



# **Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Final written submission to the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

**DECEMBER 14, 2018**

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## **Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami:**

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is the national representative organization for the 65,000 Inuit in Canada, the majority of whom live in Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland encompassing 51 communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Québec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). Inuit Nunangat comprises nearly one third of Canada's landmass and 50 percent of its coastline. ITK represents the rights and interests of Inuit at the national level through a democratic governance structure that represents all Inuit regions.

### **Introduction:**

Inuit women and girls are more likely to experience or be exposed to different forms of violence than other women and girls in Canada. Inuit experience violence at such levels that victims of violence, often neglected or unsupported, may themselves become perpetrators, leading to a cycle of violence. The pervasive nature of violence, racism and colonialism in Inuit Nunangat suggests that only a systemic, coordinated, permanently funded and multipronged approach will be capable of breaking the cycle of violence.

Historical and continued systemic racial discrimination and human rights abuses by governments against Inuit contribute to profound gaps in infrastructure and social and economic inequities between Inuit and most other Canadians. Coupled with intergenerational traumas caused by colonial programs and policies such as relocation, residential schools and the slaughtering of Inuit sled dogs, many of our families struggle to thrive. Coupled with the reality of the highest cost of living in the country, and limited access to the types of programs, services, and supports that help curb violence and trauma in other parts of Canada, the issue is multi-generational and multi-layered. The most vulnerable members of Inuit society are disproportionately impacted by violence in this environment.

The continued political and economic marginalization of Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland, perpetuates the underlying social and economic conditions that create elevated risk for violence against Inuit women and girls. To end violence, governments must prioritize eliminating the

infrastructure gap between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada and invest in the health and wellness of its people. Because Inuit men are the primary perpetrators of violence, and violence is perceived to be ubiquitous and normalized by some, Inuit leaders have a responsibility to – at minimum – speak out against it, with the goal of eliminating the stigma attached to this issue.

### **Inuit within Canada:**

1. Inuit are an indigenous people in Canada recognized and affirmed under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982. Inuit have negotiated and settled five constitutionally protected modern day treaties which encompass Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland whose area constitutes nearly one third of Canada’s landmass and over 50 percent of its coastline.
2. The majority of the 65,000 Inuit in Canada live in the 51 communities within Inuit Nunangat, spanning the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut.
3. However more than one quarter of the Inuit population in Canada lives in southern Canada and this population is growing rapidly. Between 2006 and 2016, the Inuit population living outside Inuit Nunangat grew by 62 percent.<sup>1</sup>
4. Inuit society is an extremely resilient indigenous society. The majority of our people speak Inuktitut as their first, only, or preferred language, and foods harvested on the land continue to make up an integral part of Inuit food security, health and wellbeing. Our population is young, with 33 percent of the population under the age of 15, and growing rapidly.<sup>2</sup>
5. Inuit women and girls are statistically more likely than other Canadians to experience violence and/or sexual abuse or assault in their lifetimes.<sup>3</sup>

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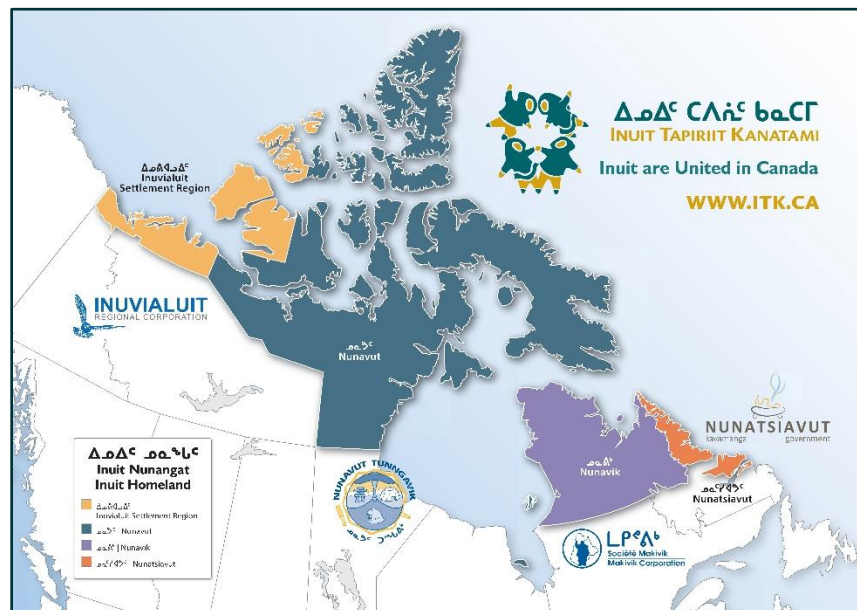
<sup>1</sup> Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, *Inuit Statistical Profile 2018*, 2018, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Francine Lavoie et al., *Prevalence and Nature of Sexual Violence in Nunavik* (Nunavik, QC: Institut national de santé publique du Québec and Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, 2007), 4, accessed June 26, 2016, [https://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/publications/668\\_esi\\_sexual\\_violence.pdf](https://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/publications/668_esi_sexual_violence.pdf); Tracey Galloway and Helga Saudny, *Inuit Health Survey 2007– 2008: Nunavut Community and Personal Wellness* (Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC: Centre for Indigenous Peoples’ Nutrition and Environment, 2012), 6.

6. This distressing reality exists against a backdrop of profound social and economic inequities between our people and most other Canadians, as well as an absence of essential infrastructure that would curb violence or exposure to violence.
7. Violence also contributes to Inuit children being removed from their families by the child welfare system, many of whom are adopted by non-Inuit families outside of Inuit Nunangat. Inuit women and girls living outside of Inuit Nunangat may face further risks for violence.
8. The social and economic inequities faced by Inuit are indicators of marginalization: a direct result of ongoing colonial violence and racism perpetuated by state action or lack thereof. Canadian law and policy has often been focused on ensuring Inuit remain invisible. As its laws and policies focus on the needs of citizens in southern Canada, it is at the expense of Inuit, whose priorities and challenges are often not adequately or considered by policy makers. Eliminating or even reducing the number of missing and murdered Inuit women and girls requires Canada to address its underlying ignorance of our people and communities and to partner with Inuit to advance legislative and financial decisions that remedy longstanding challenges.

**Figure: 1 – Inuit Nunangat: the four Inuit regions (source: ITK)**



## **Human Rights:**

9. The situation of Inuit women and girls in Canada should be framed as a significant and persistent pattern of systemic racial discrimination that violates the human rights of Inuit women and girls. There are at least two compelling reasons for doing so.
10. First, human rights are inter-connected, inter-related and indivisible. In the context of the National Inquiry, this means that addressing violence against indigenous women and girls requires Canada to address all factors that contribute to that violence.
11. Second, human rights are legal rights, capable of redress. Canada's response to the recommendations of the National Inquiry should not be framed as a policy-based approach, but rather an approach which is required in order to respect and fulfill the fundamental human rights of Inuit women and girls, most critically the right to life and the right to live free of discrimination.
12. ITK recommends that a human rights based approach requires both recognition that the recommendations of the Inquiry are relevant to the fundamental human rights of indigenous women and girls and that providing effective remedy and redress for violations of the rights of indigenous women and girls is essential to the government response to the Inquiry.
13. Canada's international human rights obligations have domestic effect within Canada. As a result Canada's, laws, policies and operational practices, at all levels, should reflect Canada's international obligations, including those contained within the UNDRIP. The National Inquiry should specify that its recommendations are obligated by Canada's international obligations, and by extension, Canada's domestic legal framework. Whether rights are international, domestic, federal, provincial or territorial, states are obligated to protect and enforce rights.
14. Dr. Dorough testified that a human rights based approach also means the Inquiry's recommendations and the government's response should adopt a distinctions-based approach. Such an approach is necessary to ensure the distinct human rights situations of indigenous women and girls are adequately addressed through the government response to the Inquiry's recommendations:

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**Recommendations:**

- I. The National Inquiry should recommend that Canada report in a comprehensive fashion to all recommendations offered by relevant international mechanisms, including treaty bodies, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, expert mandate holders such as the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other bodies, such as the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Canada's reports should be offered to an arms-length independent agency, within Canada, which is tasked with oversight of the human rights situation of indigenous women and girls. This agency should have the power to issue reports and make legally binding recommendations to federal, provincial and territorial legislatures and governments.
- II. The National Inquiry should recommend that the government recognize, as part of its duty of due diligence to redress violations of human rights, create effective legal remedies for families and survivors to ensure police forces and social services agencies are complying with Canada's international and domestic legal obligations with respect to the rights of indigenous women and children.
- III. The National Inquiry should recommend that the government recognize the importance of dignity to the right to life for indigenous women and children and create effective legal remedies for indigenous peoples to receive essential health, social services and public safety services in a manner which upholds their dignity as human beings.
- IV. The National Inquiry should recommend that the government expressly recognize the importance of economic, social and cultural rights, and develop effective legal remedies for indigenous peoples to seek redress for violations of economic, social and cultural rights.

