



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on National Defence

NDDN • NUMBER 118 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, November 22, 2018

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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the national defence committee.

I'd like to welcome Marie-Claude Gagnon, who is here to talk to us about Bill C-77 and I'm going to turn the floor over to her for her opening comments.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon (Founder, It's Just 700): Good morning.

It is an honour for me to be here today. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to share my thoughts and observations on such a complex and delicate issue.

My name is Marie-Claude Gagnon. I am a former Franco-Ontarian reservist with the Canadian Navy and a survivor of sexual trauma suffered during my military service. I am the founder of the group It's Just 700, which gives men and women suffering from military-related sexual trauma to reconnect with their peers, obtain support and get information on services available to them, whether or not those services are provided by the Canadian Armed Forces, or CAF, Veterans Affairs Canada or other related organizations.

Today, I will share with you my concerns on Bill C-77, one of whose goals is to establish a military victims bill of rights that reflects the protections already in place for civilians.

I think this bill is a commendable step for the CAF, as it contributes to creating a work, learning and living environment that is safer and free from sexual violence for all its members. However, I think the way the CAF operates and what sets it apart from civilian society are two factors that may prevent military victims from having the same rights and the same protection as those afforded to their civilian counterparts.

For example, the military justice system does not work the same as the civilian justice system. There are differences in terms of investigation methods, ways to access information, services available in victim assistance such as provincial services for victims of crime, oversight and external accountability mechanisms, and even expertise and training of individuals in the different justice system.

In addition, operational requirements, the duty to report, frequent changes of personnel, frequent deployments and assignments, CAF ethics, outdated policies still in effect, the imbalance caused by the

ranks' ability to create proximity in terms of living and working conditions, gender imbalance, and the need for strict discipline have an impact on military victims that separates them from civilian victims.

Today, I will highlight some of the differences I feel have a unique effect on the rights and protection of military victims. I will suggest ways to ensure that those differences are reflected in this proposed legislation. It is not an exhaustive list of all the elements I think should be improved, but rather a list of elements that are most likely to be received and modified, and that will benefit most military victims.

I am presenting these recommendations on the assumption that the military justice system will keep its jurisdiction over sexual assault crimes. I will be ready to make additional recommendations if the Supreme Court Canada determines otherwise in the near future.

My participation today must not be considered as a statement that supports the maintenance or transfer of sexual violence crimes management by the military justice system.

[English]

In relation to this effect, I would like to point out a statement made by Colonel David Antonyshyn, deputy judge advocate general with military justice in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces on May 28, 2018, at the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence:

The victims and survivors of sexual assault and other sexual crimes may choose where they want to file a complaint. There's no obligation to deal with civilian or military police forces. The choice is up to the victim. The investigation will often be determined by the entity to which the matter is assigned. Some sexual assault cases are investigated by the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service and transferred to civilian authorities where they are adjudicated in civilian trials.

Please let it be my first and top recommendation that military victims be made aware of this choice on the bill of rights Bill C-77 and moreover, the right to assistance to be guided on how to proceed with a request to transfer a case to the civilian authorities.

My second recommendation is to add a basic set of principles similar to the preamble found in the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. I am particularly interested in the following statements:

[V]ictims of crime and their families deserve to be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect, including respect for their dignity;

[V]ictims' rights [must] be considered throughout the criminal justice system;

There's nothing like this in the bill right now.

My third, fourth and fifth recommendations are with regard to the victim liaison officer. To substantiate these recommendations, I would like to point out one of the findings of OAG Report 5—Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour—Canadian Armed Forces, that was released on Tuesday. It was found that the required procedure to help ensure victims' needs are met was not followed in 31 of the 46 military police cases the OAG sampled. This means that victims were not always contacted to provide statements. They were not provided with the required support information package or even offered support or referral services at the start of the investigation.

•(1105)

I believe this gap may have been one of the reasons that a decision was made to add an assistant victim liaison officer to victims wishing more information and guidance to the justice process. However, proposed subsections 71.16(1) of the bill specify that this victim liaison service shall be provided “at the request of the victim”, that the commanding officer shall accommodate this request “to the extent possible”, and:

In the event of the absence or incapacity of the victim's liaison officer, a commanding officer shall appoint another officer or non-commissioned member to replace the liaison officer during that absence or incapacity, unless it is not possible to do so for operational reasons.

As stated by a member of my group, victims aren't likely to know to request a victim liaison officer; therefore, my third recommendation is to remove “at the request of the victim”, in proposed subsection 71.19(1).

This ties in with my fourth recommendation about not waiving the rights of the victim liaison officer in the event of absence or incapacity, or if it is not possible to do so for operational reasons.

As stated by retired Judge Deschamps in her report, “External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Forces”, released in 2015:

...the unique circumstances of training, operational deployment, and career courses, may create particular conditions of vulnerability. In particular, when a member is geographically relocated, a number of factors may make him or her more vulnerable and a target of inappropriate sexual conduct. These include the loss of family or social support networks, the communal setting, and a lack of knowledge of, or trust in, the temporary chain of command.

This may be even more relevant in CAF's current efforts to deploy as per the CNAP under UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This is why I strongly believe that operational reasons should not be an excuse not to appoint a victim liaison officer.

My fifth recommendation is about the role given to the victim liaison officer and training requirements.

Having the CO or the victim designate an officer implies that these liaison officers would have no training or even skills to perform any task at all.

Lindsay Rodman is an international affairs fellow for Canada with the Council on Foreign Relations and a fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute. In her article, “Does Canada's bill to protect military victims go far enough?”, she stated, “In the United States, having Victim Liaison Officers did not work; we had to give victims their own attorney.”

