



NATIVE WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

L'ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES
AUTOCHTONES DU CANADA



Fact Sheet:

Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls in Saskatchewan

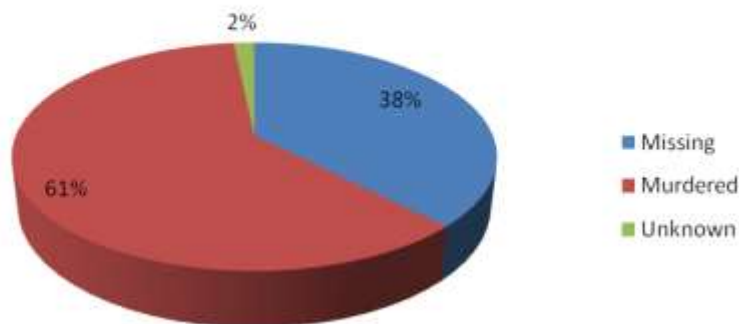
For years, communities have pointed to the high number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. As of March 31, 2010, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has gathered information about 582 cases from across the country. NWAC has worked hard to look at every case, yet we believe there are still many more to document. Based on five years of quantitative research drawn from NWAC's Sisters In Spirit database, this fact sheet examines the situation in Saskatchewan against the national context.

A higher percentage of women and girls are missing in Saskatchewan

There are 61 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Saskatchewan; this accounts for a little over 10% of the national distribution of cases.

In comparison to the national average, Saskatchewan has a much higher percentage of missing women and girls, and has a lower percentage of women and girls who have been murdered. Nationally, 20% of women and girls are missing; in Saskatchewan, 38% of women and girls are missing. An average of 67% of Aboriginal women and girls were killed in Canada, compared to 61% of women and girls killed in Saskatchewan.

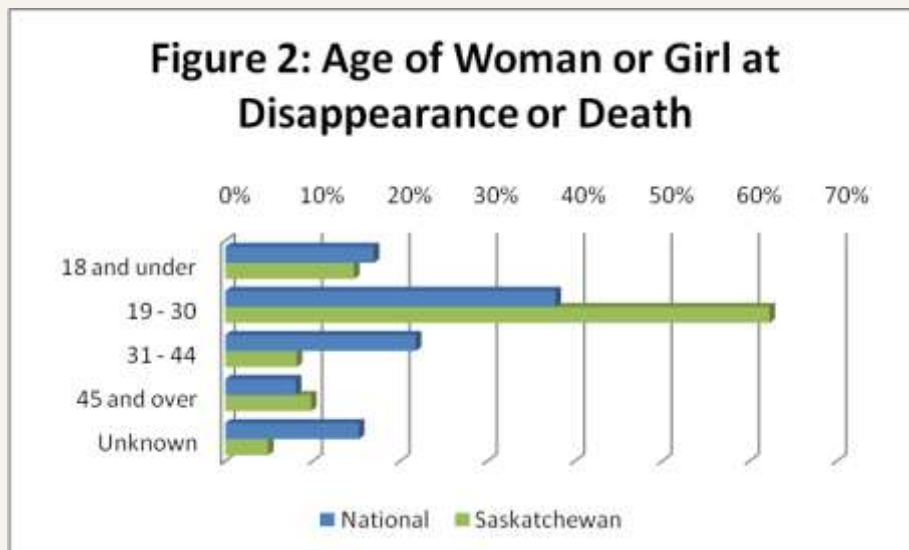
Figure 1: Summary of Cases in Saskatchewan



Source: Calculations by NWAC using data from Sisters In Spirit (SIS) database, 2010.

Majority of cases involve young Aboriginal women and girls

77% of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Saskatchewan are under the age of 31 compared to 55% nationally (see Figure 2).



Source: Calculations by NWAC using data from Sisters In Spirit (SIS) database, 2010.