**Colonialism and intergenerational trauma:**

15. The national crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is not the result of any singular cause. This crisis exists in the context of a broader violent historical reality of colonization, dispossession and displacement. Colonization and racism are ongoing realities within this country. Therefore, breaking the cycle of violence requires acknowledgement and redress for historical and contemporary injustices endured by Inuit.

16. It is paramount to understand the intergenerational effects of colonization throughout Inuit Nunangat. The social and economic conditions caused by these experiences are linked to the disproportionate level of violence experienced by Inuit women and girls. These conditions include crowding, poverty, stress and distress which all contribute to the growing number of Inuit choosing to leave our homeland.
17. As an example, the impacts of abuse in residential schools or day schools was found to be widespread.<sup>4</sup> While there is growing recognition that residential schooling has had profound intergenerational impacts on survivors and descendants of survivors, the importance of recognizing and addressing intergenerational impacts of other atrocities of the colonial period can be just as critical for healing.
18. The extent of the transition in livelihood for Inuit throughout the last century has been extreme with the introduction of residential schools, forced relocations, the slaughtering of Inuit sled dog teams, and the rapid movement into negotiating land claims agreements.
19. It is not uncommon for community members to know Inuit whose families were forcefully relocated from familiar territory to other regions by the federal government throughout the 1950's – 1960's.<sup>5</sup> This has had far-reaching and intergenerational impacts on relocatees, on families of relocatees as well as Inuit communities and society as a whole.
20. In Ms. Elisapi Davidee Aningmuiq's testimony from the hearing on Colonial Violence in Iqaluit she expressed that speaking about relocation "was too painful for our parents, for our Elders, and it hurts me, too."<sup>6</sup> However she stated that "it's only when we start talking about it and only when somebody believes us that these things start surfacing, and this is

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<sup>4</sup> Charlotte Wolfrey, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 52, at pp. 5 and 47.

<sup>5</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I.

<sup>6</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at p. 107.



when we can start talking about them and we can continue to speak the truth that comes from us.”<sup>7</sup>

21. The use of Inuit sled dogs throughout Nunavut communities was an integral part of the Inuit way of life.<sup>8</sup> The slaughtering of Inuit sled dogs by the RCMP throughout Nunavut communities in the 1950’s to 1960’s is still felt by Inuit today.<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Hagar Idlout-Sudlovenick testified that many Inuit in Nunavut still feel the effects of having their sled dogs killed by the RCMP.<sup>10</sup> Many who lived through the slaughtering of their dogs, without any full explanation, have not yet received a formal apology by the Government of Canada.<sup>11</sup>
22. Colonialism included sexual violence perpetrated by some employees of colonial institutions against Inuit, such as the Hudson’s Bay Company, RCMP, religious institutions, and residential and day school teachers. It was testified, for instance, that some federal employees used their positions to sexually assault Inuit women:

“... in 1958, a Canadian worker at the military station otherwise known as FOX-3 on the DEW line felt compelled to write an anonymous letter to the Minister of Northern Affairs saying, “Eskimos are getting a raw deal on the DEW line. In one instance, the federal electric officer is currently taking advantage of his position as

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<sup>7</sup> Elisapi Davidee Aningmuiq, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at p. 107.

<sup>8</sup> Hagar Idlout-Sudlovenick, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at pp, 50, 51 and 52.

<sup>9</sup> Cross Examination of Hagar Idlout-Sudlovenick, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at p. 99.

<sup>10</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at p. 97.

<sup>11</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I and “Qimmiliriniq: Inuit Sled Dogs in Qikiqtaaluk,” in Qikiqtani Truth Commission Thematic Reports and Special Studies 1950 - 1975, published April 2014, Exhibit 8.

station chief of FOX-3 to rape Eskimo women. This man should be banned from the North West Territories if law and order are to be maintained in this country.”<sup>12</sup>

23. It was further testified in Iqaluit at the hearing on Colonial Violence that during and after World War II, the RCMP was often complicit in or ignored violence against Inuit women and girls carried out by non-Inuit men. Some RCPM officers used their positions of authority to coerce Inuit girls and women into consensual and non-consensual relationships, which sometimes included sexual assault and rape.<sup>13</sup>

**Recommendations:**

- V. A response to murdered and missing indigenous women and girls requires a coordinated national strategy which is driven by indigenous peoples and includes action by federal, provincial and territorial governments and regional Inuit women’s organizations. This strategy should be part of a broad anti-racism strategy which contains specific elements related to violence against indigenous women and girls;
- VI. The National Inquiry should recognize the linkage between historic injustice and violence against indigenous women and girls that set in motion a cycle of intergenerational violence, and recommend that breaking the cycle of violence requires various forms of redress for historic injustices.
- VII. The National Inquiry should emphasize the cyclical nature of root causes of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. Oftentimes, those who are traumatized whether directly or through intergenerational harms may themselves become perpetrators of violence without timely interventions. In addition to recognizing that there is an intergenerational cycle of violence, the National Inquiry should make focused recommendations on ensuring that victims of violence receive services and supports designed to prevent victims from becoming perpetrators.

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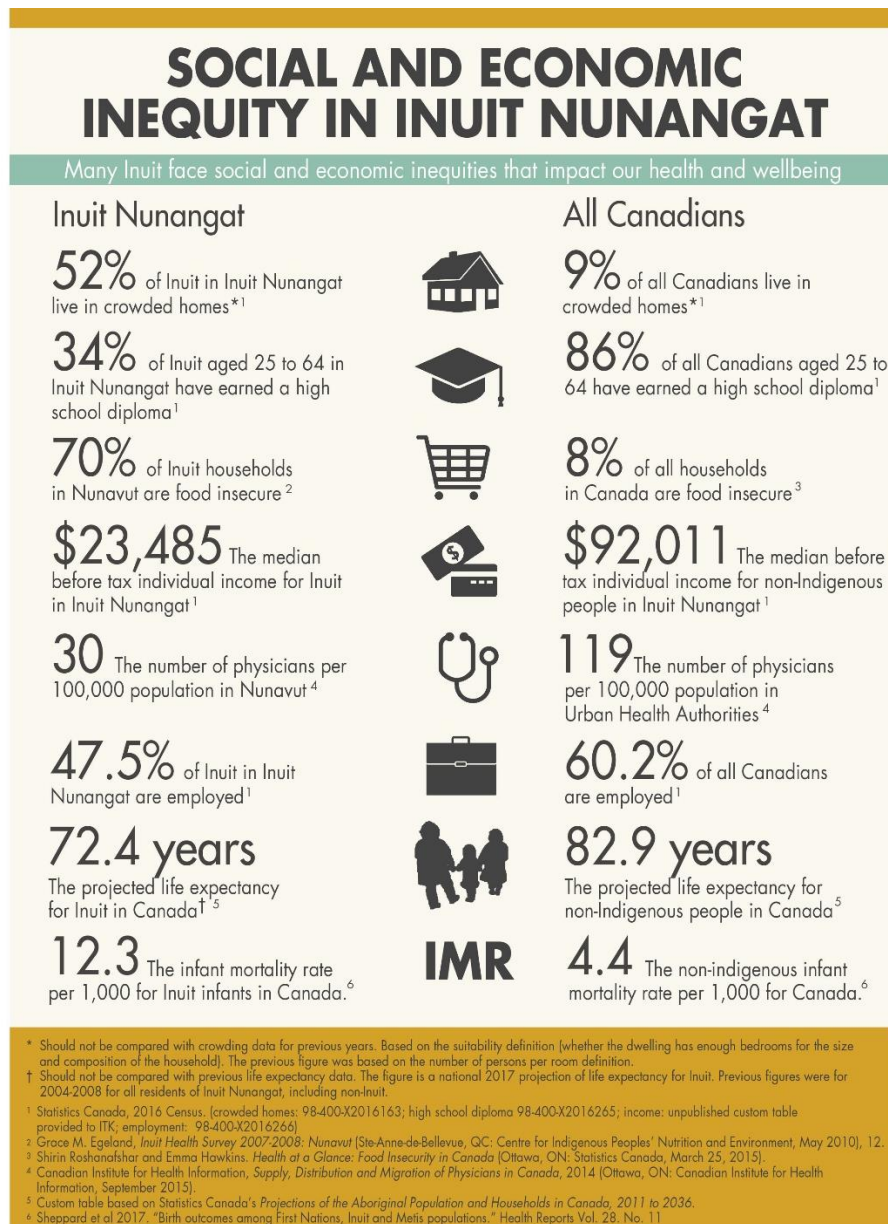
<sup>12</sup> Inukshuk Aksalnik, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at p. 57-58.

