



*A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO END VIOLENCE
AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS*

UPDATED DRAFT - FOR FULL DISCUSSION & INPUT



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BACKGROUND

There is an immediate and pressing need to seek justice for Indigenous women and girls in Canada and ensure that they have the same opportunities to fully enjoy their rights, regardless of where they reside. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is well aware of the unacceptable levels of violence against Indigenous women and girls and is committed to action. An effective strategy must include full commitment and participation from all levels of government including First Nations, civil society and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Our actions must be able to ensure justice for women and girls who are or have been victims of violence, make changes to laws and policies that allow these problems to persist, ensure the availability of adequate support services and generate a fundamental societal shift that will no longer allow epidemic levels of violence against Indigenous women and girls to continue.

The AFN is the national political organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada. This includes more than 800,000 citizens living in 633 First Nation communities, as well as remote, rural and urban areas. The AFN is an advocacy organization for First Nations which advances First Nation priorities and objectives as mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

Through resolution and the direction of First Nations, the AFN has been mandated to address the critical situation of violence, disappearance, and murder of countless First Nations women and girls.

At the 2012 Annual General Assembly, over 1,800 Chiefs and First Nations citizens made a pledge to “live violence free and to personally work to achieve safety and security for all Indigenous peoples – women and men, girls and boys.” This pledge has also been taken by thousands of Canadians and is available on the AFN’s website www.afn.ca. At the 2012 Council of the Federation, Premiers took up this pledge as a reminder in their professional and personal lives of their responsibility to ensure the safety of Indigenous women and girls.

The pledge is a clear recognition that ending violence and ensuring the safety and security of all citizens – particularly those most vulnerable – is everyone’s responsibility.



CONTEXT

Indigenous women and girls are five times more likely to experience violence than any other population in Canada. The numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women are staggering and increasing every year. It is through the efforts of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) that a picture has emerged of the magnitude of this problem. Based on their concerted research, NWAC estimates that roughly 600 Indigenous women and girls in Canada have gone missing or have been murdered over the last two decades. The majority of these cases remain unsolved. Community based workers estimate that these numbers are up to four times higher.

Through their research, NWAC sought to create greater awareness of violence against First Nations women, as well as broaden the conversation and research from a focus on domestic and family related violence to examine broader, societal forces. "The initial research question of the initiative boldly challenged the context in which violence impacts Aboriginal women in that it asked specifically: What are the circumstances, root causes and trends leading to racialized, sexualized violence against Aboriginal women in Canada?"¹

A number of historical, socio-economic and legal realities have come together to generate the conditions that allow violence against Indigenous women and girls to persist.

Indigenous women have always held leadership roles within their respective families and societies. Their participation was central to the safety and security of their families and community members. Women in some pre-contact traditional societies, such as the Haudenosaunee, had the power to appoint and remove the Chiefs. Indigenous governance systems had established processes to deal with violence in a way that continued to support families and the community. However, these traditional systems have been eroded over time due to the imposition of foreign governance and justice systems, federal government interference, legislation and policies – reaching far back to the development of Canada and continuing to today. Key among these is displacement of Indigenous peoples and dispossession of our lands, breaking up families by targeting children through the Indian Residential Schools and the broken child welfare system and the discrimination, assimilation and enfranchisement of Indigenous women through registration provisions of the *Indian Act*.

As a result, Indigenous women and girls have been pushed to the margins more so than non-Indigenous counterparts, especially within urban settings. For Indigenous women, violence is not only seen in the context of victimization but it is also part of a cycle that is perpetuated by their overrepresentation in criminal justice and correctional systems. The 2012 Public Safety Canada report, *Marginalized: The Aboriginal Women's experience in Federal Corrections*, and the March 2013 report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator, *Spirit Matters: Aboriginal People and the Corrections and*

¹ 2010, Native Women's Association of Canada. What Their Stories Tell Us: Research findings from the Sisters In Spirit initiative.



Conditional Release Act, underscore these facts. While Aboriginal people account for just four per cent of the Canadian population, one in three females in the federal correctional system is Aboriginal. In addition, over the last 10 years, the representation of Aboriginal women in the prison system has increased by nearly 90 per cent, making them the fastest-growing offender group.

