



**HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CANADA**

**INTERIM REPORT  
CALL INTO THE NIGHT: AN OVERVIEW OF  
VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN**

**Standing Committee on  
the Status of Women**

**Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.  
Chair**

**MARCH 2011  
40th PARLIAMENT, 3rd SESSION**

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# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

has the honour to present its

## **FOURTEENTH REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied violence against Aboriginal women and has agreed to report the following:



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# VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

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## PREFACE

*What is it that wakes you!*

*In the night after I wake up,  
And feel the teardrops in my eyes,  
For a moment I am startled,  
What's in dreams that made me cry?*

*So I crash through the shadows,  
Stumble through the empty halls  
Turn the radio on softly  
I want to make sense of it all.*

*Call into the night, hear the voices.  
Hurting image on the wall.  
Each is my memories, echoing I am nothing at all.  
The images are scaring me, like I have no control.  
Don't forget they are just shadows; they don't have any power at all!*

*So I crash through the shadows,  
Stumble through the empty halls  
Try to find a warm steady heart beat,  
In the cold, steel concrete walls*

*The steel guitar is screaming  
Stings the center of my soul  
Overwhelmed that I am not dreaming, fighting my way to stand up tall.  
The struggle is drowning a voice of reason;  
The tears are me believing  
That all this is me! "Realizing," that it "Really, isn't me, at all!!!"*

*So I crash through the shadows,  
Stumble through the empty halls  
Turn the radio on softly  
I want to make sense of it all.*

*Then the voice starts with humming, harmony to my soul  
Resonating a common moment as she takes my hand in her palm.  
Saying, "It's not your home, not your friends nor your lover,  
The truth is it's in your song."  
"We all need a little help.  
When our walk feels like a crawl!!!"*

*I'm not crazy, I am healing and can rise above despair!  
This is real and I'm not dreaming!  
The truth is, "I really care!"*

*I'm not crazy, I am healing and can rise above despair!  
The tears are real, and I'm not dreaming  
The truth is, "I really care!"*

Song sung by Jo-Anne Hansen as her testimony to the  
Standing Committee on the Status of Women, January 21, 2011.

## INTRODUCTION

[O]n the international, on the national, and on the global scene, Canada has not treated Aboriginal women right. They are the blight on Canada, and will continue to be the blight unless some real things are done. It can be done. This is what keeps my hope up. Yes, there are measures that can be taken in the communities and by our leadership, by every parliamentarian, and at every level to identify this and to take it on as Canadian leaders so that this can happen.<sup>1</sup>

In March 2010, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (hereinafter the Committee) passed a motion to undertake a study on violence against Aboriginal women. The Committee heard from many witnesses, including representatives of Aboriginal organizations, academics, service providers, and Aboriginal women themselves, with the goal of:

- Gaining a better understanding of the extent and nature of the violence;
- Examining the root causes of the violence; and
- Recommending solutions in consultation and with the full cooperation of Aboriginal women.

Between April 2010 and February 2011, the Committee heard from over 150 witnesses from across Canada. The study began with three meetings in Ottawa with national Aboriginal organizations, government departments and other stakeholders. During the first months of this study, the Committee conducted fact-finding visits to Aboriginal and urban communities in eastern and central Canada; this included Iqaluit (Nunavut), Labrador City (Newfoundland and Labrador), Fredericton (New Brunswick), Montreal, Québec City, and Maniwaki (all in Québec). In January 2011, the Committee continued its fact-finding visits in the west by travelling to Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay (Ontario), Winnipeg (Manitoba), Prince Albert (Saskatchewan), Edmonton (Alberta), Vancouver and Williams Lake (British Columbia), and Yellowknife (Northwest Territories). During fact-finding visits, the Committee made a number of site visits to local organizations and service providers, such as women's shelters and friendship centres.

As they crossed the country speaking to and hearing from Aboriginal women in large urban areas, in smaller communities, in the North, and on reserves, the members of the Committee were seized by the urgency of the situation of violence within which Aboriginal women, men and children live daily. The incidence and the severity of violence that Aboriginal women face are much greater than that faced by non-Aboriginal women.