<sup>13</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at pp. 47, 48 and 49.

**Infrastructure gaps and social and economic inequities:**

24. The trauma caused by these and other experiences are compounded by perpetual infrastructure gaps and social and economic inequities between Inuit and most other Canadians. These inequities include elevated rates of poverty, low educational attainment, violence, and poor mental and physical health.

**Figure 2: Social and Economic Inequities (Source: ITK)**



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25. Profound infrastructure gaps have existed between Inuit Nunangat and most other regions of Canada since Inuit began living in permanent communities. The most substantial infrastructure investments in the region at any single point in time were made by the U.S. during World War II.
  26. Infrastructure gaps include a shortage of housing, family violence shelters and transitional housing<sup>14</sup>, limited access to inpatient mental health and addictions treatment facilities<sup>15</sup>, and early learning and child care facilities.<sup>16</sup> These gaps are linked to violence against Inuit women and girls because they exacerbate the high burden of stress and trauma that many families may already experience, often contributing to further cycles of intergenerational trauma.
  27. There is only one inpatient addictions treatment centre in all of Inuit Nunangat, despite the known links between substance abuse and trauma. The perpetual housing shortage in Inuit Nunangat contributes to household crowding, with 51 percent of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat living in crowded homes compared to nine percent of non-Indigenous people in the region.<sup>17</sup>
  28. In this environment, the most vulnerable in society often have few places to turn to escape violence or heal from trauma. These gaps have implications for the recommendations of the National Inquiry because many of the recommendations which the National Inquiry might make in southern and non-remote communities assume levels of infrastructure and support which are non-existent in the 51 communities throughout Inuit Nunangat.
  29. To help remedy these and other infrastructure gaps, ITK has recommended that the Government of Canada's forthcoming Arctic Policy Framework advance nation building,

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<sup>14</sup> For further testimony relating to this point see section relating to accessing shelters and safe-houses.

<sup>15</sup> For further testimony relating to this point see sections on accessing culturally relevant mental health supports and addictions.

<sup>16</sup> For further testimony relating to this point see section on creating safe spaces for children and youth.

<sup>17</sup> Statistics Canada, 2016 Census.

with the principle aim of bringing Inuit Nunangat into Canada while creating equitable opportunities and prosperity for its residents.<sup>18</sup>

**Recommendations:**

- VIII. The National Inquiry should recommend that any government strategy to address violence against indigenous women takes account of and addresses underlying conditions to ensure that government programs, initiatives and services can actually be accessed by Inuit in Inuit Nunangat.
- IX. The National Inquiry should develop focused recommendations for the government which are aimed at creating the underlying conditions for successful implementation of its recommendations. In the case of Inuit Nunangat, these underlying conditions include development of basic infrastructure and access to essential services within communities.

**Systematic racial discrimination is a main cause of MMIWG:**

30. The National Inquiry should frame the unbelievably harsh treatment Inuit women and girls receive from perpetrators, from the state, and sometimes even from their own communities as indicative of systemic racial discrimination.
31. Systemic racial discrimination is manifested in harmful attitudes and beliefs held by governments about Inuit and Inuit communities. These harmful attitudes and beliefs are reflected in what governments prioritize and the choices they make in relation to the safety and health and wellbeing of some Canadians citizens in relation to others.
32. The situation currently being faced by Inuit women and girls is an extension of the state's historic mistreatment of Inuit. The objective of dog slaughters and relocations was to affirm Canadian sovereignty and control, while destroying Inuit culture and self-determination. The effects of these experiences, combined with residential schools and the imposition of state control over virtually every aspect of Inuit existence, has been to replicate an environment of violence and dehumanization of Inuit across Inuit Nunangat.

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<sup>18</sup> Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, *Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami position paper: Development and implementation of the Arctic Policy Framework*, November 2018, 7.

33. The pervasive racism and colonialism experienced by Inuit women and girls is evidenced both through the violence they experience as well as their invisibility. Whether as survivors of violence seeking support, as Canadians seeking access to essential health and social services, or even as persons deprived of liberty and seeking rehabilitative services as indigenous peoples, Inuit are often ignored and invisible to the broader Canadian state, and particularly to the justice system.

**Recommendations:**

- X. The National Inquiry should recommend that Canada adopt an anti-racism strategy which includes distinctions-based actions and objectives addressing systemic racial discrimination against Inuit;
- XI. Government policy should set a goal of total eradication of violence against women and girls within a definable timeframe;

**Distinctions-based approach:**

- 34. Effective solutions for reducing violence against Inuit women and girls can only be developed and implemented through a distinctions-based approach. This means any interventions, programs, or resources that are intended to benefit Inuit should reflect the distinct political, cultural, and geographic realities of Inuit culture and society, and, where relevant, apply an Inuit Nunangat policy.
- 35. Applying an Inuit Nunangat policy is achieved when funding is allocated directly to representatives of Inuit and governments where Inuit have jurisdiction over service or program delivery. Doing so respects Inuit self-determination, creates efficiency and helps ensure that Inuit experience the maximum benefits of the resource or intervention.
- 36. Applying an Inuit Nunangat policy is also achieved when programs or initiatives are distinctions-based and include Inuit-specific elements. It was testified that a distinctions-based approach to the provision of programs and services in Inuit Nunangat is necessary in order for them to be effective and impactful.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 65, at pp. 38-39.

37. It was further testified that a distinctions-based approach is required to prevent Inuit from being overlooked. Budget allocations that target violence reduction on reserves may not contemplate, for example, that Inuit face similarly acute challenges yet do not live on reserve.<sup>20</sup>

**Recommendations:**

- XII. The National Inquiry should recommend that any future budget allocations, programming, and services targeting violence reduction among indigenous communities must be distinctions-based.
- XIII. The National Inquiry should recommend that any data associated with violence against women and girls be disaggregated by Inuit, First Nations, and Metis ethnic groups to better ensure that future initiatives are supported by the best available information. This should also extend to the child welfare system.

**Implementation of Recommendations of the National Inquiry:**

- 38. Effective implementation of the recommendations of the National Inquiry requires a government response which is coordinated and effective. A coordinated response requires a national plan of action, which would detail how federal, provincial, territorial governments, indigenous peoples and others would work together to implement and monitor joint action.
- 39. An effective response requires a plan of implementation which will be implemented irrespective of political or governmental discretion. The optimal means to accomplish an effective response is to ensure a rights-based approach in which indigenous women and girls may use legal remedies to secure access to essential services. A rights-based approach also provides indigenous women and girls that very form of redress which was robbed from them during the colonial period, access to effective remedies for violations of their fundamental human rights.

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<sup>20</sup> Charlotte Wolfrey, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 52, at pp. 33-34.

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**Recommendations:**

- IX. The National Inquiry should recommend that the oversight of implementation of its recommendations should be conducted by an independent authority. Ideally, this would be through the creation of an independent, national institution with the mandate to monitor, evaluate, assess and report on the implementation of the National Inquiry's recommendations.
- X. Finally, the National Inquiry should recommend a rights-based approach to recommendations. This means ensuring that failure to achieve recommendations can be actioned either by indigenous women directly, or by allies, through legal processes capable of issuing binding remedies on federal, provincial and territorial governments or other actors.
- XI. The National Plan of Action should include a data strategy, to track the number of missing and murdered indigenous women and to track all violent incidents involving indigenous women and children. This is necessary in order to quantify the scope of the problem as well as to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of response measures.
- XII. To address the continuing concerns regarding the invisibility of indigenous women in matters which affect them, the National Inquiry should recommend that Inuit women should be meaningfully involved in the development and implementation of a national programme of action, as well as in the independent oversight of that programme.



