



News Release

June 3, 2019

National Inquiry into MMIWG Report Release: We Demand Immediate Action from Canada

(Algonquin Territory/Gatineau, QC – June 3, 2019) - Violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people continues to devastate families and communities across Turtle Island. Today, as the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls releases its final report, the Coalition on MMIWG2S in BC calls on the federal and provincial governments to take immediate action in implementing the recommendations of this report.

"We have always known this was a genocide; an Indigenous femicide. The violence we face happens in all aspects of our lives — at every level, in every institution, in every interaction. Canada must immediately respond to all the calls for justice in the National Inquiry report and stop the genocide against Indigenous and girls," says **Sophie Merasty**, sister of Rose Merasty and member of the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre.

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated, "For too long we have waited for action on this issue, and this report covers much of what we already know. We need safe and accessible housing, transportation, and services for Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people. We need to address the "Canadian Genocide" — it's the worst form of discrimination that has continued over hundreds of years and into today with the blatant sexism and racism that is rampant in this country. We need a child welfare system that seeks to reunite families, not to tear them apart in a continuation of the legacy of residential schools. We need this change today, we cannot wait any longer."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the UBCIC, stated, "The Federal Liberals are ramming through a controversial pipeline expansion whose industrial man-camps will further put Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people at risk, and yet they say they are a feminist government? With the release of this report, we know that we must see a dedicated budget and action plan for the implementation of these recommendations before the Federal election this fall."

Janice Abbott, CEO of Atira Women's Resource Society, stated, "We support the strong and necessary language used in the report and call on all Canadians to set aside their stereotypes and fear to embrace the recommendations in support of a kinder, stronger, more inclusive Canada, one that holds close not only the women who have been disappeared and their families and loved ones, but all First Nations, Metis and Inuit women everywhere – those struggling to survive right now in a climate of profound anti-Indigenous racism and misogyny, whose children continue to be stolen by the State and

who continue to be vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation. This is not our past. This is our present. Change is already too late. There is no time to waste.”

Laurel McBride, of Vancouver Rape Relief and Women’s Shelter stated, "We are pleased to see the call for the state to take all necessary measures to prevent and hold accountable those responsible for violence against Indigenous women, two spirit, gay and transgender people; for the implementation of a guaranteed annual livable income; and for programs and services to promote the safety and security of those in the sex industry. We urge all levels of government to take seriously Reclaiming Power and Place’s findings and to make the implementation of these calls for justice an immediate priority."

Regional Chief Terry Teegee, of the BC Assembly of First Nations, stated, “The recommendations outlined in this report must be quickly and fully addressed to bring about a prompt end to the ongoing genocide of our people. While many of the social issues have been known for decades, we have continued to experience apathy, and outright hostility at times, as we have worked towards collaboration and progress within the Canadian justice and social services systems – this must end now.”

Jenny Kwan, MP for Vancouver East, stated, "The federal government must commit to implementing all the recommendations with dedicated resources and a time line that is publicly accountable. Anything less would be disrespectful to all those who have shared their stories and advocated for justice."

Representatives from the **Neskonlith Indian Band Chief & Council** spoke with unity, noting that “Thousands of MMIWG Survivors & Families across the Nations have shared their stories, now is the time for action!”

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