



Native Women's Association of Canada

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NWAC Disappointed Once Again

Ottawa, ON. (March 7, 2014) The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) wishes to express its' disappointment and frustration at the report recently released by the *Special Parliamentary Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women* that was touted to be the panacea for addressing the high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, including their disappearances and murder. In spite of the call by many witnesses, who appeared before the Committee, to hold a National Public Inquiry and to implement a National Action Plan, their recommendations fail to appear in the Final Report.

“This would have been an opportune time for the Government to demonstrate to all Canadians, and to our International colleagues as well, that it truly is committed to ending all forms of violence against Aboriginal women and girls. This report fails to show the needed commitment and resources to adequately address this ongoing tragedy – a tragedy that is a reflection on Canada as a whole,” said NWAC president, Michele Audette

Early on, the Special Parliamentary Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls offered the role of special advisor and expert witness to NWAC but this role fell short of NWAC's expectations vis-à-vis their participation. Instead, NWAC lobbied the Committee to be granted ex-officio status to assist the Committee in developing its' work plan, identifying and questioning key witnesses and to participate in developing the final report. Even as a non-voting member of the Committee, NWAC with its' extensive knowledge and experience on the issue of violence against women and girls would have been a valuable asset throughout the Committee's mandate. Consequently, NWAC's involvement with the Committee has been minimal.

“It truly is unfortunate that this opportunity has been lost; on paper it looks like we are the special advisor and expert witness, but what we received was tokenism and no real engagement,” stated President Audette. *“The committee report does contain a few nuggets of hope, but there is no commitment to substantial change and no new funding dollars to ensure appropriate actions are taken. This Committee, like the previous Committee that was established to address violence against Indigenous women and girls, again fails to fully address the issue of violence against Indigenous women, fails the families of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls and, fails the Canadians who want to see this matter resolved once and for all. NWAC is deeply disappointed in this outcome.”*

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On February 13, 2014 NWAC presented to the Prime Minister's office more than 23, 000 signatures calling for a National Public Inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada and a National Action Plan to address violence against them. On that same date, the Honorable Carolyn Bennett (LIB) and the Honourable Niki Ashton (NDP) presented the official petition into the House of Commons. All provincial and territorial premiers have indicated support for a National Public Inquiry and National Action Plan. NWAC continues to collect signatures from concerned Canadians calling for an Inquiry.

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well being of First Nations and Métis women within First Nation, Métis and Canadian societies. As a national organization representing Aboriginal women since 1974, NWAC's mandate is to achieve equality for all Aboriginal women in Canada.

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