



SAFETY AND SECURITY OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND THE NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS (MMIWG)

OVERVIEW

For many years, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) pressed for the establishment of a national inquiry into the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The AFN supported the establishment of a national inquiry which would support families and ensure that all governments and policing services met their obligations to protect the fundamental human rights of Indigenous women and girls.

In September 2016, the Government of Canada established an independent National Inquiry under the federal *Inquiries Act*. The interim report of the National Inquiry entitled “*Our Women and Girls are Sacred*” was released on November 1, 2017.

On June 3, 2019, the Commissioners of the National Inquiry released their Final Report entitled *Reclaiming Power and Place*. The Final Report is 2 volumes in length and includes 11 chapters which explore the many intersectional issues that contribute to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The Final Report also contains 4 overarching findings relating to rights recognition, justice, security, health and wellness, encompassing 231 *Calls for Justice*. The Final Report’s *Calls for Justice* are directed to governments (including Indigenous governments), institutions, industries, service providers, partners and all Canadians.

More than 2,380 people participated in the National Inquiry’s hearings. Four hundred and sixty-eight family members and survivors of violence shared their experiences and recommendations at 15 Community Hearings. Over 270 family members and survivors shared their stories in 147 private, or in-camera, sessions. Approximately 750 people shared evidence through statement gathering, and 819 people created artistic expressions to become part of the National Inquiry’s legacy archive. Another 83 expert witnesses, Elders, and knowledge keepers, front-line workers, and officials provided testimony in nine institutional and expert and knowledge keeper hearings.

The Commissioners also released a supplementary report entitled, “*A Legal Analysis of Genocide*,” which explains the Inquiry’s finding that Canada’s treatment of First Nations people is an on-going genocide. The Commissioners found that colonial violence, as well as racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people, are embedded in institutions like the health care system and the justice system, or in the laws, policies and structures of Canadian society and that these actions amount to genocide.

UPDATE

On June 3, 2019, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the federal government would commit to conducting a thorough review of the Final Report and developing and implementing a National Action Plan to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, LGBTQ and two-spirited people. The federal government has also committed to working with Indigenous partners to determine next steps, and to include the perspectives and full participation of Indigenous women and girls, LGBTQ, two spirited people as well as family members of victims and survivors of violence. The Prime Minister also stated that the federal government would continue to work with the provinces, territories, and municipalities to encourage cooperation across all orders of government in responding to the Final Report.

Since the release of the Final Report, Chiefs in Assembly have adopted two resolutions in support of the full implementation of the *Calls for Justice* and the development of a First Nations women led National Action Plan. Resolution 13/2019 *“Implementation of Recommendations from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls”* directs the AFN to call upon the federal government to fully and immediately implement the *Calls for Justice*; to fully and meaningfully implement the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration); support a comprehensive national-level integrated action plan to eliminate violence against Indigenous women; to work with Indigenous front-line women’s organizations; and to call upon all

governments to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples to develop and implement a National Action Plan to address violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Chiefs-in-Assembly also adopted Resolution 67/2019, *“Development and Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA”*. Resolution 67/2019 directs the AFN to call upon the federal government to ensure that all engagement on a National Action Plan is carried out using the “Families First” approach; seek resources to develop a First Nations led National Action Plan; and to call upon the federal government to ensure the AFN Women’s Council participates in the selection of any representative appointed to implement the National Inquiry’s Final Report recommendations.

Since the release of the National Inquiry’s Final Report, the AFN Women’s Council has held technical meetings to review the Final Report and all 231 recommendations. The AFN Women’s Council is developing a response to the National Inquiry’s *Calls for Justice* as well as First Nations specific recommendations. The AFN Women’s Council is also involved in ongoing discussions with representatives from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) regarding engagement for the development of a First Nations led National Action Plan.

NEXT STEPS

- The AFN will continue to advocate for immediate measures to ensure the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S, as well as continued investments for culturally appropriate healing and support services for survivors and families.
- In accordance with Resolution 13/2019 *“Implementation of Recommendations from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls”* and Resolution 67/2019, *“Development and*

Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA”, the AFN will continue to advocate for the immediate and full implementation of the National Inquiry’s *Calls for Justice* as well as advocate for a First Nation women led National Action Plan to address violence against First Nations women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA.