For many Indigenous women, involvement in the criminal justice system is the result of a complex set of collective and individual life circumstances marked with violence and poverty. Consequently, upon entering federal correctional institutions, many Aboriginal women present with a range of programming needs including culturally appropriate and gender appropriate programming regarding life skills; parenting skills; education; employment; alcohol and substance abuse; anger management; and spiritual programming. In addition, a number of Indigenous women may present with a need for mental health care and treatment.

The high rates of First Nation children in state care (8 times that of non-First Nation children) and chronic underfunding of First Nation child welfare services introduces additional vulnerabilities to violence. In addition, women and girls often face economic and educational disadvantages which make them vulnerable to violence. Compounding these indignities is the widespread silence of mainstream Canadian society and media on violence against Indigenous women and girls.

All of these factors have worked together to develop a societal narrative that allows violence against Indigenous women to persist. Just one example is the perception that women working in the sex trade are leading “high risk lifestyles” and are therefore less likely to garner police and media attention. Consequently, the violence that they experience has become normalized and, in some cases, almost expected.

The safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women and girls is integral to ensuring healthy and prosperous Indigenous families, communities and nations. Clearly, the factors that have led to the current rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls are complex and intersecting. Therefore, our responses must be similarly comprehensive and far-reaching.



A NATIONAL PUBLIC COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

The AFN, NWAC, First Nations, Indigenous women's organizations and families of murdered and missing Indigenous women have been long advocating for a Royal Commission or National Public Inquiry on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls, including the circumstances around those that have been murdered or are missing.

An independent National Public Commission of Inquiry on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls must focus on developing action plans to address violence and the factors that lead to it, inclusive and reflective of the perspectives of Indigenous women, First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities, and the families of missing and murdered women.

Such a Commission could:

- Ensure an open and transparent examination of socio-economic, political and historical factors and their current manifestation within the child welfare, justice and corrections systems that lead to increased vulnerability;
- Examine police practices and protocols with regards to investigations in incidences where Indigenous women are reported missing, communications with families and among and between jurisdictions;
- Examine and build on the substantial – and often unimplemented – recommendations made in previous commissions, inquiries, reports and task forces (such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Manitoba Justice Inquiry , National Aboriginal Women's Summits, etc.) with a focus on identifying critical barriers to their implementation and strategies to overcome these;
- Examine experiences, supports and strategies in urban centres;
- Provide special focus on the North and the unique perspectives and experiences of Northern First Nations and Inuit communities;
- Review innovative practices and community-based supports in preventing violence and achieving reconciliation; and,
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the impacts and underlying causes of violence.

Support for a National Public Commission of Inquiry has been growing and social justice organizations, church groups and international human rights bodies have lent their voices to this call. In April 2013, Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs also agreed to call upon the federal government to initiate a National Public Inquiry.

A National Public Commission of Inquiry is critical for accountability and to create change. However, without a strong and actionable national strategy and plan for implementation, change will continue to be delayed. In order to compel concerted actions and efforts, a National Action Plan is urgently required.



EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A National ACTION PLAN

The best and most successful efforts to prevent and end violence against Indigenous women and girls are grounded in communities, are inclusive of the voices of women and Elders, and respect the jurisdiction of First Nation governments. Communities are best able to coordinate, support and mobilize the appropriate people, including leadership, frontline workers, volunteers, families, youth, service providers and external supports to create safer homes and environments.

In February 2012, the AFN convened a National Justice Forum to bring together First Nation leadership, citizens, community justice workers, activists and Elders, federal and provincial policy makers and police representatives. Among other priorities related to justice, this gathering was an opportunity to foster dialogue and seek input on an action plan intended to build on tools and partnerships to create and sustain safe and secure communities.

Building on these recommendations and in response to Resolution 01-2012 passed in Toronto, Ontario during the 2012 Annual General Assembly, the AFN worked with the Native Women's Association of Canada to co-host a National Forum on Community Safety and Ending Violence on April 9 and 10, 2013. Over 380 participants attended the Forum, including leaders, community-based justice workers, government officials and families of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls.

The intent of the Forum was to seek input into the development of National Action Plan to end violence containing concrete and tangible actions for all levels of government and building on successful and innovative initiatives. In addition, the Forum featured a number of speakers and participants engaged directly in action planning, providing written recommendations in small groups and on their own.

Overwhelmingly participants at the National Forum wanted to move towards action.

