

Highlights of the Senate Committee's Report and Government Response to *Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons*

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- Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important report.
- It is a very comprehensive and important review of all aspects of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) operations involving the human rights of persons under CSC's care, custody and supervision. It was five years in the making involving 28 institutional visits with testimony from 155 individuals.
- As I have been advocating for more than 25 years, Corrections is in the human rights business, as almost every decision it takes impacts the life, liberty and human rights of federally incarcerated individuals and those serving the remaining part of their sentences in the community. I very much appreciate this issue being considered by the Senate with a human rights lens.
- The report is excellent and thorough, and its findings and recommendations greatly overlap with many existing external reports on federal corrections, including from:
 - My Office.
 - The Office of the Auditor General.
 - Offices of provincial Coroners and Medical Examiners.
 - Numerous other reports from Senate and House Committees.
 - Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls.
 - Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- This Senate report documents significant and systemic human rights gaps in every aspect of CSC operations. And I note that in the Government Response to its 71 recommendations, 60 were directed to CSC.
- In my view, the amalgamated and thematic response from the Government includes descriptions of existing policies and initiatives already underway. There are no new commitments, only current practices and ongoing efforts, which were present at the time the Committee visited and investigated the CSC.
- In the Government Response, I did not find any new initiatives inspired by this report. While I acknowledge the existing work and numerous reference to studies and policy reviews listed in the Government Response, in my opinion these fall short. Put more simply, the Response is not proportionate to the gravity of the findings of human rights violations.

- Ideally, there should be a response to each of the 71 recommendations, and more clarity as to whether each recommendation was accepted, accepted in part, or rejected. For those recommendations which are accepted or accepted in part, a proper response would include a list of concrete actions to be taken, deliverables, targets, and timeframes.
- My unsolicited advice to your committee would be to request a better and more meaningful response from CSC on your 60 recommendations directed to that agency.
- On a last and positive note, the majority of CSC staff are well-intentioned, dedicated, and wish to do well in a job that can be very challenging.
- It's clear to me that the issue around these negative outcomes comes down to a culture, which is structurally embedded in this organization and has been for many, many years.
- I believe that there is an opportunity here for CSC to demonstrate it can acknowledge the challenges it faces, and the presence of significant human rights gaps in its operations. Providing you with a candid, open, transparent and accountable response to each of your important 61 recommendations would be a great step towards addressing this culture.
- Happy to respond to questions.