



ENDING VIOLENCE
Association of BC

NEWS RELEASE

Enough is Enough: Coalition on MMIWG disappointed by Interim Report

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, B.C. – Nov 10, 2017)

Violence against Indigenous women and girls is a devastating and ongoing critical issue. The disproportionately high number of murdered and disappeared Indigenous women and girls is an on-going crisis that requires immediate attention. The Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in BC states that enough is enough and demands serious and immediate action to address this crisis.

The Coalition is disgusted and disheartened by the recently released Interim Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (“the National Inquiry”). For decades members of the current Coalition, including family members, women’s groups and allies from across the country, have remained steadfast in our desire to raise awareness, and advocate for a public and inclusive National Inquiry, developed in partnership with Indigenous women and communities, with a commitment to implementation of results. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of this inquiry at this moment, this is an opportunity that cannot be squandered.

The Coalition is on record having provided concrete recommendations and has asked numerous questions which could have helped define the National Inquiry. However, the responses received from the National Inquiry have been dismissive and meaningless.

This lacklustre interim report makes it clear that fundamental changes must be made to the National Inquiry before an extension of time or money is granted. Numerous high level resignations, the lack of a coordinated or clear plan, and the re-traumatization of many affected by this inquiry, all of which is demonstrated by the release of this report, demonstrate that something must change.

We note several concerns with this interim report. We identify below actionable recommendations that could easily have strengthened this report and should be addressed in order to ensure any extension of time and additional funding are well utilized:

- A work plan was not presented; many communities, including Vancouver, are still waiting to hear when family hearings will be held in their region, and there is no plan regarding the examination of systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls
- The report made clear the lack of a human rights framework or approach
- Problems were named in the interim report, however solutions recommended by Indigenous communities, civil society, judiciary and government institutions were not presented (for example, sex-based discrimination in the *Indian Act* was named as a contributing factor towards violence against Indigenous women and girls, but there was no recommendation for the government to take steps to change that, despite the fact that there is a legislative process under way on this issue)
- Recommendations regarding the CHRT ruling were not correctly referenced
- Recommendation 9 of the report, regarding the creation of a national police task force to reopen, assess and investigate cases, was not detailed enough to make it either meaningful or actionable
- International obligations and principles outlined in such instruments as CERD, CEDAW, IACHR, were not adequately addressed

The challenges identified by this report demonstrate the inability of the National Inquiry, as it is currently set up, to fulfill its mandate. We recognize that this is an interim report, but were this a midterm exam, the National Inquiry would have failed miserably.

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