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## Jean London-bound for abuse conference

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Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean will make her London debut Wednesday, opening an international conference on domestic violence and children.

But Jean won't be the only big name at the international conference. The grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern India, is also expected.

Jean will open the three-day meeting on Children Exposed to Domestic Violence at the London Convention Centre.

"She's been an inspiration to all of us because she's spoken very candidly about her story. For us, she's a symbol of hope," said Linda Baker, executive director of the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, one of three agencies holding the conference.

Before becoming Governor General in September 2005, Jean helped to establish a network of shelters for battered women in Quebec.

Her family fled an oppressive regime in Haiti and came to Canada, where she witnessed domestic abuse.

About 1,000 delegates from 20 countries will be in London for the event.

They'll attend workshops and exchange ideas about what the courts can do better, discuss warning signs about domestic homicide, glean aboriginal perspectives and study initiatives so boys and men know their role in ending violence.

The conference will highlight how children can be affected by violence in the home, said **Peter Jaffe**, academic director at the University of Western Ontario's Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, another conference host.

"Now people are . . . understanding the impact of what happens to children living with violence," he said.

Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, who championed non-violent struggle in India's independence drive from Great Britain, will speak Thursday.

"He's really carrying forward the message of his grandfather," said Baker.

The conference runs until Friday. Registration is still open ([www.lfcc.on.ca](http://www.lfcc.on.ca)).