## **Re-developing a culture of respect for indigenous women and children:**

40. Inuit women from Nunatsiavut, Nunavik and Nunavut testified that they either personally experienced domestic violence<sup>21</sup>, they witnessed domestic violence within their family<sup>22</sup> or they knew individuals within the community who were being abused.<sup>23</sup>
41. Witnesses testified that Inuit men are the primary perpetrators of violence against Inuit women and girls. Inuit communities are small and close-knit, and community members often know when violence is taking place. However few people are willing to speak openly about violence and abuse due to the stigma attached to this issue. Witnesses testified that at minimum, community members and Inuit leaders all have a responsibility to speak out against violence.
42. Mr. Gordon Obed's testimony speaks to the confusion and difficult choices people confront when a loved one is being abused, saying that despite knowing about the violence his daughter was experiencing "we were caught in two in that situation, whether to intervene more or just leave her be because it's her life. And that, obviously, escalated the abuse right to the point --- right to the point of where she got killed."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Kim Campbell McLean, Part 1 Public Hearing, Happy Valley - Goose Bay Community Hearing, Public Volume 49. Lizzie Aloupa, Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66. Reepa Evic-Carleton, Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66.

<sup>22</sup> Gordon Obed and Silpa Obed, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume 50. Charlotte Wolfrey, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 52. Reepa Evic-Carleton, Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66, at p. 35. Harriet (Rutie) Lampe and Johannes Lampe, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 57.

<sup>23</sup> Benigna Anderson, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 58.

<sup>24</sup> Gordon Obed and Silpa Obed, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume 50, at p. 7.

43. Mrs. Charlotte Wolfrey used her testimony to advocate for community members to call out violence against women and girls, saying that “If we see it or suspect it, even if it involves our families and loved ones, I think we need to start naming it to stop it.”<sup>25</sup>
44. Other witnesses described experiencing violence in public while their fellow community members stood by and failed to intervene.<sup>26</sup>
45. Ms. Rebecca Jones used her testimony to explain that the ubiquity and normalization of physical and sexual violence in her community ultimately contributed to her decision to leave Inuit Nunangat. In her words: “And, that was my main reason for leaving the North, because I didn’t want my children growing up thinking that that’s normal, to see somebody walking down the street, you know, yelling at their wife and she already has a black eye, you know? And, everybody just, kind of, “Ah, that’s just them.” I didn’t want my children to grow up thinking that that’s normal. And even though I know in my heart that that wasn’t normal, it became the norm to me.”<sup>27</sup> Witnesses testified that disclosing violence could lead to further victimization by fellow community members, especially when the perpetrator is held in high regard by others. Ms. Annie Arnatuk recalled being accused of lying when she disclosed the sexual abuse she was experiencing by her grandfather. In her words: “That was the heaviest burden I carried as a young person”<sup>28</sup>
46. Ms. Annie Arnatuk continued that those traumatic experiences caused mental distress. In her words: “I have almost killed myself, but through a psychiatrist-I didn’t trust the psychiatrist at first because he was a male. But through my efforts and willingness. That experience in my community almost killed my spirit. I could have become mental or taken my own life. Those are traumatic experiences I’ve had.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 52, at p. 25.

<sup>26</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 58, at p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66, at p. 35.

<sup>28</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66, at p. 41.

<sup>29</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66, at p. 40.

47. She expressed that seeking support from a psychologist was helpful for her healing, but access to permanent psychologists or mental health supports throughout Inuit Nunangat is limited or nonexistent.

**Recommendation:**

XIII. The National Inquiry should recommend that indigenous peoples take action to end tolerance of violence against women, girls and children. This recommendation should acknowledge the responsibility indigenous leaders in particular have within their communities to help ensure safe environments for all indigenous persons.

**Inuit men and boys rehabilitative programming:**

48. The ongoing issue of violence against Inuit women and girls is linked to the violence that Inuit men and boys experience. For male perpetrators of violence, who are often victims of violence themselves, the criminal justice system is often their first rather than last stop in communities where access to services and supports, or even informal opportunities for healing, can be limited to nonexistent.<sup>30</sup>

49. Ending violence against Inuit women and girls therefore requires focused attention on Inuit men, who are the primary perpetrators of violence.<sup>31</sup> It was testified that rehabilitative programming throughout the provincial and federal incarceration systems is needed in order to break the cycle of violence.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Nunavut Tunngavik, Inc., *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society 13-14: Examining the Justice System in Nunavut*, (Iqaluit, NU: 2014), 36.

<sup>31</sup> Rebecca Jones, Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Pubic Volume 66, at p. 33.; Reepa Evic-Carleton, Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Pubic Volume 66, at p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> Harriet (Rutie) Lampe and Johannes Lampe, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 57, at p. 29.; Benigna Anderson. Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 58, at p. 9.

50. Mary Thommasie recognized the specific needs of Inuit men who are incarcerated. In her words: “We must help our men, too. They will not ask for help first, either. We women are more open to receiving help. We have men come home back to their community, and they have nothing to say or to share while their hearts hurt.”<sup>33</sup>

51. The effects of colonial criminal proceedings, criminal sanctions and exposure to a foreign entrenched system on Inuit men and boys is an added layer of colonial violence that has not been extensively testified to throughout the National Inquiry hearings.<sup>34</sup> But the issue incidentally came to surface throughout the testimony.

### **Recommendations:**

XIV. Provincial, territorial and federal incarceration institutions implement rehabilitative programming and culturally appropriate counselling for Inuit men and boys.

XV. Partnerships within Inuit Nunangat between service providers and governments to permanently fund and create rehabilitative programming, including on the land healing services, that is culturally relevant for Inuit men, boys and their families.

XVI. The full implementation of the eight recommendations within the Annual Report Examining the Justice System in Nunavut published in 2014.

### **Access to permanent and culturally relevant mental health supports:**

52. The absence of effective mental health for survivors of violence is a common theme and a major gap in federal, provincial and territorial programs and services. This gap is even more appalling if one accepts that many of the perpetrators of violence against Inuit women were themselves once traumatized by violence. Beyond revealing inequities between perpetrators and survivors, failing to redress this gap will result in a failure to end the cycle of violence throughout Inuit communities and very likely, across Canada.

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<sup>33</sup> Mary Thommasie, Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66, at p. 48.

53. After losing her daughter to murder and going through a criminal trial, and sentencing, Mrs. Harriett Lampe questioned the application of the Gladue clause in situations where there is violence against women<sup>35</sup>. She said,

“[w]e lost our loved one to somebody’s hands and what about the victims? I think the offenders get more support when they’re in that... you know, get their education or get rehabilitation or lower sentence when, you know, the victims... I heard someone say earlier too, “What about the victims?” Like we don’t get no family healing circles or as much support as they do [the offender]. We’re just as affected, and we should have a clause too through... these traumatic actions, what effects it has had on our family.”<sup>36</sup>

54. On the issue of grieving a loved one Mrs. Barbara Seigny expressed,

“[a]nother recommendation I would like to see is some more Inuit-specific grieving programs delivered in Inuktitut and English. Often a lot of non-Inuit hired to deliver Inuit programs, that don’t speak Inuktitut but are Inuit. But it’s the language that really connects, for those of us that do speak Inuktitut. We need to speak our language when we are feeling.”<sup>37</sup>

55. And Mrs. Charlotte Wolfrey expressed a need for healing services for families who have been affected by violence too. She said,

“I really think there should be wraparound services for families in crisis, everyone working together to get healing, and for me, most especially for the children left behind... And I really think for Inuit what is needed is land based healing camps because when we’re on the land we are in tune with our bodies, our minds are clearer...”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> “...if the courts are going to use the Gladue principle, the services that are needed should be in the community where the perpetrator is sentenced. For example is somebody has an addiction problem and are sentenced through the Gladue hearing to attend an addictions program, then that addictions program needs to be available in the community.” Charlotte Wolfrey, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 52, at p. 45.

<sup>36</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 57, at p 10.

<sup>37</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 65, at p. 37.

<sup>38</sup> Charlotte Wolfrey, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 52, at p. 39.

