



## Coalition calls for urgent action to stop violence against Indigenous women and girls

February 6, 2018

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA – A coalition of human rights organizations has released their report of recommendations to the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in which they call for a crisis-level response to the increasing rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

The Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA), Canada Without Poverty, and Dr Pamela Palmater, the Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University, made their oral submissions to the National Inquiry and filed written submissions in December of last year. In the report, made public today, the group calls for urgent, comprehensive, and transformative action from all levels of government in Canada.

"Canada is in the midst of a human rights crisis of its own making. Discriminatory laws, policies, and practices have created an infrastructure of violence and Indigenous women and girls are dying because of it," said Dr. Palmater.

"Simply tweaking programs and services or making minor amendments to laws will not end the violence. We need immediate, radical and strategic action - substantive remedies that match the scope and character of the human rights violations."

Shelagh Day, Chair of the Human Rights Committee of FAFIA, said "Indigenous women, civil society organizations, and international human rights authorities have repeatedly urged Canada to act strategically and urgently. So far, Canada's responses have been un-coordinated, piecemeal, and ineffective. Our coalition is calling for a national co-ordinated action plan to attack the root causes of the violence with resources to support change and timelines for implementation. Nothing less will do."

"This is a human rights crisis in Canada," said Leilani Farha, Executive Director of Canada Without Poverty. "This ongoing violence is a failure to protect the human rights of Indigenous women and girls, and now we need human rights action on the part of the Canadian government. We expect our governments to live up to the international and domestic commitments they have made to treat Indigenous women and girls as equal human beings, worthy of dignity, respect, and protection."

"The extreme violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls is no accident," added Dr. Palmater. "Historic and current practices of institutions and governments result in Indigenous women and girls being treated as lesser human beings— sexualized, racialized, and disposable. Governments have to be willing to take responsibility, to be accountable, and to dismantle laws and practices that perpetuate the violence. Indigenous women's lives depend on it."

The recommendations from the National Inquiry will be issued in April 2019. The coalition's written and oral submissions made to the National Inquiry can be found at: <http://fafia-afai.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/MMIW-Inquiry-Report-FINALFeb52019.pdf>

-30-

**Canada Without Poverty (CWP)** is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, and charitable organization dedicated to ending poverty in Canada. For nearly 50 years, CWP has been championing the rights of individuals experiencing poverty and marginalization through research, awareness-building campaigns, public policy development, and educational programming. See more at: [www.cwp-csp.ca](http://www.cwp-csp.ca).

The **Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA)** is an alliance of more than sixty women's organizations, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, with specialized expertise on women's human rights. FAFIA is dedicated to advancing the equality of all women, and to ensuring that Canadian governments respect, protect, and fulfill the commitments to women that they have made under international human rights law.

**Dr. Pamela Palmater** holds the **Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University** and is one of Canada's leading authors and commentators on current laws and policies that impact Indigenous peoples and Nations. As well as teaching and writing, Dr. Palmater provides advice directly to First Nation communities, and serves as an expert, appearing before various domestic and international investigatory bodies on government laws, policies, and practices that affect Indigenous peoples.

**For more information or interview requests, please contact:**

Laura Neidhart  
Canada Without Poverty  
Phone: 613-293-2446 | Email: [laura@cwpcsp.ca](mailto:laura@cwpcsp.ca)

Shelagh Day, Chair, Human Rights Committee  
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action  
Phone: 604-872-0750 | Email: [shelagh.day@gmail.com](mailto:shelagh.day@gmail.com)

Dr. Pamela Palmater  
Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University  
Email: [ppalmater@politics.ryerson.ca](mailto:ppalmater@politics.ryerson.ca)