



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN HONOURS MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN, DEMANDS NATIONAL INQUIRY

OTTAWA: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and the NAN Women's Council were joined by NDP leader Thomas Mulcair, representatives of women's organizations, First Nation and other political leaders at a press conference this morning on Parliament Hill to demand a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

"I am pleased to support the women of Nishnawbe Aski to honour our missing sisters and demand that the Government of Canada call a national public inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who holds the women's directorate portfolio. "We agree on the need for a national plan of action to prevent further violence against Aboriginal women, but it is critical that a national inquiry be held to fully determine the scope of these disappearances and provide accountability and justice for the families.

Beginning on Mother's Day (Sunday, May 11), the NAN Women's Council has led a 24-hour ceremonial drumming, *Honouring Our Missing Sisters: A 24-hour Sacred Gathering of Drums*, on Victoria Island in the traditional territory of Kitigan Zibi. Drumming will continue on Parliament Hill all day Monday.

"For 24 hours we are honouring our missing sisters, and the sound of our drums will send a message to the Prime Minister that we will not rest until this government commits to an inquiry to fully investigate these disappearances," said Jackie Fletcher, NAN Women's Council spokesperson. "The homicide rate for our women and girls is shockingly higher than all other women in Canada, and it is shameful that our calls for action continue to fall on deaf ears when our sisters continue to be murdered and disappear without a trace."

The Harper government is resisting renewed calls for an inquiry after it was revealed that the RCMP has compiled a total of 1,186 cases of murdered and missing Aboriginal women, significantly more than previous estimates. Of those cases, 1,017 have been murdered, 169 are still missing, 61 were ruled accidental, and foul play was not ruled out in 108 cases.

Aboriginal women are three times more likely to become the target of violence than non-Aboriginal women, according to the report from the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, *Invisible Women: A Call to Action*. It found that Aboriginal women accounted for at least eight per cent of homicide victims in Canada between 2004 and 2010, despite accounting for only four per cent of the female population.

A parliamentary committee report on violence against Aboriginal women released in March failed to recommend a national public inquiry. It was the second time in nearly two years that a committee failed to recommend action to fully address the disproportionately high levels of violence against Aboriginal women in Canada.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty No. 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario in Canada.

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