



Canada jeopardizes credible footing for national inquiry By delaying on eliminating sex discrimination from the Indian Act

(June 23, 2016) (Ottawa) – Sharon McIvor, the plaintiff in *McIvor v. Canada*, a constitutional challenge to the sex discrimination in Canada’s Indian Act, and a petitioner to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, announced today that the Government of Canada has asked the United Nations Human Rights Committee to suspend consideration of her petition. Ms. McIvor’s petition claims that the continuing sex discrimination in the status registration provisions of the *Indian Act* violate the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. Thousands of Aboriginal women and their descendants are still not able to hold and transmit Indian status on an equal footing with their male counterparts. McIvor seeks full elimination of all remaining sex discrimination.

Canada has asked the UN Committee to suspend its consideration of Ms. McIvor’s petition on the grounds that it plans to consult further on the elimination of the sex discrimination from the *Indian Act* as a part of a “larger ongoing process” regarding a new nation-to-nation relationship. Canada also indicates that the equality rights of Indigenous women are a priority concern, demonstrated by Canada’s commitment to a national inquiry on murders and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls.

In a statement released today, Sharon McIvor calls on Canada to drop its request for a suspension, withdraw its opposition to her petition, acknowledge that the sex discrimination in the *Indian Act* violates the equality rights of women, and undertake publicly to remove all the sex discrimination from the *Indian Act* as soon as possible.

In her statement, Sharon McIvor says: “The national inquiry and any consultations on a new nation-to-nation relationship can only start on a credible footing if the Government of Canada begins by publicly undertaking to eliminate the sex discrimination in the *Indian Act* immediately. Without this, Indigenous women do not begin these processes as equals.”

The Native Women’s Association of Canada and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action announced that they stand with Sharon McIvor in calling for an immediate end to the sex discrimination in the *Indian Act*.

*The **Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)** was founded in 1974 on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations and Métis women within First Nation, Métis and Canadian societies. NWAC is widely recognized as the National voice of Indigenous women and girls in Canada, and was instrumental in bringing the crisis of missing and*

murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada to light. Visit us at nwac.ca or follow us at @NWAC_CA.

*The **Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA)** is an alliance of more than sixty Canadian women's organizations founded following the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995. FAFIA's central goal is to ensure that Canadian governments respect, protect and fulfill the commitments to women that they have made under international human rights treaties and agreements. Visit us at fafia-afai.org or follow us at @FAFIAAFAI.*

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QUOTE:

“NWAC supports Sharon McIvor. NWAC has always stood against the sex discrimination in the *Indian Act*, which has had devastating and long-lasting effects on Indigenous women, their families and communities. There is no need for further study. In 2016, it is time for Canada's new government to end this discrimination, once and for all. This is the necessary beginning for a national inquiry.”

-Dawn Lavell-Harvard, President, Native Women's Association of Canada

“Since 1876 Canada has discriminated against Aboriginal women and their descendants in the status registration provisions of the *Indian Act*. It is time for this discrimination to come to an end and no delay is acceptable. FAFIA fully supports Sharon McIvor's call. When a national inquiry on murders and disappearances is about to begin, this is the time to show that Canada recognizes Indigenous women as equals.”

-Angela Cameron, Chair, Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action

BACKGROUND:

Read Sharon's statement here: <http://fafia-afai.org/en/sharon-mcivor-sex-discrimination-in-indian-act/>

Read Sharon's petition materials here:

<http://povertyandhumanrights.org/2016/06/mcivor-v-canada-2016/>

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