



**Native Women's
Association of Canada**



**L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada**

Taking Action for Justice: Steps to Addressing Systemic Violence toward Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People Amidst a Delayed National Action Plan



Bienvenue Pìjàshìg
Weltasualul Tungasugit
Tansi Bi-zhaazhig
Aanii



Your Presenters



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Elder Roberta Oshkawbewisens

About NWAC



The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) was founded in 1974 based on the collective goal to enhance, promote and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations on & off reserve; status, non-status & disenfranchised & Métis & Inuit women.

Taking A Distinctions Based Approach



- First Nations, Métis and Inuit are distinct and unique identities
- A distinctions-based approach is especially important for addressing the issue of MMIWG
- Also must include a strengths-based approach

“There is a need to utilize Indigenous gender analyses which account for the intersecting forms of violence experienced by Indigenous people of all genders and specifically targeted at women and Two-Spirit people.”

(Barkaskas & Hunt, 2017)

Overview of Webinar



- Setting the Context
 - National Inquiry into MMIWG
 - Key findings from the Final Report
- Findings from NWAC's National Roundtable on Calls to Justice
 - Action for Moving Forward
 - NWAC's 10-point Action Plan
 - Resiliency Center
 - Elder hotline
 - Question and Answer Period
 - Closing prayer

Content Warning

This presentation deals with heavy and potentially triggering and/or (re)-traumatizing material including, but not limited to:

- violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people
- violations of bodily integrity and genocide, and;
- discussion of colonialization and colonialism


If you have any concern for your safety, know that you are not alone. For immediate support (24/7)
Call The Hope for Wellness Help Line:

1-855-242-3310



Setting the context



- The historical and contemporary context of colonialism in Canada is necessary to understand the challenges First Nations, Inuit and Metis People experience
 - Prior to colonization, Indigenous women were highly respected in their families and communities
 - Colonialism signaled an assault on Indigenous Peoples land and bodies
 - Indigenous women were targeted because of their ability to reproduce
 - Colonial policies such as the Indian Act, Residential Schools and the Sixties Scoop violently disrupted Indigenous ways of knowing and being
 - This history and the ongoing colonial violence perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples amounts to cultural genocide
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Colonial Violence

- The kind of systematic violence facing Indigenous people, including violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people, is considered **genocide**.
- Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than other women in Canada, and 16 times more likely than Caucasian women.
- Indigenous women are sexually assaulted three times more often than non-Indigenous women.
- In one Ontario study researchers found that 73% of gender-diverse and two-spirited Indigenous people experienced some form of violence, with 43% having experienced physical and/or sexual violence.



Advocating for MMIWG

- NWAC has been advocating for an official Inquiry into MMIWG since the early 2000s
- Sisters In Spirit
- Honouring Indigenous Women
- You Are Not Alone: A Toolkit for Aboriginal Women Escaping Domestic Violence



Sisters in Spirit

- SIS began as a research, education and policy initiative led by Indigenous women.
- The goal was to conduct research and raise awareness surrounding the alarming rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people in Canada.
- Through developed databases, SIS tracks and investigates the causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people.
- SIS also works closely with families to document their lived experiences, adopt their recommendations, and help restore the memory of their loved ones.
- Each October 4, a vigil is organized to honour the memory of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.



National Inquiry into MMIWG



The National Inquiry into MMIWG was mandated to:

- look into and report on the systemic causes of **all forms of violence** against Indigenous women and girls, including sexual violence
- examine the underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional, and historical causes that contribute to the ongoing violence and particular vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls in Canada
- look into and report on existing institutional policies and practices to address violence, including those that are effective in reducing violence and increasing safety.

