



News Release

August 3, 2016

Coalition Calls Federal Plan for National Inquiry too Vague

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, B.C. – August 3, 2016) Today a Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls responded to the Federal Government's announcement of the national Inquiry. The Federal Government has released the names of the Commissioners and the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Inquiry.

The Coalition continues to demand justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. We have the following three main concerns with today's announcement:

1. The Terms of Reference do not include a robust and binding commitment from the provinces and territories to participating in the Inquiry or implementing any recommendations that may emerge. The participation of the provinces has been described as supportive but there is no legally binding mechanism to compel the production of documents or other evidence. Without proper disclosure, the national inquiry cannot do its work.
2. Despite repeated calls for the explicit inclusion of policing in the Inquiry's scope, policing is not mentioned in the terms of reference. The Coalition does not have confidence that the role of policing will be appropriately addressed.
3. The Terms of Reference fail to provide families with redress for inadequate police investigations into their missing or murdered relatives. The TOR only provides the Commission with the

authority to send families back to the local authorities whose very conduct is being questioned, providing no confidence that allegations of police misconduct will be meaningfully addressed.

Decades of ceaseless work by women across the country calling for solutions grounded in Indigenous laws, has culminated in this Inquiry. The Coalition is pleased that the federal government has mandated the Inquiry to examine systemic causes of violence and has taken into account the needs of vulnerable communities and witnesses. However, given the importance and the promise of the Inquiry, we are deeply concerned about the gaps in the framework that stand to undermine the good intentions that have led to the formation of the Inquiry.

The Coalition calls upon the federal, provincial and territorial governments to address the critical gaps in the Terms of Reference and make a legally binding commitment to addressing violence against Indigenous women and girls. Without concrete commitments from the provincial and federal governments to systemic change, the Inquiry risks being more about words than action.

For further information:

Amnesty International Canada, Jacqueline Hansen, (613) 851-5436

Atira Housing, Janice Abbott, (604) 331-1420

Battered Women's Support Services, Angela Marie MacDougall, (604) 808-0507

BC Assembly of First Nations, Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson, (250) 318-8527

BC Civil Liberties Association, Josh Paterson, (778) 829-8973

Butterflies in Spirit, Lorelei Williams, (778) 709-6498

Carrier Sekani Family Services, Mary Teegee, (250) 612-8710

Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Tribal Chief Terry Teegee, (250) 640-3256

Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, Alice Kendall, (604) 681-8480

February 14th Women's Memorial March Committee, Evelyn Youngchief, (778) 888-1687

First Nations Summit, Cheryl Casimer, (778) 875-2157

First United Church, Genesa Greening, (604) 681-8365

Lookout Emergency Aid Society, Shayne Williams, (604) 255-0340

Michele Pineault, family member, michelepineault58@gmail.com

Neskonlith Indian Band, Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, (250) 319-7383

PHS Community Services Society, Patrick Smith, (604) 779-6837

Pivot Legal Society, Brenda Belak, (604) 537-0680

Poverty and Human Rights Centre, Shelagh Day, (604) 872-0750

RainCity Housing, Amelia Ridgway, (604) 662-7023

Spirit of the Children Society, Christina Coad, (604) 679-4631

Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, (250) 490-5314

Vancouver Council of Women, Rosemary Mallory, (604) 985-0878

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, Keira Smith-Tague, (604) 872-8212

West Coast LEAF, Kasari Govender, (604) 684-8772 ext. 212

WISH Drop-in Centre Society, Mebrat Beyene, (604) 669-9474

Women Against Violence Against Women, Irene Tsepnopoulous-Elhaimer, (604) 255-6228 ext 229

The Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls initially came together in response to the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry in British Columbia overseen by Commissioner Wally Oppal. The Coalition membership includes representation from families, survivors, Indigenous organizations, front-line service organizations, feminist and women's organizations, legal advocacy sector, faith-based groups, and provincial organizations. Our breadth of representation and our experience with the Oppal Commission of Inquiry make the Coalition well-positioned to respond to and inform the national inquiry.