To build on the experiences and insight of participants, the AFN posed a number of questions to guide the development of a strategy. Participants identified a number of critical actions needed to take place within a number of themes, including: addressing structural violence and systemic racism; building strong and healthy communities; cultural connections and resiliency; strengthening partnership and awareness; intergovernmental relationships and coordination; and accountability.



THEMES AND ACTIONS

Priority themes and actions are outlined below. Activities are described at a high-level, to enable jurisdictions, communities, organizations and individuals to design their own tactics or specific initiatives to meet the desired outcomes.

ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND SYSTEMIC RACISM

Indigenous women experience social and economic inequality and institutionalized discrimination through legislation and approaches of institutions, such as schools, child and family services, police, courts and jails. These all leave them more at risk for violence.

| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Legislative and policy change | Improved quality of life through implementation, protection and enforcement of Treaties and rights of Indigenous peoples | Implement and fulfill all Treaties on a Treaty-by-Treaty basis. | Federal and provincial/territorial governments; First Nation governments |
| | | Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) through creating implementation strategies and workplans with clear mandates and timelines. | Federal and provincial/territorial governments; First Nation governments |
| | | Support communities to displace the Indian Act with their own laws. | Federal government; First Nation governments |
| | | Strengthen and support community-based solutions and development of legislation. | Federal and provincial/territorial governments; First Nation governments |
| | | Pursue relationship and policy principles that restore the role of Indigenous women and girls in decision-making, policy and strategy development. | Federal and provincial/territorial governments; First Nation governments |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| Improved Support to Victims and Families | Improved access to justice for victims of violence and their families and procedures that ensure that perpetrators are held to account | <p>Ensure an effective and responsive justice system which supports justice, restitution, and healing for victims of violence and their families and communities.</p> <p>Recognize and support the full implementation of First Nations' jurisdiction over justice systems, institutions and law-making.</p> <p>Ensure capacity for First Nations to design and deliver program, services and supports aimed at restoring harmony, balance and wellness in communities</p> | Federal and provincial/territorial governments; First Nation governments |
| Institutional Change | Institutions policies, processes, and practices support – rather than disadvantage and marginalize – First Nation citizens | <p>Enhance supports for First Nation women in mainstream institutions, including direct services and human resources strategies.</p> <p>Launch public education campaign on Indigenous rights that amplifies First Nation women's voices and connects local struggles and builds solidarity.</p> <p>Training and awareness for service providers and police services on First Nation histories and current realities.</p> <p>Monitoring and accountability for police services and correctional institutions and their treatment of Indigenous peoples.</p> | All governments, institutions and civil society actors |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| Public Engagement and Education | <p>Greater awareness among the Canadian public of the root causes of violence, including the impacts of colonization and socio-economic inequalities and a commitment to action.</p> <p>Increased, effective, and accurate media coverage of missing and murdered First Nations women cases</p> | <p>Conduct awareness campaigns to educate the Canadian public on systemic racism and its role in perpetuating the violence experienced by First Nations women</p> <p>Eliminate common misconceptions of First Nations 'realities' through effective education strategies, such as incorporating First Nations' history and cultural content in the public education system</p> <p>Launch public education campaign on Indigenous rights that amplifies First Nation women's voice, connects local struggles and builds solidarity.</p> | <p>Media</p> <p>First Nation governments</p> <p>Federal and provincial/territorial governments;</p> <p>Grassroots organizations</p> <p>First Nations communities</p> <p>NGOs</p> |
| Attitudinal & Behavioural Change / Empowerment | <p>Improved attitudes and behaviour that act as a protective factor against future violence</p> | <p>Through cultural values and customs, create activities that empower women and girls who have experienced violence and facilitate and sustain the healing process.</p> <p>Raise awareness and educate families about violence, what causes it, and how to respond to it.</p> <p>Encourage positive male and female roles models for youth and adults.</p> | <p>First Nations leadership</p> <p>Elders</p> <p>First Nations families</p> |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| Self-determination, decolonization, and nation-rebuilding | Enhanced support and strengthened prevention through culturally appropriate responses that meet needs | <p>Put in place political arrangements of self-government that facilitate and strengthen self-determination and nation re-building.</p> <p>Exercise jurisdiction, rights, and law-making powers, based on an inclusive community consultation process, and implement holistic plans for addressing community needs, safety, and ending violence.</p> | <p>First Nation governments; federal government</p> <p>First Nation governments</p> |
| Connection to the Land and Water | Improved protection and implementation of Aboriginal title and inherent rights to the land and water | <p>Strong advocacy efforts to ensure that inherent rights are respected</p> <p>Raise awareness about the unique and important relationship First Nations have with their land and water. When respected, such relationship is a strong protective factor against violence.</p> <p>Ensure First Nation access to and control over land and revenues derived from resource extraction to improve the quality of life in First Nation communities.</p> | <p>Federal and provincial/territorial governments</p> <p>First Nations leadership</p> |



