



For Immediate Release
Supreme Court of Canada Decision in *Ahluwalia v. Ahluwalia*

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

On Friday, May 15, a [groundbreaking decision from the Supreme Court of Canada](#) created a **new tort of intimate partner violence (IPV)**.

This tort recognizes coercive and controlling intimate partner violence as a distinct civil wrong. It allows victims/survivors who have experienced this form of IPV to seek financial compensation.

The Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that IPV includes: “acts of physical and psychological violence, as well as tactics of isolation, manipulation, humiliation, surveillance, economic abuse, sexual coercion, and intimidation that can control and entrap intimate partners.”

The Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) was an intervener in *Ahluwalia v. Ahluwalia*, represented by Neil McPhee, Scharfstein LLP.

In its decision, the Supreme Court of Canada relied upon submissions from PATHS in emphasizing how intimate partner violence can undermine victims/survivors’ freedom, liberty, agency, and independence. The Court recognized that coercive and controlling conduct within an intimate partnership can constitute a distinct civil wrong, causing harms to dignity, autonomy, and equality that existing torts do not fully address. Recognition of this new tort marks an important step toward a legal response that better reflects the lived realities of victims and survivors.

“This decision is a significant development in how civil law responds to intimate partner violence. It is important to see the Supreme Court of Canada recognize a new tort of intimate partner violence grounded in coercive control, including conduct that deprives survivors of dignity, autonomy, and equality within an intimate relationship. By confirming that these distinct harms can support an award of compensatory damages, the decision creates an important new avenue of financial redress for survivors.”—Christa Baron, PATHS Executive Director

“By affirming that intimate relationships are relationships of equality, autonomy, and mutual engagement, the Supreme Court of Canada has articulated a vision of partnership that aligns with contemporary Canadian values: intimate relationships cannot coexist with coercive and controlling behaviour.” — Neil McPhee, Scharfstein LLP

For comments:

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