

ABORIGINAL INTEREST REPRESENTATION

Before

THE MISSING WOMEN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

May 21, 2012

By Email Only (except NWAC via fax)

First Nations Summit, Grand Chief Ed John, Executive and Colin Braker, Communications Director, (604) 926-9903

Email: tlazten@gmail.com and cbraker@fns.bc.ca

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Email: tteegee@cstc.bc.ca

Native Women's Association of Canada, Claudette Dumont-Smith, Exec. Director, (613) 722-3033 x223

Facsimile: 613.722.7687

Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, (250) 490-5314

Email: ubcic@ubcic.bc.ca

Aboriginal Front Door Society, Mona Woodward, Executive Director, (604) 697-5662

Email: aa_afd@hotmail.com

WISH Drop-in Centre Society, Kate Gibson, Executive Director, (604)669-9474

Email: wishdropincentre@telus.net

Battered Women's Support Services, Angela Marie MacDougall, Executive Director, (604) 808-0507

Email: information@bwss.org

Atira Women's Resource Society, Janice Abbott, Executive Director, (604) 331-1420

Email: info@atira.bc.ca

Ending Violence Association British Columbia, Tracy Porteous, Executive Director, (604) 633-2506, x11

Email: porteous@endingviolence.org

February 14th Women's Memorial March Committee, Lisa Yellow-Quill

Email: L.YellowQuill@gmail.com

PACE: Providing Alternatives Counselling & Education Society, Karen Mirsky, (778) 838-2972

Email: Pace-admin@telus.net

Pivot Legal Society, Doug King, Lawyer, (778) 898-6349

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Union Gospel Mission, Genesa Greening, Director, Community Strategies, (604) 506-0845

Email: contact@ugm.ca

Amnesty International Canada, Craig Benjamin, (613) 744-7667 ext 235

Email: info@amnesty.ca

B.C. Civil Liberties Association, David Eby, Executive Director, (778) 865-7997

Email: david@bccla.org

Downtown Eastside Sex Workers United Against Violence Society, Katrina Pacey, (604) 729-7849

Email: welcome@spoc.ca

West Coast LEAF, Executive Director, Kasari Govinder, (604) 684-8772, x212

Email: info@westcoastleaf.org

Dear Organizations

RE: Missing Women Commission of Inquiry - Peace of Heart Peace of Mind – Aboriginal Interest

Please be advised, we are co-counsel for the Aboriginal Interest before the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry. As many of you know, we have replaced Robyn Gervais and Bryan Baynham, Q.C. of Harper Grey LLP before this Inquiry into the missing and murdered women from the Downtown Eastside.

We want to tell you, briefly, something about ourselves so that you can rest assured that we have the greatest interest and compassion in all of the families, especially the children of the missing and murdered women. Next we will set out our general view of what we believe to be the Aboriginal Interest before this Inquiry followed by our plea for your top recommendations

that will form part of our submissions and recommendations. It is our hope that these recommendations will improve the lives of the children of the missing and murdered women and the women and children still facing marginalization on the streets of all of our communities including the highway of tears, on the highways and streets of this province, country and worldwide.

Elizabeth is from the Kwakiutl Nation and as a practicing lawyer knows about and has direct experience with systemic attitudes of racism and prejudice in Canadian culture. She started her legal career at Mandell Pinder and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs in 1995. As well, she is involved and been a part of immense change in the community living sector and an active member in Alkali Lake where sobriety and education have revolutionized Aboriginal life especially for children.

A brief word on Alkali, the sobriety movement began in 1971, when an eight-year-old girl refused to go home with her parents because of their drinking. This was the beginning of change which led this girl's mother to seek help for her alcoholism. This act inspired other members of the community to seek treatment and help. Within 15 years, 95 percent of the community was sober. The combination of 12 Steps and traditional Indian spiritual practices has proven to be a powerful benefit not only to the people of Alkali but to all those who come into contact with their practices. In addition to the high rates of addiction, the community of Alkali Lake has had to face many of the same problems that plague so many Aboriginal Canadian and Native American communities – such as poverty, over representation of unemployment, racism, loss of Native language and culture and generations of physical, psychological and sexual abuse at the Residential Schools.

Alkali leadership keeps the focus on being well and their ability to face these historical problems and develop creative solutions with a strong foundation with many members with over 30 years sobriety. Alkali continues to demonstrate to other individuals, families and communities that sobriety brings hope and previously unimagined possibilities and outcomes. The Alkali community shares its experiences with the Betty Ford Centre which has had a working relationship for many years understanding strong sober communities and spiritualism. We believe there is much to be learned that will help addicted people that can be made into concrete recommendations at this Inquiry.

Ms. Narbonne has extensive human rights and criminal law experience and has worked in northern BC where she has defended many community members including aboriginal before the law. In addition to her over 20 years of experience, she is an active member of the legal community which ensures a valuable perspective for the Aboriginal Interest when Ms. Narbonne considers recommendations and options for institutional change at this Inquiry.

We know serious accounting, amends and new direction is required to meaningfully change the direction of the history of Aboriginal peoples, specifically women and children. We have to thank Ms. Gervais and her legal team for the work they did for the Aboriginal Interest before the Inquiry. As it turns out, by Ms. Gervais resigning in late March it created an opening to

make more legal, social, political room for the Aboriginal Interest which finds its roots in time immemorial use and occupation of Aboriginal Peoples lands and resources and complex social structures that supported communities' wellness and order.

We believe that the Aboriginal Interest is a common history of oppression and colonization by the Provincial and Federal Government and its representatives which has resulted in Aboriginal women ending up on the streets of the Downtown Eastside. You all likely know that this prejudice for Aboriginal people arises, at least in part, from the historical denial by the Crown governments of culture, language and Aboriginal title and treaty rights since Confederation. We also recognize that the colonial instruments to oppress Aboriginal people have had long and severe implications on women, children and men in their role in the family and society. It is our view that denial and oppression is embedded deep within our political culture and denial and systemic prejudice all go together. *The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* of 1996 has set this out and we will rely on this as understanding why a disproportionately larger number of Aboriginal women are sex trade workers addicted to deadly drugs and why these vulnerable women were murdered; why they received less respect and attention by certain police officers when investigating the crimes leading to this Inquiry.

Canada is built on a history with a serious crack that continues to affect our society as we know it today. We have heard at this Inquiry by family members about once beautiful Territories where the families were whole and there was no drugs and alcohol but this is becoming a faint memory for Aboriginal people. We know that we cannot fix this serious crack at this Inquiry. As a matter of fact, this Inquiry is operating in the mist of intense change in aboriginal determination and colonial order and control. We understand and see the flaws so well-articulated in your letters advising of your respective organizations' boycott of the Inquiry, including the Forums.

However, we accepted this position knowing the political climate and the very short time frame to address a complex problem but we believe that we can contribute to preserve the memory of the murdered women and improve the lives of children of the murdered and missing women and Aboriginal Women and Children. In the short term we will make submissions and recommendations to the police force and, in the longer term, how First Nation can achieve self-determination of First Nation peoples within Confederation. This is an important step to address the underlying issues facing this Commission. We know that Aboriginal law teaches us about cultivating respect and we hope to make recommendations that will contribute to healing solutions across cultures.