She even recommended similar remedies for the Canadian military court system:

The provision of lawyers to victims in the U.S. was resource-intensive, and therefore required commitment on the part of leadership. It was a gamble, and a controversial one, but it has paid dividends. C-77 is a good first step, but merely putting military victims on par with civilians may not be a strong enough signal to them that they will be protected and heard if they come forward. A bolder effort may be required if the CAF intends to truly take this problem head-on.

Regardless of the decision to provide attorneys to victims—which, in my opinion, would be ideal—or not, I don't believe the role of the victim liaison officer envisioned in this bill can, with its limited assistance capability, offset the service gap found in Tuesday's OAG report.

At the very least the victim liaison officer should be well trained in victims matters and trauma-informed service delivery. His or her role should be expanded to help victims work through the justice process; inform them about the documents that can be given on consent, stated in the bill; and help the victims obtain these documents so as not to put the whole burden on the victim; and provide information on how to access additional victim services and legal information.

Any substitution of this role should be done by someone with an agreed-upon basic knowledge, experience and training, and an absence of conflict of interest. The choice of the substitute and the reason that the VLO was not provided should be clearly documented.

My fifth recommendation is therefore to add the additional role, which I just highlighted, to the victim liaison officer section in proposed subsection 71.16(3) and ensure the training requirements are clearly stated either in the bill or in a subsequent regulation.

•(1110)

[Translation]

My sixth recommendation is to add a section on places where victims can find information on their rights.

The Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime provides victims with information on their rights, as well as on resources and services available to them. I don't see an equivalent option for military victims. I recommend that the bill clearly specify where a victim may find that type of information or that the information be provided in regulations.

[English]

Recommendation eight is to specify the victim-oriented training requirements for all military justice system participants.

I understand that this decision of extending the jurisdiction of summary hearings is made with the desire to ensure a swift turnaround, but military officers such as an artillery officer, a pilot or a naval officer responsible for conducting these hearings need proper guidance and training.

According to the OAG's "Report 5—Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour—Canadian Armed Forces", training given to the chain of command was not sufficient to understand how to effectively respond to and support victims. The same report found that in 21 of the 53 cases, the file showed that the victim experienced fear, distress, discomfort, a lack of support, reprisal or blame, including from the victim's commanding officer, senior leaders, instructors, and colleagues.

I recommend adding in this bill training on victims' rights and trauma-informed response for all military justice system participants to reduce risks of aggravating a trauma, creating additional trauma or leaving a victim in an unsafe or unhealthy working and living conditions.

Extending summary hearings to less trained and less experienced personnel in a much more decentralized system covering a vast periphery comes with its own obstacles. My recommendation number nine is to define and clarify certain terms to help reduce the risks of misuse and misinterpretations of these terms.

The first is "impact statement". In the definition of the term "victim impact statement", it should be specified that the statement is not to be influenced, redacted or edited by the COC, CAF or any others.

On the definition of "reasonable and necessary measures", a further solid and clear explanation of the term "reasonable and necessary measures" should be given under the article.

A definition of "intimidation and retaliation" should be added about what constitutes intimidation and retaliation. This definition should also include a clause on adverse interference such as removal from trade, place of work, section, platoon, company, ship or unit, unless it is requested by the victim.

Out of consideration for the victim's safety and security, I would like to suggest one little change. If the court martial makes a decision that the carrying into effect of the punishment is suspended, it shall include in the decision statement how it has considered, instead of that it has considered the safety and security of every victim of the offence.

[*Translation*]

Before I conclude, I would like to raise two other points to consider.

First, a few words should be added on the support provided to military victims when their case is transferred to the civilian justice system. The transfer of cases to civilian authorities must be carefully planned to guarantee the protection of everyone's rights.

The lack of information on access to military documents and medical records, the timeline of access to military information and medical records, the differences in treatment from one province to another in terms of rape kits, the application of peace bonds, as well

as the cost of transportation of key witnesses and victims from one province to another are only a few examples of obstacles military victims must overcome. Military victims should be able to count on a liaison officer who would help them navigate between the two systems, at least until they are provided with support by a provincial victim services organization.

Second, gender parity on military expert panels must be ensured. The accused generally have the right to choose between a standing court martial and a general court martial before a military judge and a panel of experts consisting of five military members. According to the CAF, court martial panels are selected at random by the court martial administrator. They serve a function akin to that of a jury in a civilian trial and must come to a unanimous decision in convictions.

As men outnumber women in the CAF, it is almost inevitable for a strong majority of men to be selected at random to make up the panel. The process could remain random, but be fine-tuned to ensure more balanced representation.

● (1115)

[*English*]

In conclusion, as explained by Lindsay Rodman, victims in military court need help to offset lack of standards to ensure they can access the same rights and protections as their civilian counterparts.

I believe my recommendations can help alleviate some of the additional burden put on military victims.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your important testimony this morning, and thank you for your service to Canada.

Have you been to committee before?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I've been to another one, but not this one.

The Chair: So it's not your first time. I'm quite comfortable interrupting my colleagues, but if you see me holding this paper up, it just means that I need you to wind down. I'd rather not interrupt you, but when we're going back and forth, I have to manage the time, so if you see this paper up, 30 seconds is as much time as you have left to respond.

I'm going to give the first seven minutes to MP Robillard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank our witness for her excellent testimony.

Ms. Gagnon, I want to begin by congratulating you on creating It's Just 700.

As a former officer of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, I am wondering whether your organization provides services to cadets. If not, does it plan to do so eventually?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: It is a bit more difficult to provide services to cadets, as they are minors. Right now, I am focused more on people from the Canadian Armed Forces, but if a cadet who is now an adult went through a problematic situation in childhood, I will definitely provide them with assistance.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you.

We often talk about the benefits of creating the position of a victims legal counsel in the U.S. military justice system. That counsel helps sexual assault victims in the armed forces feel that they can confide in full confidence and safety.

