in the number of homeless children.⁶ On average, families stay in shelters twice as long as individuals because it is so difficult to find any affordable housing to move to.

Most homelessness among families with children, however, is invisible, so the number of families with children experiencing homelessness is much higher than reported. Women with children will often take extreme measures to avoid homelessness or exposing their children to the trauma of moving into a shelter. Women experiencing homelessness with their children may also avoid shelters for fear of child apprehension or exposure to violence, making it more difficult to access necessary supports and services.

While lone-parent families have similar requirements for adequate shelter as other family types with children, they have far lower incomes and face widespread discrimination from landlords. 36% of lone-parent families with children are in core housing need compared to 5% of couples and 9% of couples with children (8%).⁷ 14% of children under 14 are in core housing need—a higher percentage than any other age group. The vast majority of lone-parent families are led by women, and they have a much higher rate of poverty and core housing need.

The effects of homelessness and precarious housing on children have been insufficiently researched in Canada and children have not been fully heard about their experiences of homelessness. It is clear, however, that homelessness has a particularly devastating effect on children, who can be severely traumatized both by homelessness and by its effect on the adults who care for them. As noted by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), homelessness and inadequate housing have severe effects on children's "growth, development and enjoyment of a whole range of human rights, including the right to education, health and personal security.... The impact on children of forced evictions is considered comparable to the effects of armed conflict."⁸

Key Concerns and Recommendations

1. Ensuring that Children's Right to Housing is Fully Recognized and Addressed under the *National Housing Strategy Act* (2019)

The *National Housing Strategy Act* (2019) (NHTA) is federal legislation which recognizes the right to housing as "a fundamental human right affirmed in international law." It states that "housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of the person," and commits the federal government to "further the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights."⁹

The NHTA also requires the government to adopt and maintain a rights-based National Housing Strategy to support the progressive realization of the right to housing. The Strategy must include national goals, timelines and desired outcomes; focus on improving housing outcomes for persons

⁶ City of Toronto, Shelter System Flow Data, online at <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/research-reports/housing-and-homelessness-research-and-reports/shelter-system-flow-data/>

⁷ A household is considered to be in core housing need if it meets 2 criteria: (1) A household is below one or more of the adequacy, suitability and affordability standards; and (2) The household would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax household income to access local housing that meets all three standards.

⁸ Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, The Right to Adequate Housing: Fact Sheet 21 Rev.1, online at https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf p. 21.

⁹ *National Housing Strategy Act* S.C. 2019, c. 29, s. 313, Assented to 2019-06-21

in greatest need; and provide for participatory processes to ensure the ongoing inclusion and engagement of civil society, stakeholders, vulnerable groups, and persons with lived experience of housing need, as well as those with lived experience of homelessness.

The NHSA also requires the appointment of:

- A Federal Housing Advocate who receives and reviews submissions on systemic issues and submits findings and recommendations to the Minister of Housing
- A National Housing Council to advise the Minister on changes needed to the National Housing Strategy
- A Review Panel of three members, appointed by and from the National Housing Council, to hold participatory hearings into systemic issues referred by the Federal Housing Advocate.

The NHSA was the result of years of civil society advocacy and urging from UN treaty bodies and successive Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Adequate Housing. The innovative mechanisms for access to justice are seen internationally as an important initiative that may be applied in other countries. These mechanisms address systemic issues that are often neglected when courts adjudicate individual claims. Although the legislation was adopted by parliament in 2019, the federal government has largely ignored it.

A Federal Housing Advocate was, after significant delay, appointed in February of 2022. There is a new opportunity to realize the potential of Canada's historic commitment to the right to housing, including for children across Canada. The National Housing Council recently released a research report documenting the ways in which the current National Housing Strategy fails to improve housing conditions for those most in need, particularly low-income families and Indigenous households.¹⁰ Direction from the Committee on the Rights of the Child to clarify Canada's obligations to ensure children's right to housing and protection from being rendered homeless would be timely and important.

Recommendation #1: Conduct a review of systemic violations of children's right to adequate housing under the *National Housing Strategy Act*.

Pursuant to their mandate under the *National Housing Strategy Act* (NHSA), the Federal Housing Advocate or a Review Panel appointed by the National Housing Council should conduct a thorough review of systemic violations of children's right to adequate housing. The Review should provide opportunities for children to be heard regarding their views and experiences of homelessness, eviction, and precarious housing. Findings and recommendations should be submitted to the federal government, in alignment with the NHSA, and to other orders of government to ensure that homelessness among families with children is eliminated on an urgent and priority basis.