We also believe that there are many people working at the Commission office who want to make changes that will truly protect and assist women and children from the dangerous predators still out there. We write to you knowing that you chose to boycott the Inquiry. We have been working around the clock to be meaningfully engaged in the day to day hearings at the Inquiry. We recognize that it is the eleventh hour of this Inquiry and we would have written at our first instance but our time has been very pressed to the edges to do everything to put the best case forward for the Aboriginal Interest at the daily hearings of witnesses. We are concerned that all of you have decided to not participate and we will not have the benefit of

the wealth of knowledge you have respectively from your organizations that would shape the findings and recommendations of this Inquiry. We know that it is impossible to canvass each and every boycotted member but we thought that we would ask for your specific practical recommendations. We invite you to email five recommendations that we can attribute to your organization or submit it as an anonymous boycotted member recommendation or any other combination that works.

We hope that you will simply email us five of the most important changes that your organization would make immediately that would improve the lives either directly or indirectly of the Aboriginal women and her children. Some of the organizations are on the ground with the daily dealings with Women and Children and others are regional political organizations that could make recommendations that would drastically improve the political climate of this uncertain province.

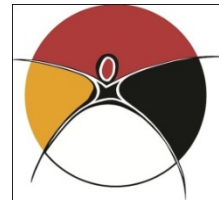
We were invited to take this position and it was independently our view that it was never too little and never too late to make a positive difference. We are concerned that there will not be another Inquiry where changes will be made to the system and the status quo will prevail. We have not heard any political party commit to another Inquiry. We know that the Government has a lot of growing to do to be truly a mature responsible government and we plead and implore you to contribute your insight despite its major shortcomings.

Thank you for your time and we hope that you will contribute and email your recommendations to Elizabeth Hunt at e.hunt@shaw.ca or Suzette Narbonne at narbonnelaw@telus.net

Yours truly,

Elizabeth Hunt and Suzette Narbonne

Co-Counsel for the Aboriginal Interest



Downtown Eastside Sex Workers
United Against Violence Society



PIVOT
equality lifts everyone



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

ENDING VIOLENCE
Association of BC

Groups affirm boycott of discriminatory Missing Women Commission

Fifteen organizations issued letters directed to Commissioner Wally Oppal confirming that they will not be participating in the “second phase” of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, citing concerns about discrimination and the conduct of the Commission to date.

The attached letters from an informal coalition of advocacy and service providing groups, the Native Women’s Association of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations are written in response to an invitation letter sent by Commissioner Wally Oppal, asking organizations to return to the Inquiry.

For more information, please contact:

- Aboriginal Front Door Society, Mona Woodward, Executive Director, (604) 697-5662
- Amnesty International Canada, Craig Benjamin, (613) 744 -7667 ext 235
- Atira Women’s Resource Society, Janice Abbott, Executive Director, (604) 331-1420
- B.C. Civil Liberties Association, David Eby, Executive Director, (778) 865-7997
- Battered Women’s Support Services, Angela Marie MacDougall, Executive Director, (604) 808-0507
- Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, Terry Teegee, Vice Tribal Chief, (250) 640-3256
- Downtown Eastside Sex Workers United Against Violence Society, Katrina Pacey, (604) 729-7849
- Ending Violence Association British Columbia, Tracy Porteous, Executive Director, (604) 633-2506, x11
- February 14th Women’s Memorial March Committee, Lisa Yellow-Quill, L.YellowQuill@gmail.com
- First Nations Summit, Colin Braker, Communications Director, (604) 926-9903
- Native Women’s Association of Canada, Claudette Dumont-Smith, Exec. Director, (613) 722-3033 x223
- PACE: Providing Alternatives Counselling & Education Society, Karen Mirsky, (778) 838-2972
- Pivot Legal Society, Doug King, Lawyer, (778) 898-6349
- Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, (250) 490-5314
- Union Gospel Mission, Genesa Greening, Director, Community Strategies, (604) 506-0845
- West Coast LEAF, Executive Director, Kasari Govinder, (604) 684-8772, x212
- WISH Drop-in Centre Society, Kate Gibson, Executive Director, (604)669-9474



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PIVOT
equality lifts everyone



ENDING VIOLENCE
Association of BC

Missing Women Commission of Inquiry
Attn: Commissioner Wally Oppal, QC
#1402 - 808 Nelson Street
Vancouver, BC
V6Z 2H2

April 10, 2012

Dear Commissioner Oppal,

Open Letter: Non-participation in the Policy Forums/Study Commission

We write to advise the Commission that we, the undersigned groups, will not be participating in the Policy Forums or Study Commission aspects of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (the "Inquiry"). We are not prepared to lend the credibility of our respective organizations' names and expertise to this Inquiry, which can only be described as a deeply flawed and illegitimate process. The Commission has lost all credibility among Aboriginal, sex work, human rights and women's organizations that work with and are comprised of the very women most affected by the issues this Inquiry is charged with investigating.

Many of the organizations listed below have for years been demanding an inquiry into the disappearances of so many marginalized women from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and across the province. When this Inquiry was finally called, we fully expected it to be a meaningful and inclusive process that would respect and honour the expertise of women, Aboriginal people, sex workers and other community members with important insight and knowledge to share. However, it has become painfully clear over the course of the Inquiry's proceedings that this Inquiry is not a meaningful and inclusive process. Instead, it has served to repeat the same discrimination and exclusion that we had hoped it was going to uncover.

Women have been going missing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and across the province, for decades. Women, especially Aboriginal women, sex workers, and women living in poverty, continue to face extreme violence in their lives, and experience profound barriers to reporting their victimization to police. Police and government failures to take women's safety seriously and to commit resources to improving the social and economic conditions in which women live are issues of long-standing concern to all of the undersigned groups. It is disturbing to note that this Inquiry into the disappearances and murders of sex workers from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside is taking place while government funding for sex worker support groups like PACE (Providing Alternatives Counselling and Education Society) and PEERS (Prostitutes Empowerment Education Resource Society) has been drastically reduced to the point that these two essential organizations may soon be forced to close their doors. Women's organizations across the province are feeling a similar squeeze.

We feel that it is important to state our profound disappointment in how this Inquiry has unfolded. Based on our experiences of exclusion from the Inquiry process, as well as our assessment of events occurring throughout the course of the proceedings, we have no confidence that our participation in the Policy Forums or Study Commission will contribute to the truth, reconciliation and accountability that we fully expected when this Inquiry was initiated. Instead, we will continue to seek alternative ways to support the families of the missing women and the vulnerable communities who continue to deal with ongoing violence, and we will advise you of this work.

When the provincial government denied funding to the community group participants who had been calling for this public inquiry for over a decade (the "Community Group Participants"), the Inquiry became the subject of intense and well-deserved criticism. We are extremely disappointed that multiple appeals to the Province to remedy this injustice were unsuccessful, and that Community Group Participants were unable to exercise the standing rights granted to them by the Commissioner.