56. Mrs. Tracy Denniston also recognized the the relevance of Inuit healing programs and the challenge for traditional Inuit healing programs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

“We do have some traditional healers, which sadly aren’t really recognized by our communities because – this is hard to say – because I think this is where some of our healing needs to happen within our communities is from traditional healers. And there were a few that – I’ve trained with a couple of them, but one of them, in particular, used to travel back and forth to Nunatsiavut communities and do healing, like sharing circles. And – like some of the core trauma issues of sexual abuse, relocation, those things came up during the healing circles, and those were some of the areas I felt were the areas that our communities needed to go to in order for us to heal. But based on traditional knowledge, they didn’t have the degrees to back up their credentials as a healer.”<sup>39</sup>

57. There is only one physical treatment structure in Kuujjuaq, and an on the land treatment program in Cambridge Bay<sup>40</sup>. Individuals living outside of Cambridge Bay or Kuujjuaq seeking access to treatment programs would,

“have to travel to an urban setting, for example, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa...the air link to the closest hub community or large city centre is where you would typically go to access treatment.”<sup>41</sup>

58. Mrs. Benigna Anderson expressed that,

“[j]ust about every woman I know has been abused in some way; physically or mentally or sexually. The need is very great, and the resources are very few. Money needs to be invested in our own people to provide training to promote healing. The revolving door of outside counsellors and therapists is not effective. They cannot comprehend what our people have suffered. All the hurts we have on such a large scale.”<sup>42</sup>

59. The experience of outside professionals like counsellors, doctors or dentists traveling into the remote communities to provide essential services was a common theme throughout the

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<sup>39</sup> Cross Examination of Tracy Denniston, Truth Gathering Process Part III, Expert & Knowledge Keeper Panel, Part III, Human Rights Framework, Quebec City, Quebec, Volume IV, pp. 248-249.

<sup>40</sup> Cross Examination of Tim Argensinger, Truth Gathering Process Part III, Expert & Knowledge Keeper Panel, Part III, Human Rights Framework, Quebec City, Quebec, Volume IV, p. 252.

<sup>41</sup> Cross Examination of Tim Argensinger, Truth Gathering Process Part III, Expert & Knowledge Keeper Panel, Part III, Human Rights Framework, Quebec City, Quebec, Volume IV, pp. 252-253.

<sup>42</sup> Benigna Anderson, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 58, at p. 9.

testimony. And this reality is because there are no permanent professionals usually stationed in Northern Inuit communities, and there is a lack of infrastructure to support such services.

60. Mrs. Elisapi Davidee Aningmiuq explained,

“[o]ne of the ways that I see the bottom line, when it comes to issues with anything like that is mental health. There needs to be access to proper mental health in all areas, in all areas of the Inuit homeland communities. Because there is a big lack of community counsellors, community mental health workers and supports.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Recommendations:**

- XV. The National Inquiry should establish that Inuit have a right to access culturally relevant mental health supports.
- XVI. The right to access culturally relevant health supports means that there should be strategies to ensure Inuit can access mental health services wherever they may be: in Inuit Nunangat and when those services cannot be provided in their own communities; in the south.
- XVII. That all governments recognize that access to services include:
  - a. Permanent whole family Inuit specific healing programs to address the aftermath of the homicide of their loved one.
  - b. grieving programs are put in place for Inuit homicide survivors
  - c. Inuit specific on the land healing programs for Inuit women, and their children throughout all 51 communities within Inuit Nunangat
  - d. Inuit specific treatment centres

### **Addictions:**

- 61. Throughout the National Inquiry hearings there was little attention specifically focussed on understanding substance abuse or addictions throughout Indigenous communities and its connection to the issue of violence or on the effects on communities and families.

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<sup>43</sup> Cross Examination of Elisape Davidee Aningmiuq, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at p. 92

Nevertheless, the reality of substance abuse was raised through the testimony of several witnesses. Addictions is centrally related to both intergenerational harms and impacts on families.<sup>44</sup>

62. Some substances have existed for generations, yet some substances bring with them new challenges. For example, the use of opioids throughout Inuit communities in southern urban centres is a growing reality, and a reality which is also currently moving to Inuit communities.<sup>45</sup> Yet the interventions needed for addictions and substance abuse generally are lacking through Inuit Nunangat.

63. There is a lack of access to rehabilitative programming across Inuit Nunangat and within southern centres. This lack of access, combined with an increasing presence of highly addictive drugs like opioid use among Indigenous populations has a detrimental effect on families and communities who do not have the capacity address addictions treatment.

64. The issue of substance abuse and addictions is broad and extensive Ms. Isabella Daniels highlighted the issue of addictions as it relates to children in care, and explained,

“...when I first started [working], you were seeing that anyone over the age of 12 was on medication. And, now, you’re hearing of, like, younger children that are five, six, seven years old, and they’re medicated. And, what happens is when they get old enough, then there’s addiction issues. And, when you age out of the system [child care system] and you don’t have ways to compensate for those medications that you’re now not getting, then, you know, you’re just catapulted into other despair.”<sup>46</sup>

65. Ms. Mealia Sheutiapik expressed throughout her testimony that accessing Inuit specific addictions treatment within urban centres is needed. She also testified about her struggle with drug addiction. She said,

“I was smoking hash. I didn’t know any other drug that time. He [her former partner] got me into smoking hash, and it escalated to other drugs just to kill the

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<sup>44</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Criminal Justice Oversight and Accountability, Mixed Part II and III, Volume V, at pp. 281-282.

<sup>45</sup> Sexual Exploitation at p. 165

<sup>46</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Child and Family Welfare, Mixed Part II and III, Volume X, at Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper on Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault, Part II and III, Volume XVI, at pp. 12-13.



pain and just to get numb, just to forget about that thought and what happened before...”<sup>47</sup>

66. There is tremendous demand for culturally appropriate addictions treatment programs for adults, youth, women and men in Inuit Nunangat and in southern urban centres. Similarly, there is tremendous demand for supports within Inuit Nunangat and in southern urban centers for ongoing programs for persons experiencing ongoing recovery from addictions.

**Recommendation:**

XVIII. The National Inquiry recognize the interconnection between colonization, intergenerational trauma, addiction and violence within Inuit communities, And eliminating violence means addressing the lack of access to addictions treatment within Inuit Nunangat and in the south.

**Access to health care throughout Inuit Nunangat:**

67. Access to health services should contribute to the attenuation of violence against Inuit women. However, when health services are not easily accessible, this lack of access itself becomes a peculiar and severe vulnerability, often in the form of dislocation.

68. When Mrs. Tracy Denniston was asked whether Inuit women from Nunatsiavut could give birth within their territory she stated,

“[n]o. All women have to leave our communities a month before their due date to go to Goose Bay to have their babies.”<sup>48</sup> And when asked if a pregnant woman has access to a doctor within the community if she goes into labour, she expressed, “[n]o. They call a doctor in Goose Bay.”<sup>49</sup>

69. This experience of Inuit giving birth outside of their community and away from their family is common also within Nunavut. Ms. Elisapi Davidee Anigmuiq highlighted that women

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<sup>47</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper on Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault, Part II and III, Volume XVI, at p. 165.

<sup>48</sup> Cross Examination of Tracy Denniston, Truth Gathering Process Part III, Expert & Knowledge Keeper Panel, Part III, Human Rights Framework, Quebec City, Quebec, Volume IV, pp. 245-246.