SUPPORT & CAPACITY - REBUILDING STRONG & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Indigenous Nations and their governing and social systems have been directly attacked through colonial legislation, policies and institutions (such as residential schools, forced relocation and settlement of families and communities, and exclusion of women under the *Indian Act*). The effects of these attacks continue today as communities make concerted efforts to heal.

As part of healing, Indigenous communities are restoring and reviving their traditional protocols and languages. Strong connections to culture and language have protective factors that improve self-esteem and lead to less risk of committing or being the victim of violence.

| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| Community safety, well-being and healing | <p>Enhanced support and strengthened prevention in First Nation communities and for all First Nation citizens regardless of where they reside.</p> <p>Address substance abuse as a contributing factor to violence.</p> | <p>Ensure that community members are included in deliberations on how to end violence, for instance, through round tables where community members can dialogue with their leaders</p> <p>Support community-based and culturally appropriate addictions and healing programs and raise awareness on the harmful effects of substance abuse.</p> <p>Raise awareness on the damaging impacts of lateral violence and address issues in the community in an open and inclusive way</p> <p>Support safe and secure communities through appropriate resources for infrastructure and governance, including safe drinking water and housing</p> <p>Prepare a comprehensive scan and gap analysis of community-based healing supports.</p> <p>Enhance funding available to healing programs.</p> | <p>All governments, community agencies</p> |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| | | <p>Provide opportunities for families of missing and murdered women to spend time together and support each other on their healing journey.</p> <p>Adopt holistic models of well-being that include spiritual, emotional, mental and physical needs and start from the resilience and strength of First Nation peoples.</p> <p>Develop violence response teams and protocols in communities with community agencies and working closely with the police.</p> <p>Increase capacity building to address substance abuse in communities.</p> <p>Develop and support health promotion strategies that aim to deter young generations from substance abuse.</p> <p>Increase culturally appropriate resources and supports available to families affected by substance abuse.</p> | |
| <p>Resources for programs and services</p> | <p>Enhanced support and strengthened prevention through improved availability of and access to appropriate community services</p> | <p>Provide needs-based, sustainable funding and adequate resources for First Nation women, including core funding for grassroots organizations.</p> <p>Improve funding for community programs and services and strengthen community-based solutions and culturally appropriate frameworks.</p> <p>Improve resources for mental, spiritual and emotional well-being and access to cultural teachings and language instruction.</p> <p>Make more resources available to</p> | <p>All governments</p> |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| | | <p>address mental health issues and addictions in the community.</p> <p>Provide equitable funding for First Nation child and family services to strengthen prevention and keep children in their home communities.</p> <p>Fund on-reserve shelters on par with provincial shelters and ensure availability and accessibility of shelter services for every First Nation woman, man and child who is in need of a safe place.</p> | |
| <p>Data collection/ research</p> | <p>Baseline data and ongoing research into the roots, impacts and remedies of violence</p> | <p>Collect existing data on murdered and missing women and make the national database accessible.</p> <p>Undertake research to shed light on the root causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls.</p> <p>Conduct research to determine the resource needs in communities to implement anti-violence programming.</p> <p>Establish an Indigenous expert advisory committee and clearinghouse function to support the development of community plans and share available information and best practices.</p> <p>Carry out qualitative research so that stories can help inform a deeper understanding of the issues and ways of addressing them.</p> | <p>All governments</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies</p> <p>Academia</p> <p>Community-based researchers</p> <p>First Nation communities</p> <p>NGOs</p> |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| Economic participation and improved outcomes | First Nations women and girls have opportunity to actively participate in the economy | <p>Ensure First Nation access to and control over land and revenues derived from resource extraction to improve the quality of life in First Nation communities.</p> <p>Support access to education, training and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Address the deep poverty faced by First Nation women on and off reserve.</p> | |