The failure to ensure equal access to the Inquiry process for the Community Group Participants granted standing made it clear to us, as it was to the broader public, that there would be deep inequities in terms of what evidence would be tendered and what interests would be represented. The value of the Inquiry was called into question and, at that point, so much more could have been done by the Commission to fight for the integrity of the process. The lack of commitment to fighting for the appropriate, meaningful, and adequately funded involvement of Community Group Participants was extremely disappointing. Additionally, former Attorney General Barry Penner, current Attorney General Shirley Bond, and Premier Clark themselves bear responsibility for refusing to adequately fund Community Group Participants, marginalizing their essential contributions and undermining the legitimacy of the Inquiry process. The families, who have appropriately been provided counsel, are unable to offer the same contributions that would have been made by the many other groups who were shut out. These groups have decades of relevant policy expertise, have been supporting women who have experienced the most extreme levels of violence imaginable, have been tracking deaths of women for many years, and have been analyzing the serious problems with policing in British Columbia, as well as other systems such as child protection, income assistance, housing, healthcare, and transportation. These groups could have made a positive difference to the proceeding and outcomes for women and families in our Province.

We would like to take this opportunity to set out a number of other concerns we have had as this Inquiry has progressed.

Limitations of the terms of reference: In unilaterally setting the terms of reference for the Inquiry without consulting any of the affected parties, the provincial government unnecessarily restricted the Commission to examining the criminal justice system and its handling of the Pickton investigation, without providing for a fulsome examination of the various systemic issues leading to marginalized women's particular vulnerability to violence, the lack of protections available, or the epidemic of missing and murdered women in British Columbia.

No lawyers for organizations and community members who represent crucial perspectives: 25 publicly funded lawyers have represented police and government interests and yet no lawyers were funded to represent the Community Group Participants who originally demanded an inquiry in the first place. The Community Group Participants represent essential perspectives and experiences that have not been, and cannot be, adequately represented by Commission counsel, the amici or the two very dedicated but overburdened lawyers who represent the families of the missing women.

Lack of Witness Protection: The Inquiry has recreated many of the barriers that women face when requiring police protection. One key example of this was the failure to grant adequate protection for the identities of vulnerable witnesses who agreed to come forward to tell their stories. Instead, the Commissioner granted significant protections for people convicted of assaulting the exact women that the Commission was hoping to hear from.

Delayed, incomplete disclosure: The failure to order the disclosure of the book written by Lori Shenher, a lead VPD investigator on the Pickton file, for months, the order requiring the book to be redacted, and then the failure to mark it as an exhibit so that the public may have access to it, is just one example of the inadequate and delayed disclosure that has become commonplace throughout this Inquiry.

Impossible Timelines: The provincial government has set a deadline of June 30, 2012, for the production of the Commissioner's report. Hearings will end by April 30. This arbitrary timeline cannot and will not provide for an appropriately diligent examination of all relevant issues. The Commissioner's request for an extension was refused, and all indications are that similar demands made recently by the families of Pickton's victims will also be rejected.

Conflict of interest: The Commission hired a former Vancouver Police Department officer to conduct witness interviews and to "help" write an "independent" report on the Vancouver Police Department and RCMP investigations that was intended to be authored by the Peel Regional Police. The Peel Regional Police had numerous officers under investigation by the RCMP while they were writing their portion of the report about the RCMP investigations into Pickton. We also understand this former VPD officer is writing questions for Commission counsel and has no training to be doing this type of work.

Allegations of sexism and marginalization of witnesses: Former staff from the Commission have alleged sexist conduct, and conduct inconsistent with the intent for which the Inquiry was established, namely, to facilitate hearing the evidence of marginalized women. The Commission appears woefully out of touch with how it may be replicating the exact exclusion and discrimination that led to this Inquiry being called in the first place.

Limited Witnesses: The arbitrary and unworkable timeframe has meant that the Commission has not and will not hear evidence from many important witnesses. Key witnesses requested by counsel for the families have not been added to the witness list more than four months after the request was made. The Commission has refused to hear evidence about possible connections between the Pickton brothers and Hell's Angels, or to look into allegations of corruption and connections with organized crime. The purpose of the Inquiry is to get to the bottom of why police failed to stop the killings of vulnerable women. The question of whether women were prevented from coming forward to police with information about Pickton because they were intimidated by organized crime connections is highly relevant to this purpose and should be fully explored. Instead, this line of inquiry has been explicitly shut down by the Commissioner.

Further to these concerns, the recent resignation of Robyn Gervais, the lawyer hired to represent "Aboriginal interests" at the Inquiry, has further reinforced our concerns. Ms. Gervais resigned her position citing the Commission's unwillingness to give enough time and weight to evidence from Aboriginal witnesses. "Aboriginal interests have not, and will not, be adequately represented in these hearings," she said. "Given that these hearings were about missing Aboriginal women, I didn't think I would need to fight to have their voices heard." From the outset, we did not support the appointment of amici to represent community interests. Ms. Gervais' resignation confirms our belief that this was a tokenistic appointment that could never have been expected to effectively represent the broad and essential perspectives of First Nations people. We are extremely troubled by the recent announcement regarding the hasty appointment, one month before the end of the hearings, of two new Independent Counsel to present issues related to Aboriginal interests. We emphasize that this will still not allow for the inclusion of critical Aboriginal voices - those voices required their own legal counsel in order to participate.

On May 1, 2012, the Inquiry will shift into its Study Commission function and begin holding Policy Forums in which interested individuals and organizations can make submissions to the Commission on issues within the advisory and policy aspects of its mandate. Given the record of the Inquiry thus far, our organizations have no confidence that the insight or expertise we could now offer would make any difference to the Inquiry's outcome or the strength of its recommendations. The government's failure to commit the necessary resources to this Commission does not bode well for its commitment to implementing any of the Commission's recommendations, and the Commission's continued exclusion and marginalization of community voices undermines the credibility of the entire process. We see little value in spending our organizations' extremely limited time and resources contributing to a process that is fundamentally flawed and irredeemably defective.

Canada has been criticized by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, just weeks ago, by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination because of the inadequacies in its law and practice respecting the prevention, investigation, prosecution and punishment of violence against women, particularly Aboriginal women. The high levels of violence experienced by Aboriginal women, as well as the hundreds of missing and murdered Aboriginal women across the country, are evidence of Canada's failure to meet its international legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the fundamental human rights of women. To date, Canada has not made an effective response to these serious and significant findings by expert human rights bodies.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has initiated its inquiry procedure under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in response to information it has received regarding disappearances and murders of Aboriginal women and girls. Given the failures of the British Columbia and Canadian governments to address effectively the human rights crisis of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, including the social and economic conditions that make Aboriginal women and girls more vulnerable to violence in the first place, our organizations will dedicate what limited resources we can offer to working with the United Nations to facilitate their investigations and fact-finding processes, in order to ensure that Canada is held internationally accountable for these ongoing human rights violations. We have no confidence that the Commission of Inquiry can provide such accountability.

