



The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations
The Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
The Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality

March 27, 2019

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers,

We write to request the immediate implementation of the United Nations Human Rights Committee's ruling on the petition of Sharon McIvor and Jacob Grismer. The Committee held that the sex-based hierarchy between s. 6(1)(a) and s. 6(1)(c), introduced by the 1985 *Indian Act*, and continued by the amendments of 2011 and 2017, violates the right to the equal protection of the law without discrimination based on sex, and violates the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of Indigenous culture, guaranteed by the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*.

The Committee has stated that Canada is obligated to provide full reparation. This obligation includes:

- ensuring that all persons, including Sharon McIvor and Jacob Grismer, who were previously not entitled to be registered under s. 6(1)(a) solely as a result of preferential treatment accorded to Indian men over Indian women born prior to April 17, 1985 and to patrilineal descendants over matrilineal descendants, born prior to April 17, 1985 be given full 6(1)(a) status; and
- taking steps to address residual discrimination within First Nations communities that arises from sex discrimination in the *Indian Act*.

Because the Government of Canada included provisions in Bill S-3 that would eliminate the discrimination against First Nations women and their descendants, once and for all, no new legislation is needed. The discrimination that remains, and that still excludes, or provides lesser status to, approximately 270,000 First Nations women and their descendants can be erased from the *Indian Act* by Order in Council (s. 15(2) of Bill S-3).

We understand that meetings of Cabinet take place on Tuesdays. This means that any Tuesday, Cabinet could eliminate the sex discrimination against First Nations women and their descendants that has been on the law books for more than one hundred years.

We urge you to wait no longer. On September 21, 2017, Prime Minister Trudeau told the United Nations General Assembly that “the world expects Canada to adhere strictly to international human rights standards ... and that’s what we expect of ourselves too.” That is what we expect: that Canada will live up to its human rights obligations, and do it now.

We look forward to an immediate response.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, C.M.
Yvonne Bédard
Senator Lovelace-Nicholas
Sharon McIvor
Dr. Lynn Gehl
Jeremy Matson
Dr. Pamela Palmater
Dr. Cindy Blackstock
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Native Women's Association of Canada
Les Femmes Autochtones du Québec/Quebec Native Women
Ontario Native Women's Association
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action

Aboriginal Legal Services
Aboriginal Women’s Action Network
Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC)
Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights
Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes
Advancement of Women Halton (AWH)
AIDS Committee Newfoundland & Labrador
Amnesty International Canada
Amnistie internationale Canada francophone
Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association
ARCH Disability Law Centre
Atira Women’s Resource Society
Aura Freedom International
Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic.
British Columbia Human Rights Clinic
Canada Without Poverty
Canadian Association of University Teachers
Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)

Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
Arbeitskreis Indianer Nordamerikas (AKIN) - Working Circle Indians of North America
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action
Canadian Feminist Network
Canadian Labour Congress
Canadian Labour Congress, Women's Committee
Canadian Research Institute for the Advance of Women/Institut canadien de recherches sur les femmes
Canadian Women's Foundation
Centre for the Study of Social and Legal Responses to Violence
Child Care Now
Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic
Colour of Poverty Colour of Change
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)
Council of Canadians, Peterborough and Kawarthas chapter
Dalhousie Legal Aid Service
DisAbled Women's Network of Canada/Reseau d'action des femmes handicapées Canada
European Alliance for the Self-Determination of Indigenous Peoples
Fédération des Femmes du Québec
Hamilton Community Legal Clinic
Harmony House
Internationales Komitee für die Indigen Amerikas (Incomindios)
Ingamo Family Homes Inc.
Interim Place
International Women's Rights Project
Justice for Girls
l'Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC)
Ligue des droits et libertés
Leeds and Grenville Interval House
Les Femmes Autochtones du Québec/Quebec Native Women
Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters (MAWS)
National Association of Women and the Law/Association nationale Femmes et Droit
Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)
OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
Ontario Native Women's Association
Oxfam Canada
Persons Against Non-State Torture
Peterborough Health Coalition
Planetary Association for Clean Energy
Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre
Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) BC Region
Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale
Regroupement québécois des centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel (RQCALACS)
Single Mothers Alliance

South West Region Women's Law Association
 The BC Assembly of First Nations
 The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition
 The Black Legal Action Centre
 The British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
 The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity (CCGSD)
 The Canadian Civil Liberties Association
 The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)
 The Canadian Union of Public Employees
 The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.
 The International Human Rights Program
 The Kawartha Truth and Reconciliation Support Group
 The Law Union of British Columbia
 The Lesbian Collective Vancouver
 The National Council of Women of Canada
 The Older Women's Network
 The Parent Advocacy Network for Public Education
 The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
 The Social Rights Advocacy Centre
 The South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)
 The United Food and Commercial Workers Canada
 Unified Veterans of Manitoba
 Unifor
 United Steelworkers
 Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter
 VOICES - Calgary's Coalition of Two-Spirit and Racialized LGBTQIA+
 Voices-Voix Coalition
 WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre
 West Coast LEAF
 Women's Human Rights Institute (WHRI)
 Women's Legal Education & Action Fund (LEAF)
 Women's Shelters Canada
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