

NWAC PRESSES GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO INCLUDE INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN NATION TO NATION FRAMEWORK

April 17, 2018

OTTAWA, ON – This week the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) is at the United Nations in New York City attending the 17th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Permanent Forum includes conversations related to collective rights to lands, territories, resources and violence against Indigenous women, among others. NWAC impresses on the Government of Canada the necessity to include Indigenous women’s voices in the Nation to Nation framework to bring solutions to the ongoing crisis’ Indigenous women continue to face.

Indigenous women are significantly overrepresented with respect to violence against women in Canada. The statistics are staggering and the safety concerns for Indigenous women continue to increase, placing more and more Indigenous women at risk. Statistics Canada indicates that Indigenous women are almost four times more likely to experience violence than non-indigenous women are. Information gathered from the United States and Mexico indicate Indigenous women in those countries experience alarming similarities in violence experienced by Indigenous women in Canada. Indigenous women are victimized and overrepresented in all forms of gender-based violence and victims of homicide throughout the Americas. The government continues to view these systemic matters as a peripheral issue. If saving the lives of Indigenous women was a priority, statistics would change and confidence levels in the system would rise.

NWAC President Francyne Joe stated, “These statistics aren’t just numbers on a page. Each statistic represents another Indigenous woman that has been victimized. This issue is critical and the risk Indigenous women face each day is not being understood. Physical violence is prominent but the definition of violence goes much deeper. We are talking about human trafficking, psychological violence, economic violence and homicide. Indigenous women are healers and the voices from the women of many Nations are required.”

NWAC was in Peru last week at the Summit of The Americas engaging in direct dialogue with Indigenous leaders, heads of state and governments from throughout the Americas. The issue of systemic violence against Indigenous women permeates entire cultures of Indigenous people throughout the Americas. President Joe added, “It’s not by chance that Indigenous women across the western world are marginalized and victimized. The issue is broad and systemic and the government cannot continue to diminish the value of Indigenous women. Improving this critical situation must include Indigenous women’s voices.”

NWAC will continue to apply pressure on the Government of Canada to be accountable and to include the voices from the women of many Nations. Indigenous women’s voices must have equal representation within the Nation to Nation framework, an end to the Indian Act that will allow for a respectful transition to self-determination and continue to address the high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

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