In closing, we reiterate our disappointment in the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, which continues to lose relevance and credibility. Ensuring that the Commission proceeds with the maximum amount of evidence and input available is literally a matter of life and death for the marginalized women who continue to experience extremely dangerous situations on a daily basis in the Downtown Eastside and throughout the province, and we are extremely upset that the Commission has not chosen to implement measures to allow for this. We are angry that millions of dollars continue to be spent on the Inquiry, and yet the Province and Commissioner were not able to provide adequate funding for Community Group Participants to participate in an appropriate manner. Our organizations will continue to support the families of the missing women and will work together going forward to ensure that real change happens for the vulnerable women of the Downtown Eastside.

Yours truly,

Aboriginal Front Door Society

Amnesty International Canada

Atira Women's Resource Society

B.C. Civil Liberties Association

Battered Women's Support Services

Carrier Sekani Tribal Council

Downtown Eastside Sex Workers United Against Violence Society

Ending Violence Association of British Columbia

Feb. 14th Women's Memorial March Committee

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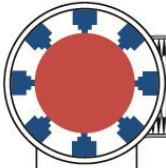
Pivot Legal Society

Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs

Union Gospel Mission

West Coast LEAF

WISH Drop-in Centre Society



Native Women's Association of Canada

March 7, 2012

Melina Buckley
Policy Counsel
Missing Women Commission of Inquiry
1402 – 808 Nelson Street
Vancouver, BC V5Z 2H2
Via email: info@missingwomeninquiry.ca

Dear Ms Buckley:

NWAC is Canada's national voice for Aboriginal women and was uniquely positioned to speak to concerns about missing and murdered Aboriginal women. NWAC was granted full standing by Commissioner Oppal, but the Government of British Columbia refused to provide funding for legal counsel and NWAC was forced to withdraw from the Inquiry on July 27, 2011 because it could not participate without financial support.

Recently, NWAC received an invitation from the Commission to participate in policy sessions. However, since NWAC was excluded from the fact-finding hearings, NWAC has decided not to participate in this secondary policy forum. Neither the Inquiry nor the Government of British Columbia is likely to attach the same weight to submissions that are made in the policy sessions. Aboriginal women, and their organizations, should not be relegated to a secondary forum.

NWAC still hopes that individual families will find some answers through this Inquiry. NWAC will continue to seek real and long-lasting solutions to the grave and systematic violations of the human rights of Aboriginal women and girls.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Corbiere Lavell
President



April 10, 2012

Missing Women Commission of Inquiry:

As this Commission of Inquiry comes to a close, we feel deep regret that no measure of justice has been achieved. We had hoped that important lessons could have been learned which may have served to prevent similar harm and tragedy from occurring in the future.

Women, and in particular, First Nations, Inuit and Métis women are among the most vulnerable in our society to unprovoked violent attacks. At every level, through policing and prosecution, the system has failed in its duty to protect these most vulnerable.

There are many elements of this tragedy which reinforce our conclusions. It is evident that systemic discrimination, in the form of racism and negative stereotyping associated with drug users and sex trade workers, contributed to the failure of the police to adequately investigate the numerous reports of missing women from Vancouver's Downtown East Side and the Highway of Tears. In addition, the Crown's decision only to prosecute Robert Pickton with respect to six of the murders that he was alleged to have committed, was insensitive, unreasonable, and disrespectful to the families of the victims.

With regard to the Commission of Inquiry itself, the Attorney-General's decision to deny funding to interested groups who may have brought evidence to the Inquiry adverse to the official position, amounted to interference with the independence of the Inquiry. The fact that the only funded parties were government agencies with delegated powers leaving one sole advocate to represent a number of the victims' families demonstrated the unfairly weighted nature of the Inquiry and the evidence brought forward. Many witnesses with potentially the most compelling and profound testimony were excluded from the Inquiry by the Attorney-General's office.

It is deplorable in a country such as Canada that identifiable groups of society can be singled out for differential treatment within the justice system. It is further abhorrent that when such cases exist, the legal and institutional tools to address them in a fair and just manner are high-jacked by interested government parties to prevent truths from airing that might bring them into disrepute.

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The families of missing and murdered women deserve much more – they deserve the truth and they deserve peace of mind. Moreover, the broader society must be re-assured that our institutions will protect the most vulnerable and all members of society. This essential effort remains unaddressed and undone.

The AFN supports and offers its sincere regret to the families of the victims that their suffering has not been given voice and that their questions remain unanswered. With increased public awareness of this tragedy, AFN remains steadfast in our support for the families and committed to the effort to bring an end to the completely unacceptable situation of missing and murdered women. We will continue to press all jurisdictions and all authorities to address this matter. Moreover, we call on the support of all Canadian authorities to facilitate the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of Women in conducting their own independent investigation into the tragedy of missing and murdered women as well as other all other mechanisms that may be required.

Respectfully,



Shawn A-in-Chut Atleo
National Chief



Jody Wilson-Raybould
Regional Chief, BC



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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2012

Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Needs to Face the Facts

Coast Salish Territory, Vancouver, British Columbia – The First Nations Leadership Council is greatly troubled by yesterday's announcement from the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry regarding the "appointment of two Independent Counsel presenting issues related to Aboriginal interests."

"The announcement represents a sad commentary on the great travesty known as the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry. As we have long maintained, it is totally unacceptable that the BC Government would establish an Inquiry into the deaths and disappearances of so many missing Aboriginal women and yet, in order to save money, deny Aboriginal peoples the opportunity to use their own voice to make substantive contributions to the Inquiry," said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. "With this announcement, it is clear the Inquiry is scrambling to prove its relevance and credibility."

"The Commission is not getting the message. Appointing independent counsel is an inappropriate and inadequate solution to ensuring a meaningful Aboriginal role in the Inquiry," stated Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit. "It is entirely unrealistic to expect that any counsel would have the ability to properly review the vast amount of information in the extremely limited timeline. The Inquiry is fundamentally flawed by its narrow mandate, the restrictive interpretation of that mandate and the absence of critical Aboriginal voices. Sadly, the result is that the Inquiry has no hope of being a meaningful illumination into key issues and policing in our society."

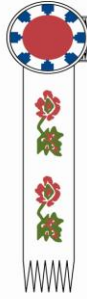
BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould concluded, "At the outset, the First Nations of BC strongly encouraged the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry to respect the families of missing and murdered women, Downtown Eastside Women's groups and First Nations' organizations by ensuring their meaningful participation in the Inquiry. The Inquiry continues despite the fact that almost all of these groups have formally withdrawn. The Inquiry has, however, heightened public awareness and justice will need to be served. Despite the obvious failings of this Inquiry, we will continue to fight on to ensure that the voices of our most vulnerable are heard so that we may seriously address the systemic problems in our justice system."

For more information please contact:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs 250-490-5314

Grand Chief Edward John
Political Executive, First Nations Summit 778-772-8218

Courtney Daws
Director of Operations, BC Assembly of First Nations 604-922-7733



**Native Women's
Association of Canada**



Press Release – For Immediate Release

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Holds Hearing on Disappearances and Murders of Aboriginal Women and Girls in British Columbia

Ottawa, ON (March 27, 2012) The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) will appear tomorrow before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in Washington D.C. to provide a thematic briefing on the subject of the disappearances and murders of Aboriginal women and girls in British Columbia, Canada.

Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, President of NWAC, said "The focus of this first briefing with the Inter-American Commission is on British Columbia for two reasons:

First, because more than one quarter of the disappearances and murders that NWAC has documented for the whole country occurred in British Columbia. It is also well known that there has been a concentration of killings in several locations in the province, in the Downtown Eastside and along the Highway of Tears.

Secondly, it is in British Columbia that the first and only inquiry into police and criminal justice failures with respect to disappearances and murders of women has been appointed. NWAC and other Aboriginal organizations have learned a sad lesson from the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, one that reveals British Columbia's unwillingness to respect the rights of Aboriginal women to participate fully and equally in judicial processes that address their interests and rights.

NWAC hoped that the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry would provide an opportunity to shed light on the systemic failures of the police and criminal justice system to deal with the racialized and sexualized violence that Aboriginal women and girls experience and become a model for other jurisdictions. For that reason, NWAC applied for, and was granted, full standing at the Inquiry.

Unfortunately, however, both the Government of British Columbia and the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry further violated the rights of Aboriginal women and girls, by refusing NWAC funding for its legal counsel, and by appointing "independent counsel" to speak for Aboriginal women, without our consent. The recently announced decision of that lawyer to withdraw, and her reasons for doing so, confirmed NWAC's worst fear that

this Inquiry will not provide answers to the ongoing discrimination against Aboriginal women that threatens their safety and lives.

The Missing Women Commission of Inquiry is a failure for Aboriginal women, with 25 publicly-funded lawyers now representing police agencies, no publicly funded counsel representing any of the groups that were granted standing, and no participation of any Aboriginal groups in the Inquiry.

We will inform the Inter-American Commission both of the nature and extent of the violence against Aboriginal women and girls in British Columbia and Canada, and also of the profound failure of supposedly corrective steps, like the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry.”

Sharon McIvor of FAFIA said “the disappearances and murders of more than 600 Aboriginal women and girls across Canada is a human rights crisis. Governments at all levels have not put in place the measures necessary to discharge their obligations to prevent, prosecute, investigate and remedy this violence. Tomorrow we will ask the Inter-American Commission to urge Canada to:

- initiate a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls that will lead to the design of national, cross-jurisdictional mechanisms and protocols for police and justice officials and to an action plan that will address the crisis of violence, and the social and economic disadvantages of Aboriginal women and girls - including poverty, inadequate housing, low educational attainment, inadequate child welfare policies, and over-criminalization;
- ensure inter-jurisdictional and inter-agency coordination of policing and law enforcement and establish improved federal, provincial, and territorial police accountability mechanisms that include both civilian oversight and civilian investigation, particularly for adherence with constitutional requirements of equal protection and access to justice;
- establish a federal mechanism for investigations into misconduct and discrimination within the criminal justice system and police forces;
- co-operate with civil society groups endeavoring to end violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada and ensure the full participation of Aboriginal women and Aboriginal organizations, with representatives of their own choosing, within national and provincial inquiries and any other related commissions or inquiries dealing with their rights.

NWAC and FAFIA have been assisted in preparation for this briefing by Caroline Bettinger-Lopez from the University of Miami Human Rights Clinic. Ms. Bettinger-Lopez is an expert on the obligations of states to exercise due diligence to prevent, prosecute, investigate and remedy violence against women. She was counsel in the case of Jessica Lenahan (formerly Gonzalez)

against the United States, which was decided by the Inter-American Commission in August 2011.

The hearing will take place on March 28 between 9 and 10 a.m. in the Padilha Vidal B room at the GSB Building of the Organizations of American States, in Washington D.C. The hearing will be live-streamed on the IACHR website at:

http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/coverage.asp.

For further information, please contact:

Jeannette Corbiere Lavell
President
Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)

(613) 899 – 2343

Sharon McIvor
Human Rights Committee
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International
Action (FAFIA)
(250) 378 - 7479

News Release



Union of BC Indian Chiefs

#500, 342 Water Street
Vancouver, BC



Carrier Sekani Tribal Council

#200, 1460 Sixth Avenue
Prince George, BC

UBCIC and Carrier Sekani Tribal Council Celebrates International Women's Day and Calls for End to Inequity and Violence Experienced by Indigenous Women

March 8, 2012

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, BC – The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is proud to celebrate International Women's Day and highlight that Indigenous women are, and historically have been, integral to the success, livelihood and survival of our communities. Today, we acknowledge that Indigenous women continue to experience disproportionately high levels of violence, and assert that Indigenous women have the human right to personal safety and security, no matter what their socio-economic status may be.

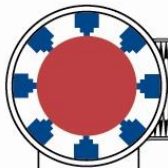
Article 22 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* provides that "States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination." Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of UBCIC points out "The unacceptable violence and discrimination that continues to be experienced by Indigenous women is rooted in systemic racism and ingrained colonialism, perpetuated through unacceptable government policies and legislation. Indigenous women experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on their indigeneity and gender. We need solid commitment from all levels of government for a zero-tolerance approach and a comprehensive, Indigenous-led strategy to end this inequity."

Coola Louis, UBCIC Women's Representative stated, "Indigenous women hold positions of high regard in our communities as givers of life who are integral and valued members of our societies. As a fundamental human right, Indigenous women must have every possible opportunity for success, as their success will exponentially increase the well-being of our communities."

Terry Teegee, Vice-Chief of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council concluded, "This week, the BC Government continues to show blatant disrespect for Indigenous women by continuing the sham Missing Women Commission of Inquiry. Despite the withdrawal of Robyn Gervais, independent counsel representing Indigenous interests, the BC Government is carrying forward with a 'business as usual' attitude. The CSTC joins UBCIC and fully supports the urgent call for a Royal Commission for the over 500 murdered and missing women across this country."

For further information please contact:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, UBCIC (250) 490-5314
Coola Louis, Women's Representative, UBCIC (250) 306-6191
Terry Teegee, Vice Tribal Chief, CSTC (250) 640-3256



Native Women's Association of Canada

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NWAC Cites Withdrawal of Independent Counsel from Missing Women Commission of Inquiry as Further Evidence of Discrimination Against Aboriginal Women

March 7th, 2012 (Ottawa, ON) -The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) learned yesterday of the resignation of Ms. Robyn dean Gervais from the position of Independent Counsel for the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry to represent "the perspectives of Aboriginal women". Her withdrawal confirms our concerns and observations about the failures of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry process. Amongst her reasons for withdrawal, Ms. Gervais cited the delay in calling Aboriginal witnesses, the failure to provide adequate hearing time for Aboriginal panels, the lack of ongoing support from the Aboriginal community, and the disproportionate focus on police evidence at the Inquiry.

NWAC is Canada's national voice for Aboriginal women and was uniquely positioned to speak to concerns about missing and murdered Aboriginal women. NWAC was granted full standing by Commissioner Oppal, but the Government of British Columbia refused to provide funding for legal counsel and NWAC was forced with withdraw from the Inquiry on July 27, 2011 because it could not participate without financial support.