Should Bill C-77 provide more than one liaison officer to victims of a military offence and give them access to counsel?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Ideally, yes. I think that would be essential in all cases where military members face barriers.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Could you recommend specific measures to improve Bill C-77? Is there anything you did not have time to mention in your testimony this morning?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Aside from the possibility of creating a counsel position, the suggestions I made are ones that are most likely to work. There are certainly many other important aspects that could be improved. Support is one of them, but there is also information sharing when cases are transferred, especially to the civilian system. The process is very complex, and people need support to understand the system and navigate in it.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you.

[English]

May I share my time?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much.

You talked about a preamble in the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, and you feel that there should be a similar preamble in Bill C-77. You were speaking very fast, and you were trying to get as much information on the record as possible. I get that, and I thank you for it. However, could you give us a bit more sense of what you're thinking regarding that preamble? Bill C-77 already mirrors the charter somewhat.

I'd like to give you the opportunity to tell us a little bit more about what you think should be in that preamble.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: The preamble in the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights puts emphasis on the respect and dignity of victims, and that does not exist in Bill C-77, from what I've seen.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Would you like to see the full preamble match?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Yes, as much as possible. There are some things I don't think will work, but I would like to see it match as much as possible.

Mr. Darren Fisher: On proposed subsection 71.16(1), you were moving quickly and I was listening to you in French. It says, "at the request of the victim". Your statement is that victims are unlikely to know that this is available to them. Does the process not currently let them know what things are available to them?

• (1120)

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: No, there wouldn't be a way for them to know what's available, especially if they don't have access to representation or any legal information. Unless they were told, they would not know that they have the right to have access to a victim liaison officer. That would be left to the discretion of whom? Would it be the SMRC, the chain of command?

The thing is, most of the people affected by these things are very young. They are people who just came into the military and they don't have much knowledge. Most of the people I've seen who are impacted by sexual violence don't have the necessary knowledge, yet they may have been in for six months or more. It's overwhelming to navigate and find anything, and most of them don't have access to the DWAN account, which is the intranet. Even if it is on the intranet, they wouldn't even know where to look.

Mr. Darren Fisher: If "at the request of the victim" is removed, does that solve the problem? Does that mean they automatically get...?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: To be honest, it won't solve the problem. As you see from the OAG report that came out on Tuesday, there are processes that were agreed upon but are not being followed. Obviously, oversight and accountability are the only way this will happen. This bill has a lot of recommendations, but it has no teeth to make sure people are accountable.

That would be another thing to look into, the accountability measures. According to another OAG report, there is a lack of accountability. I'm just saying there's a system there, but whether it's being used is another story.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Tell me a little about what you envision for training for the liaison officer.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: The liaison officer needs to be qualified. If they're not the one providing legal assistance, they will at least be the one providing people everything that is on request on this. Anything in the bill that can be asked for on request should be provided. They should know that. They should know about some of the victims' rights.

For example, when you sign off medical documentation to the military police at the beginning, that means they may have access to all of your file. Is there a way you can limit that, or is there a way you can limit what will be exposed on the big screen when everybody is there from your unit, maybe during a trial? Are there things you should be cognizant of before you sign off information? These are the types of things that a victim liaison officer might be able to provide.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you.

The Chair: For everybody in the room, if you have a phone or an iPad, if you could make sure it's on mute, I would appreciate that.

MP Gallant.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Chairman, through you to our witness, the Auditor General's report revealed an unexpected consequence that the duty to report inappropriate sexual behaviour has created. There has been a spike in third party submissions of inappropriate sexual behaviour, in some cases submitted against the will of the victim. Should there be greater protection for victims' rights in the reporting of inappropriate sexual behaviour?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Yes. The judicial report is a complex thing. It does create an aversion effect, because in one way you want to make sure that people are safe and you want to be able to act on things, but at the same time, putting people through a system that they are not willing, prepared, or supported to go through will aggravate things and makes an unnecessary medical release for that. People will release because they're mentally unprepared to go through all these things.

Retaliation as well is one of the things that has not been looked into much. There's a little thing about retaliation here, but what is retaliation and how will this be handled? You need to know that to ensure protection for people when they are faced with retaliation. As Judge Deschamps said, and as the OAG report said, people who did report faced retaliation, so that's one of the things that will protect victims and entice them to want to report.

Before forcing people to report, they should at least make sure that the system is in place to ensure their protection and safety and that it works.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: The Auditor General's report found that the briefings the Canadian Armed Forces members received from Operation Honour may have increased awareness but were lacking in understanding of how to respond to and support victims. As a result, the Auditor General reported that the briefings created confusion, frustration, fear and less camaraderie.

What do you think is necessary in terms of training or otherwise to bridge the awareness gap and hopefully alleviate the negative feelings that the briefings brought about?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: On the training itself, what I find problematic is putting everything into one big basket, but that's my opinion on this.

How would you feel if we said that all injuries are injuries, from a paper cut to losing your legs in combat? That's the type of thing that is being done right now with harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour. They put everything into one basket.

We all agree that people who lose their legs will require a different type of care from that of a person who has a paper cut at work, even though they're both workplace injuries. It's that type of thing with harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour. There are two separate things where there's care that must be given when there was harm done versus the handling of, I would say, minor infractions in order for them to not get into either repetitive or worse behaviour and then make people leave.

Those are two separate things that should be looked at in a different way. There should be more emphasis on victim support and care, and also making sure that the process is done properly, instead of looking into providing additional training to the same people over

and over again at the lower part of the chain. That is not the only way to solve the problem.