| Respect & Self-Esteem | <p>Increased and healthy levels of self-esteem and respect within and among First Nations as a protective factor from violence</p> <p>Decreased levels of lateral violence through enhanced understanding of the context in which it takes place and its detrimental effects</p> | <p>Facilitate activities that engage and support First Nations families to create, enhance and promote respectful environments.</p> <p>Support community driven initiatives that aim to enhance personal and community wellbeing.</p> <p>Encourage male and female healthy role models.</p> <p>Conduct awareness campaigns that educate community members to recognize lateral violence, its detrimental impacts and how to best respond to it.</p> | <p>First Nations leadership</p> <p>Community champions</p> <p>First Nations families</p> <p>Elders</p> <p>Culturally sound service providers</p> |
| Cultural resilience and resurgence – understanding traditional family roles and positive gender roles | <p>First Nations citizens and communities with strong understanding and practice of cultures, traditions and languages</p> <p>Enhanced support and strengthened prevention through responses that meet needs</p> | <p>Foster pride and self-esteem in all First Nation children by providing a strong grounding in First Nation identity, culture, language, and relationships and responsibilities to the land</p> <p>Provide opportunities for First Nation children and youth, especially those who live in urban settings, to connect with their traditional territories, lands and waters</p> | <p>Individuals, knowledge keepers, community agencies, FN governments</p> <p>Individuals, knowledge keepers, community agencies, FN governments</p> |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| | | <p>Raise awareness of First Nation issues and educate all children about the impacts of colonization and First Nation cultures, traditions, and territories as a mandatory part of K-12 curricula.</p> <p>Promote traditional First Nation values, ceremonies, and ways of being which encourage peace and positive behaviour, including kindness, sharing, and respect for difference.</p> <p>Create community-based preventive and healing programs based on cultural teachings, including an understanding of gender balance and traditional family roles.</p> <p>Encourage Elders and leaders to instil knowledge and appreciation of egalitarian gender roles, including two-spirited people, and traditional First Nation family values</p> <p>Support First Nation men in understanding and restoring their traditional roles and taking on their responsibilities as fathers through culturally appropriate programs and supports</p> | <p>Individuals, knowledge keepers, community agencies, all governments</p> <p>Provincial/territorial governments</p> <p>Individuals, knowledge keepers, community agencies, FN governments</p> <p>Community agencies, FN governments</p> <p>Individuals, knowledge keepers, leadership, community agencies, FN governments</p> |
| Support to Families of missing or murdered persons | Recognition and increased support for families of missing and murdered women and girls | <p>Coordinated community plans and dedicated resources to support families in crisis events.</p> <p>Support families of missing and murdered women and girls to hold a National Gathering to ensure their voices inform the actions of leadership in preventing violence.</p> | <p>Federal/provincial/territorial governments</p> <p>First Nations leadership</p> <p>Elders</p> <p>Families of missing and murdered women</p> |
| Family- and child-centered | Improved outcomes for families and children | Place children and their safety and well-being at the centre of activities | First Nation governments, community agencies |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| approach | | <p>and community plans moving forward, including children’s food security, access to safe drinking water, adequate housing, and a healthy natural environment.</p> <p>Ensure the connection of First Nation children to their families, communities and nations, as well as their culture, language, and values.</p> <p>Deliver community-based and culturally appropriate programs to help children recover from experiencing and witnessing violence.</p> <p>Create child-friendly educational materials, including on the history of First Nations-Canada relations from a First Nation perspective.</p> <p>Establish mentoring programs for First Nation youth.</p> <p>Include children and youth in the creation of programming to prevent and stop violence in First Nation communities</p> <p>Stress the importance of adults acting as positive role models for children in their community and the need to model healthy behaviour, relationships, and attitudes.</p> <p>Focus advocacy efforts on family violence and child welfare.</p> <p>Establish a support system and ongoing resources to help families of missing and murdered women.</p> <p>Deliver culturally appropriate programming and make resources available to strengthen healthy and strong families, including parenting</p> | <p>Community agencies, First Nation governments, individuals and families</p> <p>First Nation governments, community agencies</p> <p>Community agencies</p> <p>First Nation governments, community agencies</p> <p>First Nation governments, community agencies</p> <p>Individuals</p> <p>First Nation regional and national organizations</p> <p>All governments, community agencies</p> <p>All governments, community</p> |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| | | <p>programs.</p> <p>Encourage leadership to act as role models and take responsibility for community well-being and mobilizing support and caring within our communities.</p> | <p>agencies</p> <p>Leadership</p> |