<sup>49</sup> Cross Examination of Tracy Denniston, Truth Gathering Process Part III, Expert & Knowledge Keeper Panel, Part III, Human Rights Framework, Quebec City, Quebec, Volume IV, p. 247.

leaving their communities in Nunavut to give birth in Iqaluit may create vulnerabilities both for the mother and for the children:

“[w]hat I have seen is, and hear from some women that I have spoken to, they have to travel to Iqaluit for non-medical purposes are those that are delivering. When they are eight months pregnant, I think a month before they have their babies, they are to come here to give birth. So, they leave their families and they are here by themselves. That is not so much the case now. I think, you know, they are able to have a companion come with them now. But, I have heard where, you know, they have to leave their children where they children can be very vulnerable to anything. And, I have even heard of separations that happen when the mothers were giving birth. So, the health care, unfortunately, is not just available in our homelands.”<sup>50</sup>

70. Even the hospital in Iqaluit may not always be far enough. Ms. Elisapi Davidee Anigmiuq also expressed concern regarding the quality of the available health services:

“[w]e are getting some services here in Iqaluit, but you really have to travel to southern hospitals to get the proper testing’s to get the proper results.”<sup>51</sup>

71. Quality of health services in Inuit Nunangat results in vulnerabilities beyond dislocation. Mrs. Barbara Sevigny whose adopted brother was diagnosed with leukemia as a baby said that:

[h]e would be crying, and you know that when there’s children crying it’s maybe an ear infection or something, there’s discomfort there. And it was a hard cry, so she’d [her mom] take him up to the hospital. And get him checked. And they’d say, ‘I don’t see anything, but here’s the tempera.’ And they’d send him home, and that went on for about a year. For a long time, she’d be walking up to the hospital, and every time she’s sent home with tempera. Until one time his eye could not move anymore. Then that’s when they shipped him out and then she followed him to Montreal. That’s when they found out he had leukemia. So this little guy was feeling the pain of leukemia for months before they discovered it.”<sup>52</sup>

72. Tragically, this situation is not one which is isolated from missing and murdered Inuit women. Mrs. Sarah Birmingham who is Mrs. Barbara Sevigny’s mother expressed that once her adopted son was diagnosed with leukemia:

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<sup>50</sup> Cross Examination of Elisape Davidee Anigmiuq, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at p. 89.

<sup>51</sup> Cross Examination of Elisape Davidee Anigmiuq, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at p. 88.

<sup>52</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 65, at pp. 28-29.

“I took my child to the hospital and left my daughters at home. I was supposed to leave the same day that I was notified, to leave for hospital. I was there for a long time [in Montreal] and I was unable to leave my child. Once I was told by the doctor to take my child to the hospital out of my community, I cried when I heard. I didn’t think it would be of any use. It was only in the evening that I became able to cry. Not to anyone else, but I was unable to leave Montreal Hospital when I heard [the murder of her daughter; it was strange not to be able to go home.”<sup>53</sup>

73. It was while Mrs. Sarah Birmingham was away in the hospital with her adopted son who had leukemia that Mrs. Mary Ann Birmingham was murdered. Mrs. Sarah Birmingham in her testimony expressed, “[w]e still don’t know who committed the murder. We have no idea.”<sup>54</sup>

74. Inuit have scattered experience with the ability to secure escorts when travelling to receive essential services. Escorts, particularly those who are properly trained, could serve to reduce the vulnerability of Inuit who are in the south to receive services. When Mrs. Barbara Sevigny was a teenager she had to travel on her own, she expressed:

“[o]ne thing I did not share; though I did share a little bit of it: when I went for a medical at the age of 15 to Montreal, I did not have an escort. And I was sexually abused at the medical boarding home. And I think it’s important, when anyone travels so that they’re not vulnerable, taken advantage of, that they have an escort when traveling from their home to the South, or anywhere. So they are safe.”<sup>55</sup>

### **Recommendations:**

- XIX. The federal government should recognize that access to equitable, and culturally relevant health services are available is a right for Inuit, wherever they reside
- XX. All health care professionals who work within Inuit Nunangat should be required to receive mandatory cultural sensitivity training.
- XXI. Federal, provincial and territorial governments should create medical training programs and professional medical designations specifically for Inuit.

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<sup>53</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 65, at p. 31.

<sup>54</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 65, at p. 34.

<sup>55</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 65, at p. 37.

XXII. The federal government should fully subsidize both the travel and accommodation, as well as effective and trained escorts for Inuit women and girls when travelling to an urban centre to access health care services.

**Access to shelters, safe-houses and transition houses throughout Inuit Nunangat:**

75. The overarching infrastructure deficit between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada has dramatic and immediate impacts on the pervasive nature of violence against Indigenous women. This is as true for issues such as overcrowded housing and housing shortages as it is for the inadequate amount of social infrastructure across Inuit Nunangat. Ms. Reepa Evic-Carleton testified also that,

“...When I had to flee because of safety reasons for myself and my three children, it would be to mom and dad, because there were no shelters. Absolutely no shelters... And I always wondered why---why do women and children have to leave and make a big life change, when he’s the only one? But, that’s still the same today. It would be so nice if women could stay with their children because they’re very – it’s a very, very difficult time when a woman is living in an abusive relationship... So, that’s still a question in my mind, because women have to flee, women have to go outside the community to go to a shelter because most communities don’t have a shelter. So, that would be one of my recommendations, is to look at safe homes for women and children, in their community.”<sup>56</sup>

76. When Mrs. Yvonne Niego was asked to paint a picture of what housing looks like throughout Inuit households in her experience throughout Nunavut she replied:

“I’m not sure of the actual average per household, but -- for example, as a police officer attending calls, those are the high volume, highly congested housing -- dwelling houses that we attend. And, for example, -- I’ve had to even suit my own investigative tools to that housing situation. For example, child abuse cases. Any children I would interview, I would, at the front end of the investigation, I would have to try to lay out that living situation, where do you sleep. Often, houses will have multiple mattresses in one room on the floor, people sleeping in couches, in rooms that are not bedrooms. Close quarters, uncles and nieces in the same rooms. There’s all kinds of different scenarios. Very, very overcrowded.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Part I Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66, at p. 14.

<sup>57</sup> Part II Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Police Policies and Practises, Part II, Volume VIII, at p. 15-16.

77. The absence of infrastructure throughout Inuit Nunangat contributes to dislocation because many Inuit are sent to the south in order to access essential health and social services. Throughout Rebecca Jones testimony she stated that, "...some women are sent to Ottawa from the Baffin region [Nunavut] to access services or to go to a shelter..."<sup>58</sup>
78. And in the experience of losing his daughter Katie Obed to homicide, Mr. Gordon Obed testified that his daughter's murderer had been released back into the community after being incarcerated, and his daughter let him stay with her because he had nowhere else to go.<sup>59</sup>
79. The common refrain of having nowhere to go, whether due to housing shortage or lack of social infrastructure within Inuit Nunangat for Inuit women and their families who experience violence remains a prevalent and pervasive issue. Any strategy to reduce rates of violence against Inuit women and girls will not succeed so long as this refrain remains unaddressed.

#### **Recommendations:**

XXIII. Recognition that access to shelter is a fundamental right for Inuit.

XXIV. Development of safe houses, shelters and transition houses throughout Inuit Nunangat, including equitable pay for staffing such safe spaces, as well as access to safe spaces for Inuit in the south.

#### **Creating safe spaces for children and youth throughout Inuit Nunangat:**

80. Every child should have access to a safe space, whether that space is in the home, at school or in the community. Sadly, for Inuit youth there are often no safe spaces to avoid violence. Mrs. Sarah Clarke who is the Executive Director of the Arctic Children and Youth Foundation (ACYF) in Iqaluit testified that,

"...As you can see we have a very high rate of child abuse in Nunavut. In doing research for our centre we took stats from the RCMP division in Iqaluit. In 18 months there were 278 occurrences of child abuse in Iqaluit that were investigated

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<sup>58</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66, at p. 50.

<sup>59</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume 50, at p. 6.

by the RCMP... In our study we found that along with the numbers and the stats that were consistent with the high rate of child abuse, we also learned that there is a high level of underreporting of child abuse.”<sup>60</sup>

81. This suggests that the level of violence experienced by children is both unacceptably high and is currently underreported. This highlights the need for immediate and dramatic interventions. In terms of the types of interventions, Mrs. Sarah Clarke continued,

“...When asked what would help reduce stress on the child and youth or family after disclosure of abuse, the following were recommended...first being, have a child-friendly facility in communities for immediate protection, forensic interviewing and trauma services. Really key here is having 24/7 safe spaces for children and youth to go to across Nunavut... they also want to ensure there is a strong organizational delivery, strong staff training and clearly defined and safe traditional healing approaches... [n]umber two is have more mental health and trauma counselling supports for the child and family. Number three is reduce the number of people the child needs to retell his or her story to directly...Four, have more rehabilitative programs for the abuser to heal the community. People would like to invest in restorative justice models for offenders and victim families. And, they would like to have more therapeutic programs for adult offenders, as well as young offenders. Number five is to have a zero-tolerance approach to community retaliation and harassment of child and youth victims of abuse, and this requires more training for frontline people and the community. Six, train law and medical personally in each community in the collection of forensic evidence. Seven include traditional healing and elders in rehabilitative programs.”<sup>61</sup>

82. Comprehensive social and health services for youth which may be accessed from outside the criminal justice system would serve to enable access to such services without the stigma of being named a victim and could lead to reduced future violent behavior by potential offenders.