• (1125)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: We found in the Auditor General's report that the Canadian Armed Forces had not been adequately monitoring the effectiveness of Operation Honour, and any of their data on its results are of poor quality. Does this undermine the goals of Operation Honour in the eyes of the Canadian Armed Forces member?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Do you mean that they haven't reached their goals?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Yes.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: The goal was to eliminate harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour, so to be honest, that was a goal that was really hard to achieve, to eliminate it. I don't think, in a clear mind, anybody really had the impression that this would completely happen.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Despite what's often said by the officials, we know that if a victim of inappropriate sexual behaviour reports the incident, it's a good way to be demoted, transferred or discharged. How can victims trust that if they come forward, their position or career is not at risk?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Through a solid bill, I guess, with teeth in it.

The thing is that by leaving things to the chain of command.... This is a very decentralized place. People don't necessarily have bad intentions; they just don't have the education on it. They don't know how to handle these things.

We're giving them a lot of hats. One of these hats is to handle these things. In order to do it properly, they need to be properly educated on how to handle them. What would constitute a protection? What is safety? What is considered as something unsafe? Is somebody in the workplace now being confronted by the same person, living in the barracks next to a person? What is the threshold? They're going to need more guidance if they are to be the ones making those kinds of decisions on the matter.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Have you heard of any issues that victims of inappropriate sexual behaviour have had with padres or military chaplains in regard to the sexual assaults against them?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I know that part of the SMRC is to report people to the padres. One of the things about the padres is that they have a duty to report, yet they also have conventional rights.

Basically, if somebody confesses a crime to them, they can choose to keep that to themselves, but if a person victimized by sexual violence talks to them without being in confession, they can report that. I think this can be better defined, especially if this is considered one of the services victims can be redirected to.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Have you encountered any victims whom the chaplain told, “If you want to continue in the forces, you had just better keep this to yourself”?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I heard many different things from the chaplain. Again, I think training would help to ensure that there will be a trauma-informed response when they answer to people, and also that they have better guidance on what to do when they receive those kinds of things.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Is it your opinion that the process for dealing with sexual assault should be taken out of the chain of command?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: The process?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Yes.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: There's a part where there needs to be an oversight and there's a part that has to stay in.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: You mentioned retaliation. What types of retaliation have you heard about happening to victims when reported?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: They are not being accommodated, being under the impression that the accommodation didn't happen, having their units talk about them, obviously, and conversations about them or information gathering. They are things like that.

• (1130)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: In your experience—

The Chair: I'm going to have to leave it there, MP Gallant.

I'm going to yield the floor to MP Garrison.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for being here today. Your testimony, I think, is very important.

I think my concern...I'm not sure what word I'm looking for here. I wish we'd had you here earlier in the sequence of testimony, because you've raised some important points about how this will actually operate in practice about which I would have liked the chance to ask some of the people here earlier. I regret—that's the word I'm probably looking for—that you weren't here earlier. I think it's very important testimony.

I want to go back to one of the first things you talked about, and that is the transfer of cases to civilian court. I'm sure you're aware of the Beaudry case and the decision of the military appeal court that serious offences, if they're not related to military service directly, shouldn't be handled by the military justice system. That will be going to the Supreme Court, obviously. When you're saying that in this bill we should have clearer indication that there's a choice, it looks as if that choice may be going to disappear.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: It may be, but at this point no one really is aware of that. Where do you find that information? If this is a victim's choice, I really think it should be part of the bill, as a choice, as one of the things you have the choice to do.

Mr. Randall Garrison: As an MP, I can tell you that we've had numerous cases of people, either in military families or in

relationships with people who are in the military, who felt that the military investigating their case was inappropriate and unfair.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: There are current cases right now, as well, where people are defending their rights to have it done in a civilian.... I think guidance would help.

Mr. Randall Garrison: What I'm saying to you is that I totally know that in practice people don't realize there is any such alternative or that they have any way to get cases transferred.

You run across that quite regularly, then, I would say.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Yes. I think I was a little surprised when I heard about that at the Senate, because I was speaking at the same time. I never was aware of that before he said it.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Even you weren't aware, then.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: No.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Then we have to figure out something to do there.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Yes.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I'm not sure how we do that.

A lot of things you have talked about seem to me to be more directly related to resourcing the system in terms of training. If we insert things into the bill, let's say, that require more training but the military doesn't resource that training, I guess we'll end up in the same situation.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Yes, but that's the thing. Oversight and accountability are really required in a place that is decentralized and covering such a massive place, especially when you delegate more responsibility to less-trained people and don't give clear definitions and procedures, which leads to a lot of interpretations.

If the choice is to decentralize more of these hearings, it can lessen the burden and focus on more severe cases on the higher.... That makes sense. However, procedures and training need to be done. This cannot just be done this way, and that needs to be looked at and...accountable for.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I'm probably asking the wrong person here, as you'll have the same question as I do. I guess what I'm looking for is how we actually ensure the training exists and is delivered.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Again, I think it would be better oversight, such as the OAG report, regularly, and having those kinds of things that happen, just to ensure that the training was done and done well and people understood. That's what would matter, I guess.

Mr. Randall Garrison: When you're saying “better oversight”, are you saying that...?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I mean external oversight.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Okay. You were reading my mind. It needs to be external. It can't be any of the internal mechanisms.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I don't think it can be internal, no.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Right now where is that oversight really lodged? Could it be the military ombudsman or...?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Well, the military ombudsman never really took that part, from what I have seen. There's never been a report that I've seen on that.

From what I have seen, within five years they had 32 cases of sexual harassment. That's before the Deschamps commission. Concerning the fact that there were 960 cases that came after a sexual assault, I'm just wondering if this is the right place. I tried a lot within my group to have a report done through them, and that never happened.

Mr. Randall Garrison: You did try to get a report done through the military ombudsman.

• (1135)

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Yes, and we had calls, and that never happened. I don't know exactly what the obstacle is there. I don't know if he came here to look into the victims and make sure their rights were respected. I'm not so sure if the CAF ombudsman came, but that would probably have been a sign of somebody who would make sure victims' rights were looked into.