Greater differences can be seen when examining missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls separately (see Figure 3). Most noticeably, 76% of women and girls aged 19 to 30 were murdered, compared to 44% nationally. A lower percentage of women older than 30 were killed; 10% in Saskatchewan compared to 33% nationally. Of the women who disappeared in Saskatchewan, 17% are 45 years old or older (nationally, 10% are in this age range).

**Figure 3
Missing and Murder Cases by Age**

	Missing		Murdered	
	National	Saskatchewan	National	Saskatchewan
18 and under	24%	22%	17%	11%
19 - 30	36%	39%	44%	76%
31 - 44	21%	13%	24%	5%
45 and over	10%	17%	9%	5%
Unknown	10%	9%	7%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Calculations by NWAC using data from Sisters In Spirit (SIS) database, 2010

96% of missing and murdered women are mothers

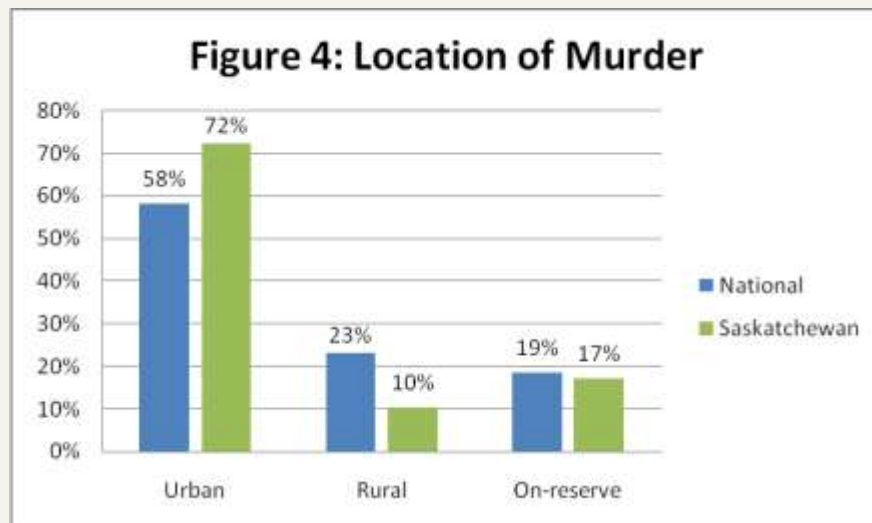
Where this information is known, NWAC's research has identified almost all of the missing and murdered women in Saskatchewan are mothers. The 96% of missing and murdered women in Saskatchewan who are mothers is greater than the national rate of 88%.

More criminal charges laid in Saskatchewan

While only about half (53%) of murder cases in Canada have been cleared by a criminal charge, Saskatchewan has a clearance rate of 78%. Still, 22% of cases of murder remain unsolved in Saskatchewan.

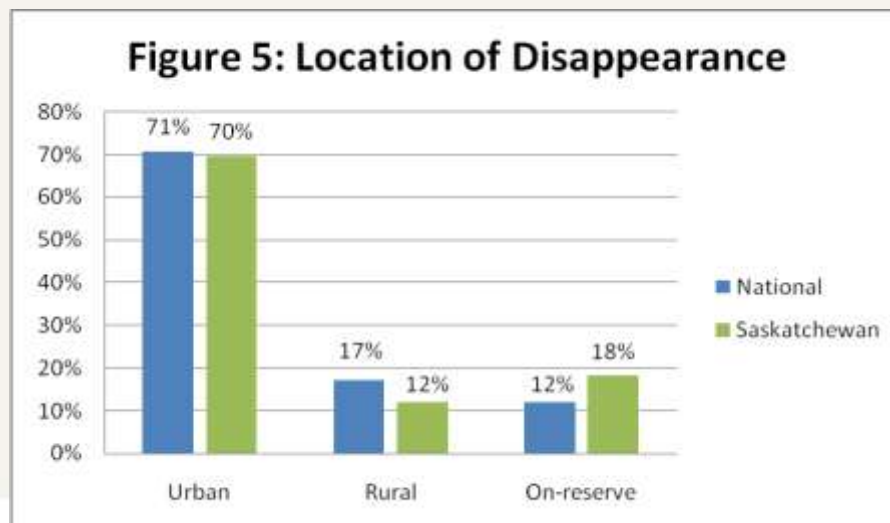
More murders in urban areas than national average.