83. Mrs. Susan Aglukark who is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, and also the founder of the Arctic Rose Foundation testified regarding her experiences as a child disclosing, and also going through the criminal justice proceedings afterwards.

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<sup>60</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Child and Family Welfare, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Mixed Part II and III, Volume XI, at p. 107.

<sup>61</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Child and Family Welfare, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Mixed Part II and III, Volume XI, at pp. 108-110.

“So, coming out of the traumatic experience, which was the court proceedings, the personal environments that we would or could return to after court proceedings, even if we do win those proceedings, the places that we go back to were and sometimes are, at best, environments of emotional unrest. They are unrest. Those homes have just been placed in a state of turmoil and cannot recover back to normal, whatever normal was. So, at best, they are environments of emotional unrest. At worst, and most often that case is, it is ground zero for returning to all kinds – every kind of abuse. ... one if the shifts in the air in that community was that the people who were close to me did not know how to support me. And so, what added to that tension that was already there caused by these court proceedings was guilt and shame, because they did not know how to support me. So, our communities are compounded and built up guilt and shame and fear and waiting.”<sup>62</sup>

84. Each of the witnesses who testified to the importance of safe spaces for children and youth throughout highlighted potential barriers to creating and financing such programming in Inuit Nunangat. While children are among the most vulnerable, they are the least empowered to compel action to overcome these barriers.

**Recommendations:**

XXV. Recognition that all children have a right to exist in a safe environment

XXVI. The creation of 24 hour, seven day a week safe spaces for children, family and youth including LGBTQ2S individuals across Inuit Nunangat.

XXVII. An action plan to reduce child sexual abuse which should include:

- a. knowledge mobilization to allow for continued sharing of best and promising practices in relation to the prevention of child sexual abuse, and elevated rates of child maltreatment among Inuit.
- b. specialized training in culturally informed forensic interviewing related to child and youth victims of sexual abuse for all RCMP and Community Social Service Workers who investigate disclosures of child sexual abuse.
- c. creation of tools to identify and support children exposed to sexual abuse and child maltreatment.

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<sup>62</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Child and Family Welfare, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Mixed Part II and III, Volume XII, at pp. 199-200.

## Child Youth and Family Services:

85. The excessively high rates of children in custody creates a serious vulnerability for Inuit women and girls. Addressing the issue of children and family services, and ensuring that children can live in healthy and supportive environments, is a necessary precondition to breaking the cycle of violence.

86. Inuit children across Inuit Nunangat are taken from their families and placed into foster care on a regular basis, sometimes depriving their families of access. In the Happy Valley – Goose Bay Community hearing Mr. Gordon Obed expressed this family dislocation in his experience with Child Youth and Family Services in the apprehending of his grandchildren:

“...The point I am trying to make is what we ask for, like, visitations, we’d like to have visitations to us at Nain. We don’t have a say how long they can stay. They have so much authority... Us Indigenous people, when we get into situations like this with our grandchildren and children, we never, well, we don’t seem to have much say in what Child, Youth and Family Services does with our children, our grandchildren. This is one of the big – biggest points I wanted to make in this inquiry, and this really affected our daughter in law [Katie Obed who was murdered] more so than before after our son died [he died in St. John’s hospital from tuberculosis (TB)]. Like I said earlier, she was lonely, She missed her boys [her boys were taken by Child, Youth, and Family Services]. She missed her husband [who died from TB], and she was in a heavy state of – she was very, very vulnerable.”<sup>63</sup>

87. On the same issue of fostering Inuit children, Mrs. Barbara Sevigny expressed a similar concern:

“...When I was a member with the Children’s Aid Society in Ottawa, there was a lot of meetings about how we can recruit foster parents. There’s a lot of meetings about those; how can we find adopting parents? Lots of meetings about those. I said “Why are we looking to see how we can keep the children away from home? Why are we not talking about how to keep the kids home? You’re going the wrong direction; we should be looking at how to keep them at home. I don’t want to spend any time working on how to find foster parents, how to find adopting parents; they belong with their family, their homes.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume 50, at p. 11.

<sup>64</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 65, at p. 41.



88. Mrs. Barbara Seigny continued on the issue of Child and Family Services,

“... there needs to be proper investigations when there is a shared custody battle going on, to make sure that the child gets both of the parents. The child is entitled to that for their wellbeing.”

89. The systems imposed on Inuit children differ from province to province and territory to territory. At times, these systems can become self-perpetuating, leaving one to question whether the systems are serving Inuit children or are serving themselves. Inuit families who have been involved with the Child and Family Welfare systems in different capacities have expressed grave concerns over how investigations are done, and how voiceless they felt regarding the placement of their family member.

**Recommendations:**

XXVIII. The creation of a national Child Commissioner for Inuit, capable of investigating and providing remedy for violations of the rights of Inuit children or Inuit families.

XXIX. A concerted effort from federal, provincial and territorial governments and indigenous peoples to create the enabling conditions to keep children in their communities and near their families.

XXX. Development and implementation of an integrated federal, provincial and territorial system for tracking Inuit children in care, such that no child is lost in the system

XXXI. The creation of a national unified disaggregated data system that tracks Inuit children and youth within child and family services systems.

**Criminal Justice: Incarceration of Inuit provincially, territorially and federally:**

90. The Canadian criminal justice system has failed Inuit women. It is a criminal justice system in which Inuit women are among the most victimized and the most incarcerated at the same time.

91. Police are often the front line of a system which prioritizes response only after violent incidents have occurred. When families testified that they sought police intervention to

manage the issue of violence that they were witnessing, the responses from police varied.<sup>65</sup>

On the issue of police responses to violence Mrs. Charlotte Wolfrey explained,

“... [w]e really need police to recognize that our women and children can be in vulnerable situations and they really need knowledge and training on how to give assistance. When women go to police and say they are in danger, why aren't they believed?.. And I think if they're in danger I think you should try and do something.”<sup>66</sup>

92. Repeated instances of violence are difficult to raise, either with police, or in the criminal justice system more broadly. Harriet Lampe's daughter Kimberly Jararuse was murdered and in Mrs. Lampe's testimony, she expressed that,

“[t]here was one time she [Kimberly] charged him. He spent one, two, three months in jail. In November 2009, two months before she was killed, she came home very frantic and messed up hair and screaming and crying that he tried to choke her and that he almost choked her at that time. ... And I used that in the trial, that he tried to strangle her in November, almost succeeded, and that couldn't go into the court because it was hearsay from myself.”<sup>67</sup>

93. Indigenous women comprise 4 percent of our general population, yet make up 39 percent of total female population incarcerated at the federal level.<sup>68</sup> Testimony from Mrs. Cassandra Churcher stated that, “...[m]any of the systematic factors... within the correctional context start at the community level...”<sup>69</sup>

94. Yet it is unreasonable to expect Inuit women and girls to even report crimes when there is a legacy of abuse by police authorities which remains unaddressed. This leads to such a breakdown in trust that results in Inuit women being both victimized and incarcerated at

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<sup>65</sup> Gordon Obed and Silpa Obed, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume 50, at pp. 15-16.

<sup>66</sup> Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 52, at p. 34.

<sup>67</sup> Harriet (Rutie) Lampe and Johannes Lampe, Part 1 Public Hearings, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Public Volume 57, at pp. 10 and 21.

<sup>68</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Criminal Justice and Accountability, Mixed Parts II and III, Volume VII, at p. 34.

<sup>69</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Criminal Justice and Accountability, Mixed Parts II and III, Volume VII, at pp. 8-9.

unacceptably high rates. It was further testified in Iqaluit at the hearing on Colonial Violence that,

“[t]he RCMP had responsibility to investigate domestic violence and sexual assaults under laws of the time, because the RCMP destroyed detachment record...It is also certain however, that RCMP used their position of authority to coerce Inuit girls and women into short term relationships that often ended with RCMP returning south alone without babies or Inuk partners. As one woman told the QTC inquiry, with that much power, the RCMP could do anything they wanted with any women that were living up north. Anything. Anything. Now that women who were forced sexually by officers cannot talk back, has nowhere to go to complain.”<sup>70</sup>

95. There are currently no generally available, disaggregated statistics on the number of Inuit women incarcerated nationally, nor are there statistics on accessibility of culturally appropriate programming for Inuit women and girls.