Mr. Randall Garrison: They didn't give you a clear indication of why they didn't do a study from the military—

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: No. Well, they said they needed to see it as a trend, and they didn't see that as a trend right now.

Mr. Randall Garrison: They didn't feel they had any statutory limitation that would have...or lack of power. They said it was more

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Also, their role was not to advocate. It was just to make sure the processes in place were respected, so they were not going to go above that.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Again, we wish we had had you here sooner.

The Chair: MP Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you very much.

I also wish you had been here much sooner, because there are lots of questions and you've really outlined things.

One of the first questions I actually asked our officials, those who put in place this proposed process, was whether they had checked with victims within the system to get feedback from them and they hadn't. I mention that again just because I'm hoping that moving forward it becomes a standard. To me that's the obvious thing to do. If we're actually proposing a system to help address an issue that's very serious within the military system, we should be going out to people who have actually been victimized to tell them what we're proposing.

You mentioned ensuring gender parity on military panels, which I really thought was important. I'll mention two things, and I'd love for you to comment on them.

One, you mentioned that there is a much smaller pool of women. Two, the culture can be the same for a woman and a man, so women aren't necessarily the best advocates for themselves. I want you to

comment. How could we make that work? I think it's an excellent suggestion.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I agree with you on that. It's not because it's women who are going to be on the panel that would necessarily change the ruling. It just would make the victim maybe more comfortable to have less uniformity on the panel itself.

I just think this is one of the.... To show how a system applies to civilians, when you say we're mimicking and mirroring the exact same thing in the military, how that makes a difference.... That's why there's a difference, and that should be considered for victims.

As to how to look into it, I don't really know how the process is randomly done, but if there's a pool of people, the representation could be two and two, and then for the fifth one, the decision is up to.... I don't know exactly how it would be done, but I just think it is something to look into, how to ensure better representation, diversity and such.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: You also mentioned that the victim liaison officer does not necessarily work, and the victim might need their own attorney. Can you elaborate a little bit on that? Why do you believe that's so?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: It's a really complex system, like anything else, and the victims are not really aware of what they are entitled to. Also, there are a lot of processes and procedures that were not designed with the victims in mind. They're old.

When they're facing those things, they're not aware of what they can have or cannot have. The bill of rights is not there yet, right? There are fewer resources available, and they have to face greater obstacles to access justice, especially if it's from different provinces, from an operational deployment situation and the power structure within the military.

There are many things to take into consideration. The chain of command won't necessarily be the one supporting, so I think it helps to have somebody there to at least tell people what they should be expecting from the process, and not just the process itself, but what their rights and protections are. They'll highlight them clearly.

Let's say you need your medical documentation. How do you go about that? Are there time restrictions for that? Can the person give you give you an ATI and wait for six months, or do you have a right to get this quickly in order for your trial to happen in time? Are you the one to have to ask for these things?

Do they have the right to look into all your DWAN accounts and your relationships in the past? They have access to all these things because you worked there since you were maybe 17 years old. They could have easy access—I'm not saying they do—to all your medical records since you were really young as well. How many times have you had an STD, or whatever it is? Can they have access to these things without your permission?

These are the kinds of things that I think the victims should be aware of when they're signing and what they're signing for. They can make a decision on that.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I think that's fair.

I'm not sure if the process actually looks at this, and I don't know if you have any recommendations. Once someone has been victimized and has gone through the process, do we have something in the process that allows them to reintegrate? Is there something we should be doing around that?

• (1140)

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Do we have something for people who were victimized to reintegrate?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Yes, to go back into the system. If you've had an issue and there's been some trauma, it's not an automatic thing to go.... You might say that you love this job and you might want to go back, but you're not sure how to actually reintegrate.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: There's a high release of people who were victimized by sexual violence—especially medical release for mental health reasons. That's a high one. There are obviously people quitting.

There's not a lot of research or work done to look into the care of how to rehabilitate people who were victimized by sexual violence. What concerns me is that in the SMRC report that came out a couple of months ago, the leadership had their top three priorities. One of them was to ensure rehabilitation of the perpetrators, but there was nothing said about the victims. It kind of shows where the priority is. What do we do? Right now it's outsourced to a civilian system. What are they saying to the victims? How do you make sure these programs are efficient? Are they working? Is the focus to rehabilitate them to come back?

One thing is, what does the chain of command do to make sure secondary trauma doesn't happen? This is usually what makes people not come back. You can see tons of people who were victims of sexual violence who didn't say anything. They stayed in the ranks and you never hear about it, and they kept doing their job fine. Yet, when they report, there are a lot of people who are gone. Obviously, something happens after they report that creates an additional trauma that makes people unable to stay.

They have to look into how to mitigate those things like the secondary trauma, the additional trauma or what we call “sanctuary trauma”. This is within the control of the military to do. They may not be able to erase all harmful or inappropriate sexual behaviour, but they sure can do something when it happens, to mitigate the factors that cause a person to leave.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Part of what we're trying to do is... There are a lot of changes happening at once. I was reading—and I think it just came out last week—that the Canadian Armed Forces thought there would be 1,000 sexual assault cases coming forward. I think we're at 3,000 right now. I think that says there have been a lot more than we originally thought.

I think that we have to deal with the sins of the past while we're changing the culture, which takes time. It does take time to change the culture, put new rules and processes in place, and then educate. I think that Bill C-77 is part of that. This is what we're trying to do all at the same time. All of that is really important.

You have made a number of excellent recommendations. You went through them really quickly.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Yes. I wanted to get in as many as I could.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I think you were trying, but could you actually pull one out that says, “Julie, this is something that's really important for this committee to consider”? If you could put that on the table, it would be great.