2. Adopting a Definition and Commitment to Eliminate Homelessness Inclusive of Families with Children

¹⁰ National Housing Council, Analysis of Affordable Housing Supply Created by Unilateral National Housing Strategy Programs: A Research Report (2022), online at <https://www.placetocalhome.ca/en/national-housing-council/media-newsroom/analysis-affordable-housing-supply-created-unilateral-nhs-programs>.

In the Canadian context, governmental policies and investments have focused on visible homelessness, often in the form of rough sleeping (or ‘unsheltered homelessness’), with the Canadian government prioritizing investments and programs for people experiencing chronic homelessness. This was emphasized in the 2020 Speech from the Throne, during which the federal government committed to eliminating chronic homelessness by 2030.¹¹ However, chronic homelessness is typically interpreted as chronically homeless *emergency shelter users*, thereby excluding women and families with children who most often rely on other means to secure shelter for themselves and their children to avoid living on the street or in shelters.¹² As a result, many women and children experiencing chronic housing precarity and violence are not considered chronically homeless and thus are excluded from prioritization, resources, and access to housing and services. This has a discriminatory impact on children experiencing homelessness, as well as their caregivers (often women). Direction from the Committee on the adopting a federal definition of chronic homelessness that is inclusive of children and families will be critical to advancing the rights of the child and the right to housing in Canada.

Recommendation #2: Commit to eliminating all forms of homelessness, not just “chronic homelessness,” and adopt a definition of chronic homelessness that is inclusive of children and families.

Revise the federal government’s commitment to eliminate “chronic homelessness” to include hidden homelessness among families with children and those under the age of 18, with clear goals and timelines for the elimination of all forms of homelessness by 2030 or sooner.

3. Ensuring that Federally-Financed Rental Housing is Fully Inclusive of Low-Income Families

In research prepared for the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate and the National Housing Council, a number of problems have been identified with the National Housing Strategy that directly impact homelessness and inadequate housing for families with children.¹³ The key programs through which the federal government supports the development of rental housing, the Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCFI) and the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCIF), have largely financed and supported housing that is unaffordable to low-income families with children.¹⁴ Remarkably, [only 3% of units](#) funded through the Rental Housing Financing Initiative—the largest program expenditure in the NHS—would be both suitable and affordable for low-income households (households which are disproportionately women-led and often include children).

¹¹ Privy Council Office, Speech from the Throne (2020), online at <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/campaigns/speech-throne/2020/speech-from-the-throne.html>

¹² Schwan, K., Versteegh, A., Perri, M., Caplan, R., Baig, K., Dej, E., Jenkinson, J., Brais, H., Eiboff, F., & Pahlevan Chaleshtari, T. (2020). *The State of Women’s Housing Need & Homelessness in Canada: A Literature Review*. Hache, A., Nelson, A., Kratochvil, E., & Malenfant, J. (Eds). Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. online at <https://womenshomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/State-of-Womens-Homelessness-Literature-Review.pdf>

¹³ Research for Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, online at <https://housingrights.ca/the-right-to-housing-in-action/>. National Housing Council, Analysis of Affordable Housing Supply Created by Unilateral National Housing Strategy Programs: A Research Report (2022), online at <https://www.placetocallhome.ca/en/national-housing-council/media-newsroom/analysis-affordable-housing-supply-created-unilateral-nhs-programs>.

¹⁴ National Housing Council, Analysis of Affordable Housing Supply Created by Unilateral National Housing Strategy Programs: A Research Report (2022), online at <https://www.placetocallhome.ca/en/national-housing-council/media-newsroom/analysis-affordable-housing-supply-created-unilateral-nhs-programs>

Recommendation #3: Ensure that federally financed housing is affordable for low-income families and reflects the diverse needs of families with children.

Change affordability requirements in federal rental housing financing and co-investment funding to ensure that any supported housing development includes a sufficient number of units and a range of unit types that are affordable for low-income families with children.