96. Once Inuit women are incarcerated within an institution, they are faced with little to no cultural rehabilitative services that are specific to their identity, language and culture. This limits access to critical rehabilitative services while contributing to a sense of invisibility and isolation.

97. Throughout Mrs. Kassandra Churcher’s testimony it is evident that there is a direct connection between colonization, social inequality, poverty, housing and the over incarceration and institutionalization of Inuit women. In addition, once a person is placed into an institutional system, the system often works to keep them there. Mrs. Kassandra Churcher stated,

“...I’ve seen within the correction system, not only for the mothers and the parents who are impacted, but the students and the children and the girls who also fell through our cracks in the education system, ended up either in youth protection, then youth corrections, and then adult corrections.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Hagar Idlout-Sudlovenick, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at pp. 50, 51 and 52. At pp. 47, 48 and 49.

<sup>71</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Criminal Justice and Accountability, Mixed Parts II and III, Volume VII, at pp. 12-13.

98. Alternatives to institutionalization, whether child custody or incarceration, often depending on the existence of a base level of capacity within the community. For example in exploring opportunities to create programming for Inuit women who are incarcerated it was explained that:

“a section 81 agreement and a transfer of funds to see if those women could serve their sentences in their communities or in their territories. That is a concrete thing that could happen.”<sup>72</sup>

### **Recommendations:**

XXXII. Police services need to be viewed as part of an integrated health and social services network: police should be obligated to inform and connect victims to victim’s services and these services be available within Inuit communities.

XXXIII. All Police and social workers who investigate disclosures of child sexual abuse should be required to receive specialized training in culturally informed forensic interviewing related to child and youth victims of sexual abuse

XXXIV. Federal, provincial and territorial corrections systems maintains disaggregated data relating to the number of Inuit women and girls in their systems.

XXXV. That corrections institutions create rehabilitative programming that are specific to Inuit.

XXXVI. Create conditions to increase the ability to access to diversion or rehabilitative programming in communities, such as section 81 agreements in Inuit Nunangat.

### **Sexual Exploitation, Wage Economy and Poverty:**

99. Sexual exploitation and trafficking is a serious risk for indigenous women, and particularly for Inuit women. The same social determinants which marginalize and lead to vulnerability of Inuit women to violence, also create vulnerability to sexual exploitation and trafficking.

100. In any discussion of sexual exploitation and trafficking, there is a need to recognize the state and its contribution to the current issue of sexual exploitation and human trafficking within Inuit communities. Mrs. Jennisha Wilson, manager for programs related to sex

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<sup>72</sup> Cross Examination, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper Hearing on Criminal Justice and Accountability, Mixed Parts II and III, Volume VII, at pp. 202-203.

work, exiting the sex trade and anti-human trafficking at Tungasuvvingat Inuit in Ottawa,<sup>73</sup> explained

“... [w]e can bring awareness to sexual exploitation and support navigations of systems and teach cultural competency, but we also have to look at how the state intentionally does not invest in communities, over polices, over surveillances, and creates violence geographically...”<sup>74</sup>

101. Focussing on the conduct of the persons being trafficked and exploited, rather than on the underlying causes, leads to ineffective interventions and perpetuation of the problem.

MS. Jennisha Wilson argues that any strategy on sexual exploitation and trafficking must be broadened in order to be truly effective, stating,

“... it’s really important that when we’re having conversations around sexual exploitation and human trafficking – and this is a recommendation for folks that are doing this work on an everyday basis – that we change the definition to include those colonial practices that have normalized violence within these communities. I can’t express how important that is for Indigenous women, specifically Inuit in this context that they are part of that conversation. Because, as it stands, Inuit women, within literature around human trafficking and sexual exploitation, are invisible.”<sup>75</sup>

102. The demand for services relating to sexual exploitation and human trafficking within Ottawa for Inuit is substantial. Mrs. Jennisha Wilson explained, “[a]s a team of eight people we have a significant amount of work... Within our first six months we had 25 dedicated primary clients that we had to support and service on the ground, which speaks to the need for Inuit-specific services.”<sup>76</sup>

103. In fact, applying current understandings of how sexual exploitation and trafficking are underinclusive of the lived reality of many Inuit,

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<sup>73</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper on Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault, Part II and III, Volume XVI, at p. 33.

<sup>74</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper on Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault, Part II and III, Volume XVI, at p. 49.

<sup>75</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper on Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault, Part II and III, Volume XVI, at p. 46.

<sup>76</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper on Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault, Part II and III, Volume XVI, at p. 51.

“...on the ground what we’re seeing, beyond sexual exploitation of primarily youth who are women and identify as part of the 2LGBT community, is we also see that Inuit men who are – who have substance abuse issues are also trafficked for their carvings within the city... And we also have youth that are in care who are actively sought out by traffickers because they know that there’s a constant flow of individuals that are coming to the south and being relocated for foster care that are being trafficked...”<sup>77</sup>

104. Mrs. Mealia Sheutiapik who testified in St. John’s as a former sex-worker explained that when she was exiting sex work some years ago it was challenging to find a permanent job.<sup>78</sup> This suggests that any effective strategy to sexual exploitation and trafficking must take a broad approach which includes addressing economic injustice by providing meaningful transition support out of the sex trade.

### **Recommendations:**

XXXVII. Governments should recognize a positive obligation to ensure all men, women and children are free of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

XXXVIII. Government policies and programs should be realigned to address human trafficking and sexual exploitation broadly, and should be inclusive of strategies to reduce both trafficking and exploitation

XXXIX. Inuit intervention programs and ongoing supports for Inuit women and girls who are looking to exit sexual exploitation or human trafficking.

### **Life in the South:**

105. The cumulative effects addressed above relating to limited infrastructure, over-crowded housing, lack of access to health care, birthing centres, post-secondary institutions, shelters, safe houses, mental health resources, treatment centres, employment, prisons, penitentiaries, and foster care throughout Inuit Nunangat is that Inuit must seek these services in southern Canada. This creates a profound sense of dislocation, which itself creates additional

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<sup>77</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper on Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault, Part II and III, Volume XVI, at p. 52.

<sup>78</sup> Institutional and Expert/Knowledge-Keeper on Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault, Part II and III, Volume XVI, at pp. 23, 24, 25 and 26.

vulnerabilities for Inuit women and their families including their children. This was testified to throughout several of the hearings.

106. Inuit specific programming is especially needed in urban centres where individuals have to navigate administrative systems which may be complex, foreign and offered only in English or French.<sup>79</sup>

107. Youth programming for Inuit in the south is becoming more important because the number of Inuit within southern urban centres is increasing. In addition, Inuit specific programming in Inuktitut creates connection to community and culture, a connection which can ease the sense of dislocation, while increasing the effectiveness of youth programming for Inuit.<sup>80</sup>

108. While federal, provincial and territorial policy should be focused on creating the underlying conditions to eradicate violence in Inuit Nunangat, all governments should minimize dislocation and ensure Inuit safety and security when accessing services in the south. At minimum, this should include a distinctions-based approach to service delivery in southern centers with substantial numbers of Inuit, as well as effective measures to ensure the safety of women and children.

### **Recommendations:**

XL. Provincial, territorial and municipal service providers should partner with urban Inuit organizations to ensure Inuit in urban centers can access health and social supports despite cultural, linguistic or other barriers created by ‘neutral’ delivery criteria for such services and supports.

XLI. Federal, provincial and territorial strategies for reducing violence against Indigenous women and girls outside Inuit Nunangat should recognize and address vulnerabilities which are created by dislocation and should prioritize development of social infrastructure and other supports in Inuit Nunangat.

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<sup>79</sup> Rebecca Jones, Part 1 Public Hearings, Montreal, Quebec, Public Volume 66, at pp. 36-37. Tracy Denniston, Truth Gathering Process Part III, Expert & Knowledge Keeper Panel, Part III, Human Rights Framework, Quebec City, Quebec, Volume IV.

<sup>80</sup> Elisapi Davidee Aningmuiq, Institutional and Expert/Knowledge Keeper Hearing on Colonial Violence, Iqaluit, Nunavut, Mixed Parts II & III Volume I, at p. 94.




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