After the Government refused funding for NWAC and the other groups granted standing, and most of the groups were forced to withdraw, Commissioner Oppal attempted to salvage the Inquiry by appointing two "independent counsel," Ms. Robyn Gervais and Mr. Jason Gratl to represent "the perspectives of Aboriginal women" and "Vancouver's Downtown East Side community." In her "independent counsel" position, Ms. Gervais was expected to represent "Aboriginal women" but had no Aboriginal client, and could not seek or take instructions from any individual Aboriginal woman, or any Aboriginal women's organization. As NWAC noted in our letter to Commissioner Oppal of September 6, 2011, the appointment of "independent counsel" to represent Aboriginal women, without Aboriginal women's knowledge or consent, was itself discriminatory. The Commission placed Ms. Gervais in an untenable position, and yesterday's withdrawal is the result.

Twenty-five publicly funded lawyers represent police and government at the Inquiry, while there are only two publicly funded family lawyers. There were and are no publicly funded lawyers retained and instructed by any Aboriginal parties.

Recently, NWAC received an invitation from the Commission to participate in policy sessions. However, since NWAC was excluded from the fact-finding hearings, NWAC has decided not to participate in this secondary policy forum. Neither the Inquiry nor the Government of British Columbia is likely to attach the same weight to submissions that are made in the policy sessions. Aboriginal women, and their organizations, should not be relegated to a secondary forum.

Ms. Gervais' decision to withdraw, and her reasons for doing so, have confirmed NWAC's fear that this Inquiry will not provide answers to the ongoing discrimination against Aboriginal women and girls that threatens their safety and their lives. NWAC still hopes that individual families will find some answers through this Inquiry. NWAC will continue to seek real and long-lasting solutions to the grave and systematic violations of the human rights of Aboriginal women and girls.

-30-

For more information please contact:

Claudette Dumont-Smith, Executive Director
1-800-461-4043 or cdumontsmith@nwac.ca



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
MARCH 6, 2012***

First Nations Summit withdraws from participation in Missing Women Commission of Inquiry

An Open Letter to Wally Oppal, Q.C., Commissioner

Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver) — The First Nations Summit today released the attached open letter to Wally Oppal, Commissioner of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry.

The letter concluded that given recent developments, including the withdrawal of the Independent Legal Counsel for Aboriginal interests and the overall conduct of the Inquiry, the voices of the families of the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and Aboriginal communities are clearly not being heard or respected. Therefore, given the realization that the Inquiry will clearly not be able to fulfill a critical part of its mandate, the First Nations Summit has indicated it has no choice but to withdraw as an active participant in the Inquiry.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For Further Information:

Grand Chief Edward John
FNS Political Executive
Cell: 778-7725-8218

Chief Doug White
FNS Political Executive
Cell: 604-910-8853



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

March 6, 2012

Wally Oppal, Q.C., Commissioner
Missing Women Commission of Inquiry
#1402 - 808 Nelson Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2H2
Fax: 604-681-4458
info@missingwomeninquiry.ca

Dear Commissioner:

Re: First Nations Summit Withdrawal from Missing Women Commission of Inquiry

Your Commission appointed Robyn Gervais as Independent Legal Counsel for Aboriginal interests. We had no role or any say in this matter. She has now withdrawn as Independent Legal Counsel. We find it extremely disturbing that she has had to take this drastic step.

The First Nations Summit applied for standing and was granted Limited Participant status. Despite the fact the government failed completely to provide any financial resources to our and all other First Nations/Aboriginal organizations, we did what we could to participate.

On October 12, 2011 on behalf of the First Nations Summit we submitted a comprehensive Statement to your Inquiry (see enclosed). We want to reiterate our full support for the families of all those women who are missing and murdered. They need to see that justice is not only seen to be done, but that it is done and that the many questions they have are answered fully. The voices of these families and that of our communities must be respected and heard.

We come to the conclusion, given all these developments, together with the conduct of the Inquiry, including your statements to Robyn Gervais today, those voices are not being respected or heard. This continues to reflect what we said in our Statement, a systemic pattern of discrimination. We feel the Inquiry will not be able to fulfill a critical part of its mandate.

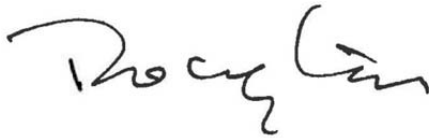
Our continued participation has always been subject to review by our Executive and Chiefs. Unfortunately, the fears expressed by our Chiefs and leaders at the outset of this process, have been confirmed. Given the withdrawal of, and the reasons provided by, the Independent Legal Counsel, Robyn Gervais, today and the withdrawal of all First Nations/Aboriginal organizations earlier in the process, we feel we cannot continue to participate. Effective today, we withdraw from participation in this Inquiry. We will seek alternative ways for the voices of the families of the missing and murdered women and our communities to be heard and respected.

Page 1 of 2

Yours truly,
FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT TASK GROUP



Grand Chief Edward John



Chief Douglas White III Kwulasultun



Dan Smith

Enclosure (1)

Missing Women Commission of Inquiry First Nations Summit
Statement (October 12, 2011)

NOTE TO MEDIA: Please visit www.fns.bc.ca to download the October 12, 2011 First Nations Summit Statement to the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry



Media Statement

Monday, March 5, 2012

Independent Counsel Withdraws from Missing Women Commission of Inquiry

Vancouver – Robyn Gervais, Independent Counsel for Aboriginal Interests at the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry has withdrawn from her position effective immediately.

Ms. Gervais cites the delay in calling Aboriginal witnesses, the failure to provide adequate hearing time for Aboriginal panels, the lack of ongoing support from the Aboriginal community and the disproportionate focus on police evidence as her reasons for withdrawal.

Ms. Gervais said, “This inquiry is fundamentally about missing and murdered women, a disproportionate number of whom were Aboriginal. Despite 38 days of police testimony, the commission has yet to hear from an Aboriginal witness.”

“As I leave, I regret that I could not find a way to bring the voices of the missing and murdered Aboriginal women before the Commissioner”, said Ms. Gervais.

The inquiry appointed Ms. Gervais as independent counsel on August 11, 2011 with a mandate to serve the public interest. She was appointed after the provincial government refused to fund legal services to First Nations groups.

Robyn dean Gervais graduated from University of British Columbia Faculty of Law in 2008. She is Metis, and grew up near Edmonton, Alberta. She previously represented the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council at the inquiry before the group decided to withdraw because of lack of funding.

The commission was appointed by the B.C. government in 2010 to probe the Vancouver police and RCMP investigations of women reported missing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside between Jan. 23, 1997 and Feb. 5, 2002.

-30-

Contact:

Robyn dean Gervais
Email: gervais@rogelaw.ca
Twitter: @RobynGervaisMWI
Phone: 604. 812. 9694

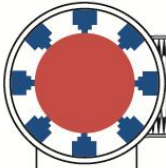
Gervais Law Corporation

#2809 - 128 West Cordova Street, Vancouver, BC

C: 604.812.9694

F: 604.608.5386

gervais@rogelaw.ca



Native Women's Association of Canada

March 7, 2012

Melina Buckley
Policy Counsel
Missing Women Commission of Inquiry
1402 – 808 Nelson Street
Vancouver, BC V5Z 2H2
Via email: info@missingwomeninquiry.ca

Dear Ms Buckley:

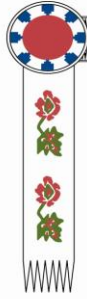
NWAC is Canada's national voice for Aboriginal women and was uniquely positioned to speak to concerns about missing and murdered Aboriginal women. NWAC was granted full standing by Commissioner Oppal, but the Government of British Columbia refused to provide funding for legal counsel and NWAC was forced to withdraw from the Inquiry on July 27, 2011 because it could not participate without financial support.

