



Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

Scholars Against Abuse in Canadian Sport urgently calls on the Canadian government to initiate an immediate independent judicial inquiry into the widespread reports of sexual, physical, and psychological abuse of athletes throughout the nation's sport system. Our 92 members, across 30 Canadian and 17 international institutions stand in solidarity with the over 1000 Canadian athletes seeking immediate accountability and meaningful change from Sport Canada and the broader system it governs.

The government's response to athlete abuse remains woefully inadequate, failing to address the underlying factors responsible for the widespread maltreatment of athletes across the sport system. The establishment of the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC) in June 2022 is not a solution. Without complete independence from Canada's sport authorities, the OSIC will always lack the powers necessary to resolve this crisis. The OSIC is an inadequate response to the toxic culture of abuse. It lacks the necessary independence, capacity, authorities, expertise, and mandate to conduct an inquiry of the breadth and depth required.

The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) established the OSIC to adjudicate claims of abuse emanating from within Sport Canada's jurisdiction. Yet, the SDRCC, which funds OSIC, is itself funded by Sport Canada. In short, the government is allowing Sport Canada to investigate itself. The government must appoint a third party to conduct a proper, thorough trauma-sensitive investigation into the systemic failure of the nation's sport system. Moreover, the aim of such an investigation must be to *prevent*, rather than simply respond to, the kinds of abuse so frequently reported. The OSIC has not been empowered to pursue meaningful, sustainable change within Sport Canada.

Pursuing meaningful, sustainable change means subpoenaing testimony and/or documents. It means sanctioning offending parties. Instead, the OSIC will silence and re-traumatize survivors. According to the OSIC, survivors "should not discuss or disclose the complaint, allegations, investigation, or details thereof with anyone (including on social media or publicly), except as directed by OSIC...As otherwise required by law, or as noted in the exceptions." The last thing survivors need is yet another mechanism that operates to silence them.

Canadian athletes deserve better. They deserve more. Their safety and well-being should be the absolute priority. To reform the sport system, and *prevent* abuse going forward, we must know the scope of the problem. Without this information, the toxic status quo will persist. We urge the Canadian government to initiate an independent judicial inquiry into athlete abuse in Canada, akin to the Dubin Inquiry of 1989. The safety of the nation's child, youth, and elite athletes depends upon it.

Signed,

Scholars Against Abuse in Canadian Sport

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