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS & AWARENESS

Critical gaps remain in how services in different geographic areas and those run by different governments work with each other to prevent and address violence against Indigenous women and girls. Many institutions have a role to play in creating awareness and preventing violence. This must be done in a way that supports community and individual healing and responds to the needs and direction of Indigenous communities and citizens.

| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| Improved Policing | Improved police response to incidences and reports of violence and missing persons | <p>Work with Indigenous women and Elders to review policies and procedures with a view towards fostering respectful relations.</p> <p>Develop protocols to ensure a more integrated response to missing persons, with strong and immediate cross-jurisdictional coordination.</p> <p>Modify access to and protocol for calling “Amber Alerts” to ensure timely response.</p> <p>Provide cultural sensitivity and Indigenous awareness training to police officers.</p> <p>Strengthen partnerships and communications with communities and families of missing and murdered</p> | <p>Law enforcement agencies</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies, community agencies, First Nation governments</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies, communities</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies</p> |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| | | <p>women.</p> <p>Create effective accountability mechanisms and community oversight to address police brutality</p> <p>Create adequate funding arrangements for First Nation police services.</p> <p>Gather baseline information by changing reporting practices to include ethnicity and create a unified police database.</p> <p>Create a National Missing Person's Office.</p> <p>Encourage the recruitment of First Nation women to increase the First Nation representation on police forces.</p> <p>Create and implement action plans for police services to address racism and sexism.</p> <p>Create harm-reduction and protective strategies for Indigenous women and girls engaged in the sex trade.</p> | <p>Provincial and federal governments</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies</p> <p>Federal government</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies, service organizations, sex trade workers</p> |
| <p>Knowledge Sharing</p> | <p>Improved knowledge sharing among First Nations which maximize the benefits of successful community initiatives and overall education and awareness efforts</p> | <p>Develop an information sharing hub for communities to share successful initiatives, and provide mutual support. Such a mechanism can also provide information and resources to educate First Nations on issues of violence and how to best respond to it.</p> <p>Utilize social media to maximize networking and knowledge sharing efforts</p> | <p>First Nations leadership</p> <p>Community members</p> <p>First Nations families</p> <p>Elders</p> |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| Cross-Jurisdictional Commitment & Implementation | Effective, sustainable, coordinated, and equal engagement of First Nations, Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments in planning, developing, implementing and supporting strategies/initiatives that address the root causes and perpetuating factors of violence against First Nations women and girls | <p>Develop a UNDRIP implementation strategy with the full and effective participation of First Nations leadership and grassroots organizations, as well as adequate support from all levels of government.</p> <p>Identify and implement effective mechanisms that facilitate community input in the development of action plans or strategies aiming to address and prevent violence against First Nations women and girls.</p> | <p>First Nations leadership</p> <p>Federal/provincial/territorial governments</p> <p>NGOs</p> <p>First Nation citizens</p> |
| Coordinated Response System and Partnerships | An effective, prompt, multi-sectoral and coordinated response system is in place | <p>Develop an inter-jurisdictional response plan that comes in effect once a missing person is reported (immediate response).</p> <p>Create a national missing person's office to coordinate all the activities and disseminate information to families (ongoing response).</p> <p>Establish multi-sectoral partnerships to facilitate coordinated responses across provincial and territorial jurisdictions and internationally.</p> <p>Support and facilitate culturally appropriate training for front line workers.</p> <p>Increase profile, awareness and responses to human trafficking of Indigenous women and girls.</p> <p>Create one-stop service windows and coordinate resources more effectively</p> | <p>First Nations leadership</p> <p>Federal/provincial/territorial governments</p> <p>Local/provincial police</p> <p>RCMP</p> <p>Service providers</p> |



| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| Ensuring coordination and support to First Nation citizens in urban, remote and Northern areas | Improved outcomes and reduction in all forms of violence experienced by First Nation citizens with specialized responses to those living in urban settings, remote areas and the North | <p>Develop an urban strategy that recognizes the unique needs of First Nation citizens and their increased vulnerability to violence.</p> <p>Increase support for friendship centres.</p> <p>Ensure equal access to justice and policing for First Nations citizens living in rural and remote areas.</p> | <p>Federal/provincial/territorial governments</p> <p>Municipal governments</p> <p>First Nations leadership</p> <p>Friendship Centres</p> <p>First Nations youth</p> |
| Emergency Preparedness | Improved coordination, prevention and response measures to violence in the context of emergency preparedness and management | <p>Proactive planning and emergency funding to prevent violence in emergencies.</p> <p>Ensure community access to an emergency fund in case a crisis arises.</p> | <p>Federal/provincial/territorial governments</p> <p>First Nations leadership</p> <p>Elders</p> <p>Service providers</p> <p>Emergency Relief teams</p> <p>NGOs</p> |



ACCOUNTABILITY

A terrible tolerance for violence against and among Indigenous people has persisted in Canada for too long. Real accountability is needed from governments, institutions and individuals to stop this violence, take responsibility for actions needed to address past violence, and work towards preventing it in the future.

| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| National Inquiry | Cross-sectoral effort to document violence against Indigenous women and girls and make recommendations to end it | Establish a National Inquiry to investigate the epidemic of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls in Canada and to propose how to move forward based on the direction from the families of missing and murdered women | Federal government |
| First Nations Dialogue, Collaboration & Unified Voice | Enhanced dialogue and cohesion among First Nations peoples to work in unanimity to address the root causes and perpetuating factors of violence against First Nations women and girls | Identify mechanisms to facilitate dialogue and strategy planning and implementation among First Nations Engage in public activities that strengthen advocacy efforts and raise awareness about the immediate need to address the unacceptable levels of violence against First Nations women and girls | First Nations leadership Elders Youth Grassroots organizations |
| First Nations Leadership Responsibility & Accountability | Effective and active First Nations leadership engagement and accountability | Facilitate dialogue between leadership and community members to ensure that high-level decisions are informed by community's needs. Develop mechanisms to hold leadership accountable for their role in addressing violence against First Nations women and girls In cases in which the leadership and/or Band Council members may be implicated, make available appropriate supports and resources to victims and their families, as well as an impartial recourse mechanism to | First Nations leadership Grassroots Elders Community members |

| Area of focus | Outcome (s) | Activity | Responsibility |
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| | | report and address such incidents Affirm the personal commitment of leaders to live violence-free and make the safety of all citizens a priority in their nations | |

IMPLEMENTATION

First Nation citizens and communities will only fully realize their rights once clear action has been taken to ensure they are safe from violence.

All governments need to commit to action and establish mechanisms to measure progress and ensure accountability.

A number of existing forums could be used to ensure progress, including the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers of Justice and Public Safety and the Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders working group.

Additional mechanisms should be created, such as a national working group with corresponding regional input, to ensure ongoing First Nations input into achievement of the National Action Plan.

Structural change and making reparations for centuries of colonization and its impacts takes time. However, there are a number of recommendations and areas of action from the previous list that can be done immediately to start to create change today:

- Investment in front-line services and shelters on-reserve and in rural areas so that **every First Nations woman and girl experiencing violence has access to immediate support.**
- Coordinated strategy inclusive of service providers and First Nations governments to **prevent and address violence against Indigenous women and girls in urban centres.**
- Develop compulsory protocols between and among police services to share information and **immediately respond to and appropriately investigate reports of missing persons by Indigenous families.**
- Create a **resource centre/hub for First Nation communities** of prevention, awareness and response materials.



- Support a **National Gathering** led by and for the families of murdered and missing Indigenous women.
- Call a **National Public Commission of Inquiry** into Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls, including those that have disappeared or have been murdered.
- Provide **Local Community Action Grants** to support the development of **Community Action Plans & Emergency Management Teams** in every First Nation community so they are equipped to intervene in incidences of violence.
- Compel police services to work together to **produce verifiable numbers on incidences of violence** against Indigenous women and girls, so that progress can be measured.
- Provide **sustainable, adequate resources to First Nations Police Services**.
- Create a **National public awareness and prevention campaign** on violence against Indigenous women and girls.