4. Addressing the Financialization of Housing and the Loss of Affordable Housing for Families

The National Housing Strategy has failed to address the financialization of housing, through which investors buy up affordable rental housing and “upgrade” it to house more affluent households, displacing low-income families from the communities in which they have traditionally lived. These mass tenant displacement and gentrification projects, driven by large corporate landlords, most affect already-marginalized families and children like immigrants, racialized people, low-income tenants, and people receiving public assistance¹⁵. Further, the federal government continues to provide tax breaks to corporate investors such as Real Estate Investment Trusts. The result is that more affordable housing for families is lost every year through speculation and gentrification than is being developed through newly built or acquired housing under federal and provincial/territorial housing programs.

Recommendation #4: Address the financialization of housing and prevent the loss of affordable housing for low-income families.

Adopt necessary measures to regulate private market investment and housing development to preserve affordable housing stock and inclusive communities for low-income families. Implement measures to address the financialization of housing, including through the removal of tax subsidies for Real Estate Investment Trusts and other financial actors investing in housing as a commodity.

5. Ensuring that Provincial/Territorial and Municipal Housing Programs Comply with Children’s Right to Housing through Bilateral housing and Funding Agreements

Bilateral agreements between the federal government and provinces/territories currently require the adoption of provincial/territorial housing action plans to support the progressive realization of the right to housing.¹⁶ However, there has been no monitoring or accountability of provincial/territorial action plans or housing policies to ensure that the plans comply with the obligation to realize the right to housing, including for children. Similarly, funding agreements with municipalities also lack any clear accountability to the right to housing. Direction from the Committee on this matter would assist in ensuring accountability towards realizing the right to housing for children at the provincial/territorial and municipal level.

¹⁵ Human Rights Case Against Timbercreek and the City of Ottawa, online at <https://herongatetenants.ca/human-rights/>

¹⁶ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Housing Agreements online at <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/federal-provincial-territorial-housing-agreements>

Recommendation #5: Ensure provincial/territorial and municipal compliance with children's right to housing through bilateral and funding agreements.

Through its bilateral housing agreements and conditions of federal funding for provincial/territorial or municipal housing programs, the federal government should require accountability to the right to housing and the full protection of children from homelessness or precarious housing. Funding provided to provinces, territories, and municipalities should be conditional upon measures to eliminate homelessness among families with children.

6. Inadequacy of Social Assistance to Cover Housing Costs for Families with Children

A critical cause of inadequate housing and homelessness among children in Canada is the inadequacy of social assistance to cover actual housing costs. Until 1995, the federal government required provinces and territories to ensure that social assistance rates covered the cost of basic requirements, including housing, as a condition of cost-sharing agreements.¹⁷ These conditions were removed in 1996.¹⁸ Currently, the federal government plays no role in ensuring that social assistance rates comply with Canada's international human rights obligations to ensure a level of income sufficient to cover the cost of housing.

The cost of housing has escalated dramatically in recent years, while social assistance rates have had minimal increases. In Ontario, for example, a single mother on social assistance with 2 children receives a maximum shelter allowance of \$756. The rate has not changed since 2018. The average price of a two-bedroom apartment for rent in Toronto in April 2022 is \$2,776 per month, an increase of over 16% in one year.¹⁹ It is virtually impossible for a single mother on social assistance, facing widespread discrimination in the rental market, to obtain an apartment within the maximum shelter component. The inadequacy of social assistance rates has a direct bearing on the realization of the right to housing for children, and Canada would benefit from the Committee's guidance in this regard.

Recommendation #6: Ensure that provincial/territorial social assistance rates for families with children reflect the actual cost of housing and other basic necessities.

Provincial and territorial social assistance rates should be raised for families with children to ensure they sufficiently cover the actual costs of obtaining adequate housing in the area in which recipients reside. These rates should also reflect the actual cost of other living expenses incurred by families, such as transportation and childcare. The federal government should lead a national initiative to ensure that this is done in provinces and territories across the country.

7. Applying the Best Interest of the Child and Ensuring Protection from Eviction

Tribunals that oversee termination of tenancy and evictions in Canada provide very little information on who is being evicted, the reasons for eviction, and the outcomes for those affected.

¹⁷ *Canada Assistance Plan*, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-1.

