

The Committee concurs with many of the witnesses that gun control is not the central issue in violence against women, although it is related. Rather it is one area where the federal government can legislate to improve the safety of all Canadians.

### **RECOMMENDATION 23**

**The Committee recommends that Parliament revisit the issue of gun control, and introduce legislation that will be stronger in the following specific ways: that gun ownership be reaffirmed as a privilege, and not as a right; that the privilege of gun ownership not be granted to persons who have been convicted of crimes against the person or other serious offences; that the minimum age for gun ownership be raised from 16 to 18 years; that semi-automatic weapons be made restricted weapons; that all weapons be required to be registered by type and serial number on the owner's Firearms Acquisitions Certificate (FAC); that a FAC be required for the purchase of ammunition; that a national data base of gun owners and guns be set up; that women and non-gun owners be included in the process of defining safe storage requirements for guns and that the safe storage requirements be enforced; that all assault weapons be removed from circulation; and that the necessary resources be allotted to each of these initiatives.**

### **Q. TASK FORCE ON FAMILY VIOLENCE IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES**

In their appearance before the Committee, representatives from the Native Women's Association of Canada spoke of the lack of services and appropriate responses within Native communities to meet the needs of women and their children who are physically, sexually, and emotionally abused. They pointed out that there is a dearth of emergency shelters and, as a result, women and children must leave their home and community to secure their personal safety. The victims are then doubly-victimized, as they are isolated and cut off from family support.

Further, police often will not lay charges after an assault has occurred unless the woman victim presses charges. Typically, in Native communities a woman lives with her husband and children in the home of her in-laws or parents. She is often dependent on her extended family for support and shelter and therefore reluctant to press charges. The criminal justice intervention preferred for abusive men over arrest and imprisonment is treatment and counselling. Programs of this nature, however, are lacking in Native communities.