



Memorandum

MMIW Pre-Inquiry Engagement

To: First Nations, PTOs and Tribal Councils
From: Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day
Date: 4 February 2016
CC: Political Confederacy

ISSUE SUMMARY

The following memorandum provides an overview on the nature and status of the federal government's pre-inquiry engagement into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

The Government of Canada has begun a pre-inquiry engagement process with victims' families, survivors, Indigenous organizations and communities, provinces and territories, and experts in order to design a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The purpose of this process is for Canada to hear the voices of the individuals and groups who are affected so that it informs the design of the national inquiry.

BACKGROUND

The Liberal government has followed through on their campaign promise to make a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls a priority. In order to avoid the problems with lack of engagement from which previous inquiries have suffered, Canada announced a pre-inquiry engagement process on December 8, 2015, to allow input from *“survivors, families and loved ones, Indigenous organizations and leaders, provincial and territorial governments, regional and local organizations working with the families and with women who are at risk, and others, to ensure that we understand what they want to see come out from the inquiry.”*

This process consists of a series of meetings with Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Justice and Attorney General Jody Wilson-Raybould, and Minister of Status of Women Patty Hajdu. The meetings have been, and will continue to be, held with family members, survivors, provincial and territorial representatives, front-line workers and other experts, and Indigenous women's organizations.

The INAC website includes an online survey to provide input, and interested parties can provide feedback and input over email, phone, and mail.

The website also includes support material on violence and abuse prevention and a toll-line for those suffering from trauma.

The first meeting, which was held on December 11, was attended by over 70 family members and loved ones, mostly from the Ottawa-Gatineau region, along with the three ministers and other representatives from the ministries. Elders and health support workers were also there for support and well-being. Questions focused on who the participants should be, what issues should be covered, and how should recommendations be laid out, among other comments by participants. A summary of the meeting is on INAC's website.

CURRENT STATUS

At the direction of the Political Confederacy and the Chiefs Committee on the Safety of Our Citizens, the Chiefs of Ontario is developing a written submission based on the input by Ontario families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls which was provided to Ontario First Nations leadership at the Chiefs of Ontario's Planning Gathering for the Families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, held in Thunder Bay in February 2015. It is worth noting that current Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, attended the Gathering to sit with the families and hear their input. The Chiefs of Ontario submission will be presented to Canada prior to the end of the pre-inquiry engagement period.

Initial Inquiry design meetings were set to be held in Thunder Bay on January 5 and 6, 2016, followed by meetings in British Columbia, Quebec, Nova Scotia and throughout the territories between Jan 6 and Jan 22. Additional meetings, which include ones in Toronto and Ottawa, will be announced in the coming weeks. The minister of Indigenous Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, and Minister of Status of Women, Patty Hajdu, are expected to be in attendance.

The Chiefs Committee on the Safety of Our Citizens, along with Ontario Regional Chief Day, met with Minister of Status of Women Patty Hajdu on December 8 and presented her with the Final Report of the Chiefs of Ontario's Planning Gathering for the Families of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, held in Thunder Bay in February 2015, which captures the input from the Ontario families who attended this gathering on what they would like out of a national inquiry. Ontario First Nations leadership stressed their full support to the families' recommendations.

How to Participate

There are several ways to participate in the process to allow loved ones, organizations, activists, and other interested parties to help develop the inquiry regardless of location and mobility. These are:

Attend one of the pre-inquiry engagement meetings that are currently taking place across Canada. In February, the final planned month, meetings are being held in Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, and Ottawa. See the full list here: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1451512439995/1451512465810>. Summaries of previous meetings can be found on the INAC website.

Fill out the online survey on the INAC website (found here: <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1448637991710/1448638013197>) to submit input on the development of the inquiry process. This must be submitted by February 22, 2016.

Email comments on the process to FFADA-MMIWG@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca by February 28, 2016.

Provide phone comments at 1-877-535-7309 by February 28, 2016. This phone number can also be used to get information on the general process of individual meetings.

Read the discussion guide on the INAC website (found here: <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1451921853861/1451921924809>) and mail in answers to the included questions to:

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