Quick Facts on the National Inquiry:

2386 Participants in the Truth Gathering Process
1484 Family Members and Survivors provided
Testimony
819 Individuals shared through Artistic Expressions
83 Experts, Knowledge-Keepers and Officials
provided Testimony
15 Community Hearings
9 Knowledge Keeper, Expert and Institutional
Hearings

Timeline of National Inquiry into MMIWG

December 2015-May 2016:

Government of Canada pre-Inquiry process

September 1, 2016:

Inquiry officially commences

November 2016-March 2017:

Meetings with regional groups, national organizations and community visits

May 2017-December 2018:

Statement gathering across Canada

January 2019-March 2019:

Analysis and validation process

June 3, 2019:

Publication of Final Report



“Motherly Love” by Dee-Jay
Monika Rumbolt as part of
the National Inquiry’s
Gallery of Artistic
Expressions

Key Findings

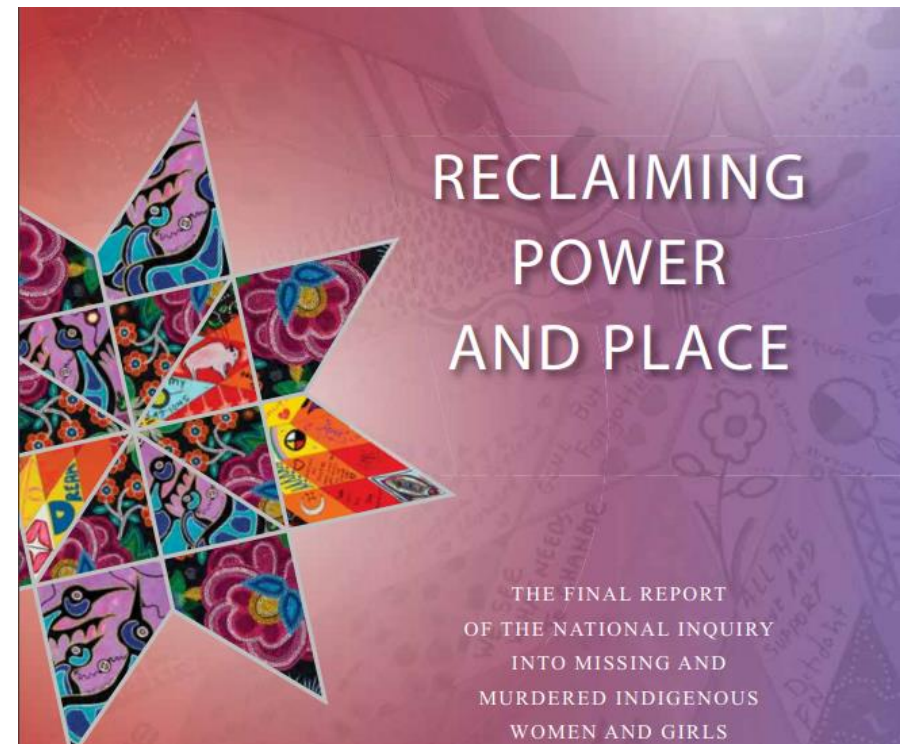
“This violence amounts to a race-based genocide of Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, which especially targets women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.”

(MMIWG Final Report, 2019)



Key Findings

- 231 Calls for Justice to address the genocidal violence faced by Indigenous women, two-spirit and gender-diverse people.
- Calls for Justice are directed at:
 - All Governments;
 - Industries, Institutions, Services, and Partnerships, and;
 - All Canadians



Federal Government's Response to MMIWG

- Many have criticized the government's response to MMIWG
- National Inquiry launched in 2016
- Concluded in June 2019
- Committed to launching a National Action plan by June 2020
- Action plan has since been delayed
- No action/no accountability




NWAC's National Roundtable

- In January 2020, NWAC facilitated a MMIWG National Roundtable with over 65 participants from out PTMA's
- The objective was to engage Indigenous communities so that they can identify key priority areas in response to the 231 Calls for Justice outlined in the final report of the National Inquiry on MMIWG.
- Findings from this report were summarized and provided to the federal government




6 Key Findings



1. Identify priorities thematically rather than temporally
 2. Reinforcing existing priority areas
 3. Support Indigenous women's reoccupation of valued roles in their communities
 4. Accountability is key
 5. Understanding the context is essential for sustainable change
 6. Address the "isms" by changing laws and educating the public
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6 Key Recommendations