¹⁸ *Budget Implementation Act*, Chap. 18, S.C. 1996

¹⁹ *Rentals.ca April Rent Report* online at <https://rentals.ca/national-rent-report>

Where data has been made available, it is clear that the best interests of children and their right to the protection of home and family under the CRC have not been properly considered or applied. The Supreme Court of Canada has established that for administrative decisions to satisfy a standard of reasonableness, international human rights should be considered.²⁰ Even in jurisdictions where adjudicators are able to exercise discretion not to evict families with children, the options are largely limited to providing families more time to repay arrears. Government agencies with responsibilities to assist families with children are not parties to eviction hearings, so tribunals and courts have been unable to ensure that assistance is provided where necessary or that where eviction is unavoidable, families with children are not rendered homeless.

While data on eviction is scarce, there is widespread indication that families across Canada are being evicted for minimal financial amounts or facing no-fault evictions. For example, a recent analysis of eviction data during the pandemic in Saskatchewan revealed that single mothers were evicted for as little as a month in arrears or even after rent had been paid.²¹ Given the significant consequences of eviction for children and their caregivers, including child apprehension and child-parent separation, the Committee should advise Canada on its obligation to uphold the right to housing in such instances, including its duty to prevent eviction into homelessness.

Recommendation #7: Revise all provincial/territorial laws governing evictions to ensure that the best interests of the child are given primary consideration in all eviction matters, and that all avenues for eviction prevention are pursued prior to termination of tenancy.

All provincial and territorial laws governing termination of tenancy or evictions should be revised to require that:

- i) the best interests of children be a primary consideration in all decisions affecting families at risk of eviction and/or homelessness;
- ii) a representative of the responsible government or agency be a party to any eviction proceeding affecting children and the tribunal or court be authorized to order the provision of necessary assistance either to prevent an eviction or to ensure that adequate alternative housing is available; and
- iii) all avenues for eviction prevention and housing retention be pursued prior to eviction, particularly in instances where there is a risk of child apprehension or child welfare involvement.

8. Ensuring the Rights of Indigenous Children

Over 85% of Indigenous Peoples in Canada live in urban centres and experience disproportionate levels of core housing need and homelessness.²² For years, the government has promised an Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy but has failed to deliver on this promise.

²⁰ *Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) v. Vavilov*, 2019 SCC 65 at para 114.

²¹ Sarah Buhler, "Pandemic Evictions: An Analysis of the 2020 Eviction Decisions of Saskatchewan's Office of Residential Tenancies," *JL & Soc. Pol'y* 35 (2021): 68 pp 69, 82. Online <https://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/jlsp/vol35/iss1/4/>

²² National Housing Council, Analysis of Affordable Housing Supply Created by Unilateral National Housing Strategy Programs: A Research Report (2022), online at <https://www.placetocalhome.ca/en/national-housing-council/media-newsroom/analysis-affordable-housing-supply-created-unilateral-nhs-programs>.

The recent Federal Budget 2022 proposes to invest \$300 million over five years to co-develop and launch an Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy. However, the amount allocated is completely inadequate in relation to the needs that must be addressed. Parliamentary committees, the Parliamentary Budget Officer and other experts have called for investments of \$1.5 to \$2 billion per year to address the critical housing needs of Indigenous Peoples living in urban, rural and northern communities.²³ This has direct bearing on the human rights of Indigenous children, who continue to experience some of the most egregious housing conditions across Canada.

Moreover, The 2019 National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls revealed that the lack of safe and affordable housing posed a significant barrier to fleeing unsafe situations and increases risks of violence and harm for Indigenous girls, as well as women with children. The National Housing Strategy has failed to adequately target and monitor the impacts of its programs on Indigenous women and girls, thus perpetuating gendered experiences of violence and harm among Indigenous children.

Recommendation #8: Adopt and robustly fund an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy that articulates clear goals and timelines for the elimination of homelessness and reduction of core housing need.

Adequate funding should be provided for an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy co-developed with Indigenous nations, organizations, and communities. This Strategy should articulate clear goals and timelines for the elimination of Indigenous homelessness and reduction in Indigenous households in core housing need, including households with children. It should also apply a clear GBA+ approach, in line with the National Housing Strategy's gender-based commitments and the 2019 National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which revealed that a lack of safe and affordable housing increased risks of violence and harm for Indigenous girls and women with children.

²³ National Housing Council, Report and Recommendations to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion on Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing (2022) online at <https://www.placetocalhome.ca/en/national-housing-council/media-newsroom/report-recommendations-minister-housing-diversity-inclusion-urban-rural-nih>