



FAFIA-AFAI

Feminist Alliance for
International Action

L'Alliance Féministe pour
l'Action Internationale

CANADA

Groups do not support extension of time or additional funding for National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls until conditions are met

OTTAWA, ON – November 20, 2017- A coalition of organizations which have been granted standing in the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls are calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, to ensure that the Inquiry adopts a human rights based approach. The organizations, which include the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA), Canada Without Poverty (CWP), and Dr. Pamela Palmater, the Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University, have also called for a clear and detailed workplan for the Inquiry's systemic review before additional time or money are provided. This call follows the release of the interim report of the Inquiry on November 1, 2017.

The interim report states that the Commissioners have elected to use a trauma-informed, decolonizing and families-first approach to the implementation of their mandate; however the Commissioners have not adopted a human rights based approach, which would require analyzing the violence against Indigenous women and girls, and the treatment of the families, in the context the obligations of the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, municipalities and government actors, including the police, pursuant to the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and in international human rights law.

"Indigenous women and girls are rights-bearers. It is through this lens that the National Inquiry must approach its work and mandate," said Sharon McIvor, member of the Human Rights Committee of FAFIA. "This Inquiry is about the human rights of Indigenous women and girls, the human rights of family members, and the obligations of governments to respect, protect and fulfill those rights. If the Inquiry does not adopt a human rights framework, it will not be able to make a lasting difference in the lives of Indigenous women and girls, bring meaningful changes to government conduct or recommend law reform that will meet human rights standards."

The Inquiry was called as a result of pressure from Indigenous women, family members, Canadian human rights organizations and international and regional human rights bodies that found Canada in breach of its international human rights obligations to act with due diligence to prevent violence against Indigenous women and girls. Reports of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have already found Canada to be in violation of the rights of Indigenous women and girls to life, security of the person, and equality.

"The job of the Inquiry is to examine the causes of these violations and identify specific steps that need to be taken by governments in Canada to prevent the violations from continuing to occur," said Harriett McLachlan, Deputy Director of CWP. "A human rights approach requires detailed examination of current practices and policies."

Chief Commissioner Buller has asked the Government of Canada for more time and more money in order to fulfill the National Inquiry's mandate. Despite this, no workplan has been provided and no dates for expert or institutional hearings have been set, nor have international human rights experts been contacted to appear before the Inquiry.

"As organizations granted standing at the National Inquiry, we have serious concerns about the direction of the Inquiry, its capacity to undertake the necessary systemic review, and the conditions of participation for civil society groups, like ours, that are crucial to informed outcomes," said Dr. Pamela Palmater.

"We urge Minister Bennett and Prime Minister Trudeau not to extend the time and money for the National Inquiry until there is a comprehensive workplan in place for the completion of family hearings and for the institutional and expert hearings. The Inquiry needs both a workplan and a clarification of goals that assures families, groups with standing, and the Canadian public that the Inquiry has the capacity to do the serious work necessary to engage with governments and make change."

—30—

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Shelagh Day (English)
Feminist Alliance for International Action
shelagh.day@gmail.com
[604-872-0750](tel:604-872-0750)

Anne Levesque (Français)
Alliance féministe pour l'action internationale
anne@equalitylaw.ca
613-558-4740

Sharon McIvor
Feminist Alliance for International Action
250-378-7479

Harriett McLachlan
Canada Without Poverty
harriett@cwp-csp.ca
613-986-7761

Dr. Pamela Palmater
Chair, Indigenous Governance, Ryerson University
905-903-5563