1. Build on NWAC's Sisters in Spirit initiative
 2. Fund Indigenous initiatives directly and equitably
 3. Employ a human rights-based approach
 4. Simultaneously address short- and long-term need and regional realities
 5. Interconnect, rather than rank, priorities
 6. Fund NWAC to monitor progress made on the National Action Plan
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Moving beyond the stated Calls for Justice



- Continuing services after leaving correctional facility
 - Establish nation-wide community-based emergency response teams for missing persons
 - Prioritize Indigenous rights when developing laws to ensure the safety of Indigenous women
 - Numerous groups mentioned more **grandmother and clan mother input**
 - “as mothers and grandmothers, we should have a huge say over social workers and those implicated in child welfare”
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NWAC's 10-point Action Plan



1. Faces of Justice Grassroots Tour: Involve and Engage Families and Community
 2. Produce a Research Gap Analysis in Partnership with Nanos Research
 3. Develop International, Collaborative Partnerships
 4. Monitor and Evaluate Progress on 231 Calls for Justice and Commentary on Genocide
 5. Build Institutional Awareness
 6. Influence Policy and Legislation
 7. Provide Training and Workshops to Better Understand History and Colonization
 8. Launch Campaign to De-stigmatize Stereotypes
 9. Create a Social and Cultural Innovation Hub and Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Women's Business Development
 10. Promote Understanding and Research on Resiliency, Commemoration and Honouring
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Next Steps

- Due to COVID-19, the need to address MMIWG is more urgent than ever
- The work has already been done, the GoC just needs to act
- Responses to MMIWG must focus on both short and long term goals



Resiliency Center



- Resiliency Centre will be a safe place for families of MMIWG to heal together
- Conceptualized in response to MMIWG
- Specifically, in response to Call to Justice #7.1:



“We call upon all governments and health service providers to recognize that Indigenous Peoples - First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, including 2SLGBTQQIA people - are the experts in caring for and healing themselves, and that health and wellness services are most effective when they are designed and delivered by the Indigenous Peoples they are supposed to serve, in a manner consistent with and grounded in the practices, world views, cultures, languages, and values of the diverse Inuit, Métis, and First Nations communities they serve.”



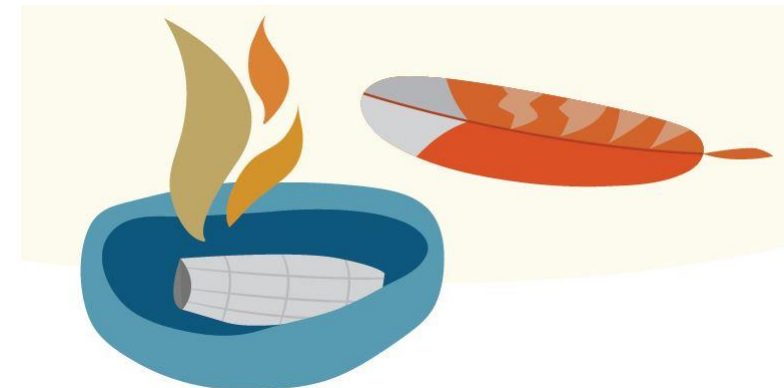
Elder Support-line



- NWAC's Elder Support-line has 4 in-house Elders
- They are available Monday-Friday, from 9-11 a.m. EST and 1-3 p.m. ES



Elder Roberta Oshkawbewisens
Toll Free: 888-664-7808



Supports

- The Hope for Wellness Help Line
 - 1-855-242-3310
 - hopeforwellness.ca
 - open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Phone and chat counselling is available in English and French.
- On request, phone counselling is also available in:
 - Cree
 - Ojibway
 - Inuktitut



**You Are
Not Alone**

Haw'aa!

Miigwetch!

Merci!



Wel'alin!

Qujannamiik!

Nakurmiik!

Thank you!



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