The Chair: Unfortunately, you're over your time. Maybe Mr. Spengemann will latch onto that one, or he might have his own questions. I'm going to yield the floor to him. We'll go to the five-minute questions.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gagnon, thank you for your testimony and for joining us today. I also thank you for your service to our country and, once again, for your advocacy. I would first like to invite you to tell us a bit about your organization.

[*English*]

You haven't had a chance to put much on the record yet about what led you to found It's Just 700, how it networks and what its aspirations are.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Okay.

I will continue in English.

[*English*]

My group was built in 2015 after the Deschamps commission report. The reason I called it “It's Just 700” is that when the Deschamps commission report came out, in the social media there was a lot of backlash towards victims. A lot of people said that it was just 700 people who reported it and it wasn't a big deal, so I used that term as the name of the group. I was kind of mad that day.

The first thing, the objective, was to create an online group where we could safely talk to each other without being judged. We saw as well that there were trans-systemic issues within Veterans Affairs to access services, but also within CAF. Instead of just calling each other and crying, we tried to make some changes. Also, when things happened, we saw that could be a broader trend in this.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Does your group have connections to militaries outside of Canada, particularly those that are contributing or taking leading roles within the UN peace support operations system?

• (1145)

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Yes.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: What kind of feedback have you received from them?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I have had conversations with my equivalents in New Zealand, Australia and the U.S., as well as within Canada with first responders of different forces, such as the RCMP. They want to see how we can... Within here, it's how to work together, and outside, especially with the women, peace and security agenda, it's how to ensure that... For example, rape kits are not standardized. Right now, if somebody from another country does the rape kit on you, it may not be admissible in the court system within your country. How do you ensure that these things get pushed to have a standardized process and approach?

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Even though we're still dealing with some of the very pressing problems that my colleague was just referring to—3,000 cases—we haven't solved the issues yet. Bill C-77 is an important part of that. Do you see a role for Canada in teaching and training at the level of the UN on issues of military sexual trauma, abuse and assault?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I think they can take the lead on it, but I think it would be more for the Minister of National Defence than the CAF to do that, especially through MOUs, let's say. That's my own opinion on it, but if we go through a conflict, it's just to ensure that the care is there, that it's provided, and that people are trained to ensure safety. That probably should be done through some kind of memorandum of understanding when we go into conflicts in other countries.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: This is more specific and more directly related to Bill C-77. I had a chance to ask General Lamarre at a previous session about the risk of different service discipline cultures emerging across the country under Bill C-77. They're much more minor offences, but still one unit of the armed forces having a different culture or a different vision of service discipline from another. He did not express that there was concern about that.

I now want to ask you in the context of much more serious offences—military sexual exploitation and assault—do you see a risk under the framework of Bill C-77 that different units of the Canadian Forces will take this issue more or less seriously and that the outcomes for victims would be different within the justice system that's contemplated by Bill C-77? If so, what levers do we need to examine more closely to make sure that doesn't happen?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Obviously, if the more serious crimes are dealt with in a centralized way, there'll be some consistency there, but all the minor cases that can lead to bigger cases, that can foster this to lead to those, is where the concern is. Decentralizing this does help with regard to serious crimes being handled on time, but at the same time, the smaller crimes should also be looked into by people who are competent and able to provide some kind of consistency. That's why a clear definition process needs to be done. Accountability, making sure that these are being followed, needs to be done as well. Maybe the SMRC could be doing that. I'm not so sure.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thanks very much.

That's just about my time.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Martel.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Good morning, Ms. Gagnon.

Congratulations on the work you are doing.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Thank you.

Mr. Richard Martel: There are many sexual assault cases in the army, and I must admit that it is difficult for me to understand the situation.

What can that be attributed to? Is it because people remained silent on the issue for too long? Why is it that, all of a sudden, cases seem to be accumulating and reaching significant numbers? Is the number of sexual assaults proportional to the number of assaults identified in general society?

I would like to understand what pushes armed forces members to commit so many assaults? Is it because they are in a different environment?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: It is true that very young people find themselves in an environment where they are far from their family and its support. They live in very close proximity to one another in barracks where women and men live together. That was my reality. It gives you an idea of the type of environment I was exposed to. Certainly, risks increase in such circumstances.

● (1150)

Mr. Richard Martel: Is it possible they feel that it is allowed because they are outside their usual environment?

That is what I'm trying to understand.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Honestly, I'm not sure how much the situation may have changed.

I came into the Canadian Armed Forces a long time ago. In my experience at that time, a certain view was propagated, especially in recruit courses. Regardless of the opinion we may have on the issue, that somewhat affects our behaviour. Recruits learned to talk as little as possible if something happened. They would tell themselves that it seemed to be allowed.

Mr. Richard Martel: I would like to know what you think about a fairly broad issue.

What do you think is the best way to convince victims of crime that their well-being is crucially important, and that it is up to them to focus on it? How can they be educated about that?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Resources that might support them must be implemented.

When all that happens, I would say offhand that there should be a public affairs office able to manage cases and provide a call centre to direct people. If the case is deemed to be serious, problematic, medical assistance or psychological support would need to be provided.

If we think that focus should be on the victims, the first thing that needs to be done is to ensure their well-being and find ways to take action. I don't know to what extent that has been done so far.

Mr. Richard Martel: Trust should also be developed.

An article I read said that the armed forces have provided awareness and training sessions, but they have not tackled root causes of inappropriate sexual behaviours.

What do you think about that?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Military members are told that they should not behave that way, that it is not good. They are also told what is not good about it.

When it comes to third party intervention, that is part of training. I work at a university now, and I know that is also being taught.

There is a difference between the duty to report and the duty to intervene. You intervene when, for example, someone makes an inappropriate joke in your presence and you tell them to stop because it is inappropriate. The training is supposed to provide people with tips, give them tools so they can intervene without feeling isolated.

