

o Foot electronic bracelet system: MONTREAL -- Quebec will implement an electronic bracelet system this spring to protect victims of conjugal violence. Guilbault said the monitoring devices will help women "who are stuck in that hell of domestic violence," recapture some semblance of peace. The device usually consists of an ankle bracelet and a transmitter box worn by the offender, and a second box -- a receiver -- provided to the victim. When the two devices are within a certain distance, in what's called a "pre-alert" zone, the police and the offender are notified. There have been 18 femicides in Quebec in 2021, a phenomenon that advocates say has been exacerbated by the lockdown rules related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Deputy premier and public safety minister Genevieve Guilbault made the announcement Wednesday at a press conference in Quebec City, where the first electronic monitoring systems will be implemented. The Executive Director of Shield of Athena Family Services in Montreal welcomed the news about the new protective device, however, she said it was just one of many strategies needed to fight domestic violence. The service will then be gradually rolled out to every region in the province by December 2023. "It's a tool that has to be used but in concert with other measures. I think it's yet one more reinforcement for the victim," Melpa Kamateros said. She also said the use of the electronic bracelet takes the onus off the potential victim and places it on the shoulders of the potential abuser for a change, while at the same time benefiting them in several ways. "If we can help women and give them back this peace of mind, the power over their own life and their autonomy, it is priceless," Guilbault said. "Because if he does go overboard with a heinous act and he does kill the victim then he's in a bad way himself and we've all seen, unfortunately, how these cases end," she said. "It isn't only with the tragedy of the murder of the victim, but it's also the tragedy of the suicide of the abuser in many cases," Kamateros said. The monitoring bracelets are also used in parts of the United States, in France, and in Spain. Statistics Canada estimates that almost half of female homicide victims were killed by an intimate partner, compared to 6 per cent for men, according to data from 2019. If after that, the two people continue to move closer to one another, police officers will travel to meet each person at their location.