



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls releases Interim Report

November 1, 2017

Ottawa, ON – The Commissioners of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NI-MMIWG) are releasing the interim report, meeting their November 1 deadline. The 118-page report entitled, *Our Women and Girls are Sacred* outlines what the NI-MMIWG has accomplished to date, acknowledges challenges in establishing a unique and unprecedented National Inquiry of this nature and makes some recommendations for immediate support to assist families that want to participate in the process, including a call to extend the timelines. Most importantly, the Interim Report serves as the blueprint for moving the National Inquiry forward in a good way.

The NI-MMIWG is unprecedented because it covers 14 jurisdictions and looks at the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S people in a manner that is culturally centered. The Truth Gathering Process has four fundamental components: research, Community Hearings, Institutional Hearings, and Expert Hearings. The overall process strives to put families and survivors first while honouring those who have been taken.

After some initial challenges, the NI-MMIWG has gained momentum with Indigenous women, girls, transgendered and two-spirited people and families stepping forward to share their important stories. We are determined to keep moving forward in a good way – for the 905 and counting – who want to participate in the National Inquiry. To date, the NI-MMIWG has heard 269 testimonies over three hearings – spanning from Yukon, British Columbia and Manitoba – with one happening today in Membertou, Nova Scotia. There are also six more scheduled to happen until January 2018.

While the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is only part-way through its mandate and mission, the Interim Report includes three immediate calls to action for the Government of Canada to:

- Work collaboratively with provinces and territories to create a national police task force to which the National Inquiry could refer families and survivors to assess or reopen cases or review investigations.
- Establish a commemoration fund in collaboration with families, survivors and national and regional Indigenous organizations.
- Provide additional funding to Health Canada's Resolution Health Support Program to expand its services to meet the increased needs flowing from the National Inquiries work, at a minimum, for the duration of the National Inquiry.



Indigenous women make up nearly one quarter of homicide victims in Canada and are 12 times more likely to be missing or murdered than any other women in Canada today.

In *Our Women and Girls are Sacred*, the NI-MMIWG's Chief Commissioner Marion Buller and Commissioners Brian Eyolfson, Qajaq Robinson and Michèle Audette, outline the next steps as follows:

- We have many more truths to hear through the Community Hearings model we have established.
- We need to re-explore the time we have to hear from the growing number of families and survivors registered to share their stories (905 to date) and properly look at all forms of violence, while building a foundation for community-based solutions. In practical terms, we believe this means extending the timeframe mandated to complete this inquiry.
- We will establish the Institutional Hearings Process where we will question various jurisdictions and public institutions on the systemic forms of violence, racism and abuse that our women and girls have suffered at the hands of these parties.
- We will convene expert panels of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants to examine overarching themes such as the human rights of Indigenous women and girls.

Quote

"With the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Interim Report, we are able to reflect on what we have learned after months of research and the living experience of establishing an Inquiry of this magnitude.

Our women, girls and two-spirited people and their families continue to suffer from violence today and we know that they are re-traumatized as they tell their stories to us. That is why this Interim Report calls for the immediate increased support both financially and for counselling services for families and survivors. The need is much greater than the Inquiry can serve in an on-going manner.

The National Inquiry will continue to focus on what matters most: providing a safe space and enough time for families and survivors to tell their truths. It is these truths that will inform our recommendations to address the widespread systemic violence that Indigenous woman, girls and two-spirited people face, every day in Canada."

- Marion Buller, Chief Commissioner National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



About the NI-MMIWG

In response to calls for action from Indigenous families, communities and organizations, as well as non-governmental and international organizations, the Government of Canada launched an independent National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in September 2016.

The National Inquiry is entirely independent from federal, provincial and territorial governments. The Commissioners' mandate is to examine and report on the systemic causes of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada by looking at patterns and underlying factors.

The NI-MMIWG will continue to hear from family members and survivors, front-line workers ranging from the legal to family services sector to academics, educators, Elders and Knowledge Keepers as the Commissioners continue to find the truth, honour the truth, and give live to the truth as a path to healing.

Quick Facts:

- The federal government's report on the pre-Inquiry engagement process was based on the feedback from more than 2,100 people, over 4,100 online survey responses and more than 300 other submissions. Pg. 29
- The National Inquiry has analyzed 98 reports on violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Pg. 33
- Indigenous women are physically and sexually assaulted, or robbed almost three times as often as non-Indigenous women. Pg. 8
- Indigenous women experience domestic violence more frequently, and more severely, than do non-Indigenous women. More often (52% versus 31%) Indigenous women in these situations fear for their lives. Pg. 8
- In Manitoba, Indigenous women made up 86% of women admitted to prison in 2014/15, but only 14% of the general female population. Pg. 8
- Statistics Canada reports that people who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are violently victimized nearly five times as often as people who identified as heterosexual. Pg. 8
- In 2016, over 90% of children in care in Manitoba were Indigenous. Pg. 10

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Website: A copy of the Interim Report *Our Women and Girls are Sacred* can be downloaded at [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)

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