It is certain that, if all those things, both the inappropriate winks and inappropriate jokes, are reported and make it to the top of the organization, the system will get clogged up. The department needs to be better equipped to manage serious cases. Processes need to be provided, so that those cases can be managed internally. Once again, it must be ensured that responders receive training in order to be able to meet the needs.

It is very important to do that properly because, if not, and a minor incident occurs that is poorly managed and develops into a major case, the person will know that they have no support and no one is listening to them. So great importance should be attached to minor cases and the training of people who manage them, so that they would meet the needs.

Mr. Richard Martel: Training can always be improved, right?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Certainly. Training may also not be provided by professionals. In addition, it is not very convincing if the person providing the training has committed those kinds of acts.

[English]

The Chair: MP Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much.

Without the changes that Bill C-77 would bring to the military justice system, how difficult is it now for victims to access general information? What does the right to information mean to victims?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: It's very important, and I don't think that right now there's much of that; hence, people are left in the dark. I've been hearing that a lot. When they go through the system they learn after the fact via a peer, a person who went through the system themselves, what they should or shouldn't have done. They need information. That's why it's so important to have somebody there to guide them through the system. I don't think what is offered right now through the VLO is sufficient to provide that kind of information.

Mr. Darren Fisher: That's good to hear.

We know there needs to be a culture change in the military, especially surrounding sexual harassment and assault. In your opinion, what aspects of Bill C-77 would work to modify that culture and strengthen the rights of victims?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Again, if done properly, one thing will be to show a victim trauma-centric support. That would show the military can care. Care and the military don't always mesh, to care for people when we're trained to do these things that we do. That we care about the victims will give this.... When the chain of command gets a case, they learn that their role is to ensure the person is well received, listened to, respected, and that they'd have a trauma-informed response.

A PO or chief who's not learned to do these things all his life could create a shift in the focus of their role. I think people are lost when they get these cases. They don't know what to do. Giving them the proper tools can help.

Would that convince everyone? No, and that's why a procedure to make sure that's being followed is what matters. Then the change comes later.

I keep talking about the seatbelt in the car. For years we never used to buckle up. We were aware that we were going to die if we didn't buckle up, and still no one buckled up. When we put in a rule and enforced that you would get an \$80 fine if you didn't buckle up, everybody started to buckle up. Now who is not going to buckle up? It changed our ways. We imposed something, and that made the change happen. Culture change can happen by enforcement of procedures.

The rotation of personnel is really frequent in the military. Eventually, the people who don't believe will leave and new people will come in, and they will be into that new mindset.

• (1155)

Mr. Darren Fisher: In your experience, is a particular demographic most susceptible to sexual harassment and assault?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Yes, it's young women especially, and there's been research that people from indigenous groups in the military were more susceptible as well, something I found interesting. The survey excluded the rangers. That would be nice to have.

Mr. Darren Fisher: What provisions in Bill C-77 would address this?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: For these specific groups? The fact that they're really young means they don't have a lot of information. They are overwhelmed. They need proper guidance. Most people who are subjected to sexual violence are very young, and have just started in the military. They are still really impressed by their chain of command, and they will listen to whatever they say. The chain of command may also take advantage of that and tell people they can't report, that they can't do this, and they'll listen. They're more in that mindset when they just finish their boot camp, for example.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you very much for your work and all your efforts.

The Chair: MP Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you again for your service, for your leadership and the strength you're showing in dealing with such a difficult issue.

In listening to your testimony just now, the whole issue of summary hearings is supposed to negate the criminal charges brought against a perpetrator. In your opinion, should sexual misconduct be dealt with by summary hearing, or should it always be done through court martial?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Sexual misconduct is a really minor crime. I don't think it necessarily has a place in criminal court, that's for sure, but you mean military court. It's disciplinary.

My only concern about having it extended this way is that it will be led by people who are not properly trained and don't have the expertise, experience and knowledge. If we keep it the way it is right now, my concern is that there are so many of them. So many little actions are going to come up that burden the system for bigger cases. I think it's not a bad scenario to give it in summary hearings. However, you can't just give it to people who are trained the way they are now.

When I was in the three-day training, it was about learning the basics of the legislative process. This is not the kind of training you have for provincial victim support. They have social workers. They have people who have been working in this. If you get the person who happened to take the three-day training once, there's no way they're going to be able to. They don't receive anything about victims or trauma-informed care. They won't be equipped to respond to these things. If this happens, resources need to be invested to make sure it's done properly, and the accountability and the oversight are done.

Mr. James Bezan: The Auditor General did say that the investigations were taking too long. Again, there is the whole question around the Beaudry decision of the Court Martial Appeal Court that was dismissed. They're sending it up to the Supreme Court, because again, it's time frames, taking too long because of a lack of training.

I think we need to have clear definitions of what sexual misconduct is, what sexual assault is, and then the proper training to go with that, whether it's the victim liaison officers who specialize in sexual misconduct and sexual assault to support victims, as well as military police.

• (1200)

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Also some tracking, because of the relocations. People are frequently relocating. If you put this in the chain of command and then within that there's a posting of A, B and C, that case is left in limbo. The other person comes in and has to start again to learn the facts and everything.

There needs to be proper guidance, and timelines and procedures that need to be followed.

Mr. James Bezan: Who would be responsible for that?

Should it be JAG, or should it be—?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: If JAG is the one that wants to delegate it, I think they should be responsible to ensure it's done properly.

Mr. James Bezan: Okay.

In the Auditor General's report, there's the whole issue of this service gap that they talked about.

Especially when we start talking about the portability of the crime and the victim, moving around from base to base, how do we fill that service gap?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Well, if the victim liaison officer is trained enough and could be attached to one specific area and that becomes their expertise, and anyone who has questions can contact that person, that may help. If you're a victim liaison officer within your unit and have an expertise, anyone who has questions can reach them when they have a case. The expertise needs to be somewhere, and then you'll be able to....