The majority of cases in Saskatchewan occur in urban areas such as Regina and Saskatoon. 72% of Aboriginal women and girls were murdered in an urban area. While there is no significant difference between the national average and Saskatchewan when it comes to percentages of on-reserve cases, there are far fewer rural cases in Saskatchewan than the rest of Canada.



Source: Calculations by NWAC using data from Sisters In Spirit (SIS) database, 2010.

While the Saskatchewan and national averages are comparable in disappearances in urban areas, there are fewer Aboriginal women and girls who went missing in a rural area (12% in Saskatchewan compared to 17% nationally). There are also a greater number of disappearances occurring on-reserve than the rest of Canada



Source: Calculations by NWAC using data from Sisters In Spirit (SIS) database, 2010.

Majority of murders occur in residences, and on streets, roads, and highways
 In terms of the specific location where a murder or suspicious death occurred, Saskatchewan is comparable to the national data, but with some notable differences.

Figure 6 Location of Murder or Suspicious Death in SIS Database, 2010		
	National	Saskatchewan
Residence	59.4%	50.0%
Public place	6.8%	0.0%
Vehicle (including public transportation)	0.4%	0.0%
Street, road, highway	13.7%	23.1%
Open area	14.5%	15.4%
Other	5.1%	11.5%
Total known locations	100.0%	100.0%
Based on cases in SIS database where this information is known.		
Source: Calculations by NWAC using data from Sisters In Spirit (SIS) database, 2010		

While most murders occurred in residences, the percentage in Saskatchewan is lower than the national average. However, the rate of murders that occurred on streets, roads, highways, and ‘other’ locations in Saskatchewan is higher than the national average indicates (see Figure 6).

Aboriginal women and girls are more likely to be killed by a stranger

Particularly noteworthy in Saskatchewan is the fact that the percentage of Aboriginal women and girls who were murdered by strangers (36%) is significantly higher than the national percentage (16%). However, the percentage of Aboriginal women and girls killed by an acquaintance is lower in Saskatchewan (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 Relationship of Offender in Murder Cases, SIS Database 2010		
	National	Saskatchewan
Partner	17%	17%
Ex-Partner	5%	0%
Family, including all types of family relationships	6%	3%
'John' or criminal relationship	2%	8%
Acquaintance	17%	8%
Stranger	16%	36%
Unknown	36%	28%
Total	100%	100%
Note: Total represents the number of cases in the SIS database for which charges were laid.		
Source: Calculations by NWAC using data from Sisters In Spirit (SIS) database, 2010		

When combined, the data indicate 44% of Aboriginal women and girls were killed by an acquaintance or stranger, and 20% of women and girls in Saskatchewan were killed by someone well-known to them.

In Saskatchewan, the percentage of women and girls killed by a ‘John’ or someone with whom they were in a criminal relationship is four times higher than the national average (8% compared to 2% respectively). Recognizing that women involved in prostitution are extremely vulnerable and experience high levels of violence, NWAC has worked to better understand how this experience relates to cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. To date, however, NWAC has been able to gather information in only a small number of cases. It must be emphasized that prostitution is not a ‘cause’ of violence; rather, many women experience prostitution in the context of limited options and after experiencing multiple forms of trauma and violence.

Cases divided between RCMP and municipal police services

Where this information is known, slightly more cases are handled by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) than municipal police services. In Saskatchewan, 53% of cases occurred in RCMP jurisdiction and 45% took place in urban areas with municipal policing services. Only a small percentage of cases (3%) were handled by multiple police agencies.

For more information, read What Their Stories Tell Us: Research findings from the Sisters In Spirit initiative. This report presents demographic and statistical evidence from NWAC’s Sisters In Spirit database, while situating the issue within the larger context of root causes and ways forward. The report can be found on NWAC’s website at www.nwac.ca.

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