Recently, NWAC received an invitation from the Commission to participate in policy sessions. However, since NWAC was excluded from the fact-finding hearings, NWAC has decided not to participate in this secondary policy forum. Neither the Inquiry nor the Government of British Columbia is likely to attach the same weight to submissions that are made in the policy sessions. Aboriginal women, and their organizations, should not be relegated to a secondary forum.

NWAC still hopes that individual families will find some answers through this Inquiry. NWAC will continue to seek real and long-lasting solutions to the grave and systematic violations of the human rights of Aboriginal women and girls.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Corbiere Lavell
President



Native Women's
Association of Canada



February 8, 2012

Madame Sylvia Pimentel, Chair
Members
United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
c/o CEDAW Secretariat
OHCHR - Palais Wilson, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, CH-1211
Geneva 10, Switzerland

Dear Madame Pimentel and Members of the Committee,

We write to you today as Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, their representative organizations and their allies. We are extremely pleased to learn that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has initiated an inquiry under Article 8 of the Optional Protocol into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. This inquiry is urgently needed. We hope that the Committee will request a visit and come to Canada to conduct the inquiry as soon as possible.

We know that the Committee has been in dialogue with Canada about missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls since 2008. We are aware of the Committee's priority recommendation on this subject in its 2008 Concluding Observations after its review of Canada, the request for a follow-up report by Canada in 2009, and the Committee's conclusion in 2010 that Canada has not implemented the Committee's recommendation. We know further that the Committee has been in communication with Canada since then asking for additional information, and for a report on outcomes of measures that Canada says it has put in place. We thank you for this consistent effort on behalf of Canada's most disadvantaged and threatened women and girls. However, given these efforts over four years and the unsatisfactory outcomes, an Article 8 inquiry is timely and necessary.

Many of the groups and individuals who are signatories to this letter have worked for more than a decade, to bring this issue to the attention of the Government of Canada, as well as provincial and territorial governments. We have tried to impress upon our governments the seriousness of the human rights violations involved, and the need for strategic, co-ordinated action to address the police and government failures that permit and condone the persistent sexualized and racialized violence. Many of us have provided support and services to Aboriginal women and girls who have experienced violence, and to members of the families of women and girls who have disappeared or been murdered. We have all worked in different ways and in different communities.

We have lobbied, written, spoken out, walked across the country, held hundreds of vigils for the disappeared and murdered women, intervened with police, appeared before Parliamentary Committees, and met with government officials, repeatedly.

Despite our years of effort, our goal has not been achieved. Canada does not yet have in place a co-ordinated national plan, with detailed and concrete measures, to address the root causes and remedy the consequences of the violence against Aboriginal women and girls. Some steps have been taken. But, when these steps are assessed against the long-standing and continuing pattern of violence and the harms that it causes to women, girls, families and communities, the response of the Government of Canada, and the provincial and territorial governments, remains weak, un-coordinated, and inadequate.

In addition, the voices of Aboriginal women and their organizations are still ignored and disrespected, and they are excluded from participation in deliberations about their lives and their deaths. Most recently, the Parliamentary Committee on the Status of Women released its final report on violence against Aboriginal women. The report ignores the testimony given by hundreds of Aboriginal women and Aboriginal women's organizations and it offers no real solutions.

Further, because the Government of British Columbia denied funding for legal counsel to the groups who were granted standing by Inquiry Commissioner, Wally Oppal, the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry in British Columbia is proceeding without the participation of the Native Women's Association of Canada, and other crucial organizations who work directly with, and defend the rights of women who are targets of violence. Neither analysis of the problems, nor solutions to them, can be formulated effectively if Aboriginal women, their organizations, and those with knowledge and expertise about their conditions, are not included and listened to.


As time goes by, and there are still no effective measures in place, there is an increasing sense of urgency and frustration. Aboriginal women and girls continue to disappear and be found murdered. We believe that external intervention and examination is necessary. The Committee's presence in Canada can instruct governments and the public of the gravity of the human rights violations. The Committee can also identify the measures that need to be put in place immediately to satisfy Canada's obligations to prevent, investigate, prosecute and remedy violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

As Aboriginal women and girls, and their representatives and allies in Canada, we believe it is crucial that the Committee move forward with its inquiry into the national tragedy of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls as expeditiously as possible. We request that the Committee seek permission for a visit to Canada in order that members undertaking the inquiry can speak directly with some Aboriginal women in Canada and visit some of our communities. We believe that a visit to Canada is essential for the Committee to be fully informed about the social, historical and geographical context in which the disappearances and murders of Aboriginal women and girls are taking place. We stand ready to assist the Committee in any way we can.

Respectfully,



Jeannette Corbiere Lavell
President
Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)



Sharon McIvor
Human Rights Committee
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International
Action (FAFIA)

Aboriginal Services Center for Addiction and Mental Health
Aboriginal Women's Action Network
Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes
Alberta Aboriginal Women's Society
Alternative pour Elles
Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association
Asian Women Coalition Ending Prostitution (AWCEP)
Assistance aux femmes de Montréal
British Columbia Assembly of First Nations
British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
British Columbia Federation of Labour
British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union
British Columbia Government Employees' Union, Local 601
British Columbia Teachers' Federation
Business and Professional Women of Canada

Business and Professional Women (Montreal Chapter)
Centre d'aide and de lutte contre les agressions a caractère sexuel (CALACS)
CALACS Assaut sexuel secours
CALACS Chateauguay
Canadian Association of AIDS Care
Canadian Association of Social Workers
The Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC)
Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies
CAW-TCA Canada - National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada
CAW-TCA Canada, Local 1106
Canadian Federation of University Women – Halifax
Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)
Canadian Labour Congress
Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
Canadian Union of Public Employees, Saskatchewan Division
Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 1281
Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice
Canadian Women's Foundation
Canadian Women's Health Network
Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children
Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of British Columbia
Comité d'action contre la traite humaine interne et international
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP)
Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle (CLES)
The Council of Canadians
Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association
Dalhousie Women's Centre
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Elementary Teachers of Toronto
EVE (formerly Exploited Voices now Educating)
Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec
Glenwood Women's Institute
Harmony House
Hospital Employees' Union
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW)
IAMAW, Local 16
IAMAW, Local 2323
Indigenous Bar Association
International Anglican Women's Network in Canada
International Indian Treaty Council
Justice for Girls
La Débrouille
La Maison d'Ariane
La Maison De Connivence