Again, it's about guidelines. I'm really strong about online guidelines and information—strong procedure. If they have guidelines on how to tie our shoes, they sure can have guidelines about how to handle these things. We know they have them on how to brush your teeth and everything. It's all there, so—

Mr. James Bezan: Under Operation Honour, there's been a recent report that the number of prosecutions, investigations taking place, has dropped dramatically. It was done rather quietly over the last few months. What's your take on why that happened?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Do you mean the notice of 30 days?

Mr. James Bezan: Yes, it's tied to the AG's report, that there was a reduction in the number of prosecutions that were being proceeded on, and that nobody really talked about it. There is supposed to be transparency and accountability, and yet it took the Auditor General to actually discover it.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: There needs to be a consistent, frequent accountability review and reports done, in order for that not to fall through the cracks...saying every five years that we'll do something different, and then it takes five years and they're doing something different again.

There needs to be more frequent oversight.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, I want to move a motion in light of testimony that we've received and the report that came from the Auditor General. I move:

That the Committee invite the Auditor General to appear before the consideration of Bill C-77 clause-by-clause and discuss his Fall 2018 report.

The Chair: Is there debate?

Mr. Darren Fisher: I move that the debate be now adjourned.

The Chair: It's a dilatory motion.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I'm going to yield the floor to MP Spengemann.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Chair, thank you very much.

Madam Gagnon, I'm going to ask you a question that goes slightly outside of the bill, and then I'll give the remainder of my time to my colleague MP Dzerowicz.

It goes back to what our colleague Monsieur Martel said about the well-being of victims. The bill talks about the right to information, the right to protection, the right to participation and the right to restitution.

In your experience as a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces, what support mechanisms were there prior to Bill C-77? What support mechanisms would there be in the future for a victim to come forward with respect to counselling and mental health services?

This being one incentive to take the step of coming forward, I think it's a very important—

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: The way it's done right now is, they highlight all of the support that exists in the military, but they're not all specifically for that. They say, "Well, we have health care providers and we have chaplains", but they haven't been trained on these things. This is the support available. It's done; it's there, but it's not cognizant of these specific needs.

What is needed is either to create something separate or ingrain it in what's offered now. For example, the operational stress injury people are not trained for sexual trauma. They don't have peer support. Those are the kinds of things that are really needed in order for people to be able to have those kinds of supports and care they need.

Right now it's redirected to external agencies. In the new budget 2018, they said they were going to put \$5 million over four years into external rape crisis centres in nearby bases in order to help victims. I'm not so sure that happened, because I haven't seen any victim centres get anything. Even if they did, how are they sure that this money is invested for that specific need? What was the scope, and how do they make sure that happened?

If you just outsource it, you make it a system that is inconsistent and care that is inconsistent for all victims, because it's led to local organizations all over the country.

• (1205)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: That's really helpful. Thank you very much.

I'm going to pass it to Madam Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you so much.

Thanks again.

We're almost at the end of the testimony.

Leadership matters. It very much plays a role in how culture unfolds and even in how things like Bill C-77 are implemented and enforced. What more do you think needs to happen at the leadership level to ensure that Bill C-77, what we're trying to do and the support we're trying to provide to victims will go through?

What more do you think needs to happen at the leadership level?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I think the way they can provide, I'll say, more teeth is to enforce that any person in the chain of command that did summary hearings should have to write a report of what happened, and the victim and the accused should also give their input about how they felt they were treated.

That should be put together and sent to the sexual misconduct response centre of the CSRT, if that's what they want. Then they compile it, and they can review the cases, the outcome, and how people felt they were treated. From there, from having that every year, they could have an evaluation, see trends and have a plan that could be published on how they're going to remediate the gaps they see in these things.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: It's like continuous improvement. What is it that we're seeing? What are the gaps that we're seeing and how can we improve? I think that's excellent.

You mentioned—and again this is probably just because I didn't listen closely—that proposed subsection 71.16(1) should be removed. Could you just let me know—

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: Which one was that, sorry?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I think you said 71.16.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: What was that one about?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I'm not sure. It was after you talked about victims when you talked about adding the principle about victims being treated with dignity.

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I think it's about the request. It's not the whole thing, but the part referring to it being on request should be removed. Victim liaison officers should be given automatically; it shouldn't be done at the request of the victim, because they won't know to request them.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you. That's a very helpful recommendation.

There's another thing I would love to talk to you about and that is I've only worked in male-dominated environments as well. Changing culture is a tough thing to do, because for many years people operated under a particular environment that was perfectly normal for them and reinforced by leadership.

For me, part of this whole process is trying not to get people to be victimized. I also don't want people to feel bad that they're normal people and they've acted in a particular way, but now they have to change their behaviour.

Do you have any comments about what more could be done around that change in culture within the military?

Ms. Marie-Claude Gagnon: I wouldn't be focused on changing the culture more than focusing on changing the procedures and the leadership voice at this point. The culture will follow. If you have process people first, they may stumble and may not agree with it, but they'll do it. Eventually the next person will come and they won't ask why, and it will change.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

I think with that—

The Chair: Before you do that, the notice of meeting went until 12:00. We had a very important witness today, so we went over. I think there was implied consent to do that; however, the notice of meeting was until 12:00, so I have to ask the committee for unanimous consent to continue the meeting.

I'm getting signals from the other side that they won't consent. Unfortunately, you're going to have to hold your motion.

I want to thank you very much for coming with your well-thought-out testimony. It was very important that we hear from you. Thank you for proactively seeking to come and speak with us. I appreciate it and thank you for your service to Canada.

Before we go, I want to remind the committee we have an informal meeting with a delegation from Mali on November 28,

from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and on Wednesday, December 5, we have a delegation from Burkina Faso from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. You should all know about that.

At this point I'm going to have to adjourn the meeting.

Thank you very much.

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