



Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police  
Association canadienne des chefs de police

November 16, 2018

Via e-mail: [b.zandberg@mmiwg-ffada.ca](mailto:b.zandberg@mmiwg-ffada.ca)

Bryan Zandberg  
Registrar  
National Inquiry into Missing and  
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Dear Registrar :

**Re: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit evidence on behalf of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police for the purposes of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This information is provided pursuant to Rule 33 of the Legal Path: *Rules of Respectful Practice* and paragraph 9 of the Practice Direction regarding *Public Submission of Information to the Record Outside of Witnesses*.

Enclosed, please find a copy of the CACP's Resolution #07-2006 and its associated commentary.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

Ashley M. Smith  
Counsel, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

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## MISSING PERSONS INVESTIGATION POLICIES

*Submitted by the Policing With Aboriginal Peoples Committee*

**WHEREAS** Canadian Police Leaders and all Canadians are concerned with the number of Aboriginal women who are reported missing or murdered in Canada. In fact, Aboriginal women between the ages of 25 and 44 with status under the Indian Act, are five times more likely than all other women of the same age to die as the result of violence, making them prime targets and the most vulnerable in our society. (*Aboriginal Women: A Demographic, Social and Economic Profile, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Summer 1996*), and;

**WHEREAS** National Aboriginal organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations and the Native Women's Association of Canada have continued to advocate for more constructive measures to deal with the pervasive issue of violence toward Aboriginal women. (*AFN Women's Council and Special Chiefs Assemblies in 2005 and 2006; NWAC Sisters in Spirit Campaign*), and;

**WHEREAS** the Policing with Aboriginal Peoples Committee and the Ontario First Nations Police Commission organized and facilitated a Responding to Missing Aboriginal Persons Conference in March 2003, and;

**WHEREAS** involved communities reviewed missing person's policies from several Canadian police services and determined that while they were generally well written, the defining issue was the degree to which bias and stereotyping played a role in the application of the police response to a missing person case involving a person from a marginalized group, and;

**WHEREAS** recommendations contained in various inquiries and reports, from the 1991 Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba to the 2004 Stolen Sisters Report from Amnesty International, urge police services to put in place specific protocols that are sensitive to the particular concerns and circumstances in relation to violence against Aboriginal women, and;

**WHEREAS** there is an ongoing need to identify and implement appropriate and effective protocols that will result in more successful investigations that are sensitive to the particular concerns and circumstances in which Aboriginal as well as marginalized people are reported missing, and;

**WHEREAS** the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, as the national voice of Canadian police leadership, is committed to continue to raise awareness of the issue of Aboriginal missing persons Canada-wide, and;

**WHEREAS** the Ontario Provincial Police, based on the results of the Committee consultations, has produced a comprehensive and holistic policy manual for dealing with lost/missing persons cases that, with regard to Aboriginal and marginalized people, is based on principles of cultural sensitivity, respect, compassion and empathy,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police requests that all police services in Canada consider adopting the principles incorporated in the Ontario Provincial Police Lost/Missing Persons Manual and specifically with respect to Aboriginal and marginalized people.

## MISSING PERSONS INVESTIGATION POLICIES

### Commentary:

Canadian police leaders along with all Canadians are concerned with the number of Aboriginal women who are reported missing or murdered in Canada. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has revealed that Aboriginal women between the ages of 25 and 44, with status under the Indian Act, were five times more likely than all other women of the same age to die as the result of violence, making them prime targets and the most vulnerable in our society. Aboriginal leaders continue to be vocal in their call for changes in the way police agencies investigate cases involving Aboriginal people.

Amnesty International has recently articulated what national Aboriginal organizations have long espoused; that the way police respond to reports of missing persons is of critical concern requiring institutional reform. Few police services have specific protocols on actions to be taken when Aboriginal women and girls are reported missing. Police need to understand the specific needs of Aboriginal communities, be able to communicate without barriers of fear and mistrust, and ultimately be accountable to those communities.

In June 2002, a renewed Policing With Aboriginal Peoples Committee began work on the issue of Aboriginal missing persons cases. The committee consulted widely, involving national organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, the Inuit Women's Association and the Native Women's Association of Canada. In March of 2003, the committee organized a Responding to Missing Aboriginal Persons Conference, attended by over 120 delegates. In May of that year the committee went to British Columbia and consulted directly with communities directly affected by missing persons cases and violence against Aboriginal women.

The committee focused their efforts on the issue of policies and practices related to missing persons from Aboriginal or marginalized communities. Policies from several Canadian police services were reviewed and it was felt that while current policies were generally well written, the defining issue was in the application of the guidelines. The committee spoke to holistic approaches to examine the degree to which bias or stereotyping played a role in the nature and degree of police responses to cases involving people from Aboriginal or marginalized groups. At the 2003 CACP Annual Conference in Halifax, then committee Co-Chair, O.P.P. Deputy Commissioner Bill Currie, made a passionate and controversial presentation on the current state of affairs in relation to police response to Aboriginal and marginalized people.

Following up on the committee research and consultations, the Ontario Provincial Police produced a modified lost/missing persons policy manual that embraced the principles of respect, compassion and empathy in a relevant culturally competent context. Since 2004, select other police agencies (such as the RCMP) have since modified their respective missing persons policies to reflect these same principles when dealing with Aboriginal people.

Despite these efforts, there is still significant feeling in Aboriginal communities that the police are not doing enough to deal with the issue of how police respond to missing persons from their communities.

The momentum initiated by the conference and the community consultations must not be allowed to dissipate further. The newest version of the Policing With Aboriginal Peoples Committee is committed to completing a priority of the original committee in creating a more effective police investigative environment around lost or missing Aboriginal or marginalized people.

There is the need for all Canadian police services to review the Ontario Provincial Police Lost/Missing Persons Manual and consider adopting similar principles specifically with respect to Aboriginal and marginalized people.