

Canada Survey Finds Nearly 1,000 Assaults in Canadian Military Last Year



Ottawa, December 6 (RHC)-- A survey conducted by Canada's national statistics agency shows nearly 1,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces reported being sexually assaulted over the past year.

According to a survey by Statistics Canada, 1.7 percent of regular force members of the military had been sexually assaulted in the past 12 months. The landmark survey, commissioned by the military, found that 27 percent of women in the armed forces have been sexually assaulted during their career.

The survey, which received more than 43,000 responses and a 61 percent response rate among regular force members, said that women were four times more likely than men to report being sexually assaulted in the past year.

Women make up about 15 percent of Canada's armed forces. The survey by the country's national statistics agency showed that 49 percent of women assaulted in the past 12 months identified a supervisor or someone in a higher rank as the perpetrator. In contrast, 56 percent of male victims identified a peer as the perpetrator.

The survey, the first of its kind in Canada, was commissioned last year by General Jonathan Vance, Canada's chief of the defense staff. Vance has said the results of the survey were both expected and sobering.

"Harmful sexual behavior is a real problem in our institution. We know it, and we are trying to tackle it head on," Vance said during a news briefing, adding: "I'm more motivated than ever to eliminate this behavior and the perpetrators from our ranks."

In 2015, Vance launched Operation Honor, a military program to address sexual offenses after an external investigation said the Canadian armed forces had an underlying sexualized culture hostile to women and gays.

The developments come as Western military forces are increasingly coming under scrutiny for their handling of sexual offenses. A Pentagon report in May said sexual assaults in the US military are still under-reported.

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