La Maison des-Femmes de Sept-Iles
La Maison Hina
L'R des centres de femmes du Québec
Labourers' International Union of North America
Les EssentiElles
Maison d'aide et d'hébergement pour femmes et enfants victimes de violence conjugale de L'islet
Maison d'aide et d'hébergement l'Accalmie
Maison de Lina
Maison Halte Secours
Maison Interlude House
Maison Mikana
Maison Unies-Vers-Femmes
Mattawa Women Resource Centre
Media Watch, U.S.A
Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women & Children
Multi-femmes Inc. pour les femmes victimes de violence conjugale
National Council of Women of Canada
National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE)
Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories
Newfoundland Native Women's Association
New Brunswick Aboriginal Women's Council Inc.
Noojmowin Teg Health Centre
Nova Scotia Association of Women's Centres
Ojibway Cree First Nation
Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses
Ontario Native Women's Association
Oxfam Canada
Project of Heart
Québec Native Women's Association
Public Service Alliance of Canada
Public Service Alliance of Canada North
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Aboriginal Action Circle
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Winnipeg Regional Women's Committee
Public Service Alliance of Canada, British Columbia Region
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Local 00392
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Dawson City Regional Women's Committee
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Whitehorse Regional Women's Committee
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Aboriginal People's Committee
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Prairies Region
Rainy River District Women's Shelter of Hope
The REDress Project
Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale
Regroupement Québécois des Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions a caractère sexuel
Sagkeeng Health Center
Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation
Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa
Syndicat des employées et employés nationaux, Local 00392, (The River Local)
Thompson Rivers University Faculty Association, Status of Women Committee
Transition House Association of Nova Scotia

Tri County Women's Centre
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs
Union of Northern Workers
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter
Walk 4 Justice
West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund
Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle
Women for a Just and Healthy Planet
Women of Diverse Origins
Women's Legal Education and Action Fund
Women's World 2011
YMCA Canada / A Turning Point for Women
YWCA Yellowknife
Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council
Yukon Status of Women Council

Individuals

Amy Bombay
Tina Bunnie
Monique Charlebois
Linda Christiansen-Ruffman
Elizabeth Dorion
Victoria Gibb-Carsley
Kimberley Henry
Carol Hughes, Member of Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing
Shannon Kraska
Hélène LeBlanc, Member of Parliament, LaSalle—Émard
Brian Masse, Member of Parliament, Windsor West
Rebecca Megyesi
Kelly Megyesi
Jane Moseley
Jane Stinson
Ruth Newell
Lyanne Ruest
Daphne Young

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



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500-342 Water Street
Vancouver, BC
V6B 1B6

Ph: 604-684-0231
Fx: 604-684-5726

April 20, 2012

The Honourable Robert Douglas Nicholson
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H8

Sent via facsimile: 613-992-7910

Re: Renewal of funding authority from Treasury Board for the Aboriginal Justice Strategy

Dear Minister Nicholson:

We are extremely concerned that the federal Budget tabled March 29, 2012 made no reference to the renewal of the Aboriginal Justice Strategy. The Aboriginal Justice Strategy is a fundamental community-level program, widely supported by First Nations and Aboriginal communities across Canada since 1991. As you are aware, the funding authority from Treasury Board for the Aboriginal Justice Strategy ended March 31, 2012.

The program is essential to on-going efforts to keep communities safe through the provision of services to our citizens and particularly to our children and victims of crime. If the Aboriginal Justice Strategy is not renewed, more than 250 justice programs will be forced to close their doors across Canada. Many of the services these programs provide to over 670 Aboriginal communities across Canada will halt. Our communities continue to work hard to strengthen our governance and in many cases to assume greater responsibility for the development and administration of justice in our communities. The Aboriginal Justice Strategy has been an important pillar to this continuing work.

The First Nations Leadership Council is deeply disturbed with the increasing number of our citizens in jail; ending the Aboriginal Justice Strategy would have devastating consequences to families and to our communities. We are aware that many community justice programs are being forced to issue lay-off notices to staff and will soon be forced to close their doors.

We strongly support the Aboriginal Justice Strategy and the many vitally important community programs delivered under this initiative.

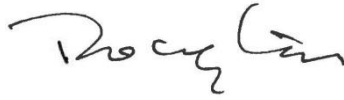
We urgently request your immediate response detailing the efforts of your office to secure the renewal of the funding authority from Treasury Board and subsequently a timeline for the release of funding to the many community justice programs under the Aboriginal Justice Strategy.

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT:



Grand Chief Edward John



Chief Douglas White III Kwulasultun



Dan Smith

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS:



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Bob Chamberlin



Chief Marilyn Baptiste

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:



Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould

CC: Mr. Jack Harris, Member of Parliament
J.harris@parl.gc.ca
mcu@justice.gc.ca

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL CHIEF**BUREAU DU CHEF NATIONAL**

Assembly of First Nations

Assemblée des Premières Nations



March 7, 2012

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
President
Union of BC Indian Chiefs
209 – 345 Yellowhead Highway
Kamloops, BC V2H 1H1

Dear Grand Chief Phillip:

On behalf of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), I want to convey my sincere appreciation for your participation as a speaker at the AFN National Justice Forum held on February 21 - 23, 2012 in Vancouver, BC.

The Forum provided a key opportunity for national and regional First Nations organizations, frontline justice workers, key stakeholders, and representatives from federal and provincial governments in attendance to exchange perspectives and knowledge, and to discuss successes, challenges and current issues affecting Indigenous people in advancing justice for all.

The AFN has received wonderful feedback on the event and we appreciate your contribution as a speaker in helping us achieve a successful Forum. We are preparing a final report on the Forum and will send you a copy in the coming months.

Thank you once again.

Respectfully,

Shawn A-in-chut Atleo
National Chief



FEB 27 2012

Grand Chief Phillip Stewart
Member of Braidwood Recommendations
Implementation Committee (BRIC)
President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs
500 – 342 Water Street
Vancouver BC V6B 1B6

Dear Grand Chief Stewart:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to the Braidwood Recommendations Implementation Committee (BRIC). The participation and assistance of the BRIC members with the implementation of recommendations stemming from Justice Braidwood's June 2009 report: *Restoring Public Confidence: Restricting the Use of Conducted Energy Weapons in British Columbia* was invaluable.

The task before the BRIC committee was enormous and the success of the committee's work hinged on the commitment of its members to collaborate to ensure safe communities and accountable policing.

Police Services Division (PSD) in consultation with BRIC, developed *BC Provincial Policing Standards (BCPPS)* for police use of Conducted Energy Weapons (CEWs). I have approved the attached *BCPPS* developed through the BRIC process and they are now binding on an entity. All *BCPPS* can be found on the Police Services Division website as follows:
http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/police_services/standards/index.htm

Thank you once again for your involvement in this very important initiative.

Sincerely,

Shirley Bond
Minister of Justice
and Attorney General

Ministry of
Justice

Office of the
Minister of Justice
and Attorney General

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Enclosures:

BCPPS 1.2.1P Intermediate Weapon and Restraint Approval Process

BCPPS 1.3.1 CEW Threshold and Circumstances of Use

BCPPS 1.3.2 Approved CEW Models

BCPPS 1.3.3 Internal CEW Controls and Monitoring

BCPPS 1.3.4 Medical Assistance to CEW Discharges

BCPPS 1.3.5 CEW Testing

BCPPS 3.2.1 CEW Operator Training

BCPPS 3.2.2 Crisis Intervention De-escalation Training

pc: Mr. Clayton Pecknold
Ms. Lynne McInally