



Native Women's Association of Canada

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NWAC launches their report -
*Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls: Literature
Review and Key Informant Interviews***

(October 16, 2014) (Ottawa, ON) - The Native Women's Association of Canada's (NWAC) has just released their comprehensive report on the trafficking of Aboriginal women and girls in Canada for sexual exploitation. The report is part of several reports that were funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation, along with their National Task Force Report. To access all the reports, please go to:

<http://canadianwomen.org/reports/trafficking>

NWAC's report is solutions-oriented and provides many recommendations and practices to help prevent trafficking and help Aboriginal women and girls to exit situations of sexual exploitation. The report also helps shed light on the nature of Aboriginal women and girls' vulnerabilities to trafficking, and explores the larger societal factors that contribute to their over-representation in sex trafficking in Canada. Service providers, government, and those who engage with and support trafficked Aboriginal women and girls will find the resource valuable for the insights, strategies, and recommendations.

The report contains a comprehensive literature review, key information interviews, and surveys. NWAC worked with women who were experiential survivors, service providers, officers of the law, and judicial officers to gather information and stories. The report covers root causes, recruitment, prevention, exit strategies, legal, justice, and policy measures, as well as exploring some current Canadian initiatives into trafficking from a perspective that recognizes the importance of addressing the needs of Aboriginal women and girls.

One of the key findings from the report are that Aboriginal women and girls are over-represented in trafficking; with some research going so far as to find Aboriginal women and girls as the majority of those being sex trafficked in Canada today. Key informants in NWAC's interviews, the survey, and in the literature repeatedly identified the Indian Residential School impacts and intergenerational trauma, systemic poverty, and discrimination as major factors in contributing to increasing vulnerability of Aboriginal women and girls.

The report calls for more initiatives to ensure and promote educational access and success for Aboriginal women and girls as a key preventative measure; and that for Aboriginal women and girls exiting exploitative circumstances, they require non-judgmental attitudes, harm reductionist approaches, culturally-relevant programming, safe housing, long-term counselling, and education and training to make sustainable alternative healthy lifestyles. As a result of its findings and in recognition of the needs and well-being of

trafficked Aboriginal women and girls, NWAC recommends decriminalizing women in prostitution and prosecuting pimps and johns.

“It is our hope that this report and the women’s stories within it will further show the need for public and Government attention, care and protection of trafficked Aboriginal women and girls in Canada,” said Michèle Audette, NWAC President. “We want more for our women and girls – we want a life filled with choices, peace and economic security and a world where our women are valued,” continued Audette.

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.

- 30-

Claudette Dumont-Smith, Executive Director

1 Nicholas Street, 9th Floor

Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7

Toll free 1-800-461-4043

Tel.: 613-722-3033 x. 223

cdumontsmith@nwac.ca