If there is something that is even more shocking than the violence itself, it is the silence within which this violence is allowed to continue. It is that silence which is perhaps the greatest shame of all. It is the silence of those of us in the majority who chose to turn a

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1 *Evidence*, Muriel Stanley Venne, President and Founder, Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, January 21, 2011.

blind eye to this violence—cases of missing Aboriginal daughters and mothers which never make the headlines; epidemics of suicide which don't elicit an outpouring of concern and outrage from the non-Aboriginal community. It is this silence which is complicit in allowing the situation to continue. It is this silence which sends the message that we don't care, that we don't want to care, that we won't pull all the stops to say "enough".

This Committee wants to join our voices to the voices of the strong women who took the time out of busy lives to tell us their stories, and we want to say "enough". We want to dream with Aboriginal mothers who give birth to new sons and daughters—to dream that those families will receive the support they need to live lives free of violence, free of racism. We recognize that, as elected officials, we must play a major role in breaking that silence.

This interim report is a first step toward the full report which this Committee plans to issue on violence against Aboriginal women. In this report, the Committee will highlight what we heard from witnesses in Ottawa and across the country. Based on this testimony, we will outline some guiding principles for moving forward on breaking the cycle of violence against Aboriginal women. A more detailed compilation of recommendations will be incorporated into this Committee's final report.

In this report, we want to give voice to the women and men who have shared their stories with this Committee in the hope that things will change. We hope to do justice to the voices of people like Marilyn George, who told the Committee:

So I sit here in hope that our voice will be heard loud and clear as first nation women. I speak for my daughter, my cousins. I speak for those I've lost in my past due to suicide because of domestic violence and other assaults that have happened to many of our women in our communities.<sup>2</sup>

## **MANY FORMS OF VIOLENCE**

Violence in Aboriginal women's lives is pervasive, and is compounded by violence and systemic and institutionalized racism as well as the effects of historical violence, such as residential schools, the *Indian Act*, and other legacies of colonization...Violence in many Aboriginal women's lives is a daily occurrence, for too many women have died either by murder or by their own hand. Many governments have been willing to fund studies and reports, but very few have been willing to step up and fund the long-term solutions to the problem of violence against our women and girls. How many more women have to die before any concrete, long-term action is taken?<sup>3</sup>

There is much diversity among Aboriginal women. Some are First Nations, others Métis or Inuit. Some live on reserves, and many more live off reserve, in towns and cities across Canada. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) reports that there are over 100,000 First Nations women aged 15 and over living on reserve,

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2 *Evidence*, Marilyn George, Representative, Ending Violence Association of British Columbia, Outreach Services Coordinator, Smithers, British Columbia, January 18, 2011.

3 *Ibid.*

almost 330,000 living off reserve, approximately 135,000 Métis, and approximately 16,000 Inuit women. Despite their great variety, however, Aboriginal people are much more likely than non-Aboriginal people to be victims of violent crime and spousal violence.<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada reports that 24% of Aboriginal women reported being victims of spousal violence in 2004, more than three times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal women (7%). In addition, Aboriginal women are significantly more likely than non-Aboriginal women to report the most severe and potentially life-threatening forms of violence, including being beaten or choked, having had a gun or knife used against them, or being sexually assaulted. According to Statistics Canada, Aboriginal women are also seven times more likely to be murdered than non-Aboriginal women in Canada. Research conducted by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) demonstrates that Aboriginal women and girls are as likely to be killed by a stranger or an acquaintance as they are by an intimate partner—very different from the experiences of non-Aboriginal women in Canada, whose homicide rates are often attributed to intimate partner violence.

NWAC has documented that, over the past 30 years, more than 500 Aboriginal women and girls have gone missing or have been found murdered in communities across Canada. The Committee heard from the family members of some of these women as it travelled across the country.

Witnesses who appeared before the Committee emphasized the high prevalence of violence in Aboriginal communities, the normalization of violence within these communities, and the stigma surrounding discussing violence. While most of the violence is targeted at women, many men are also victims of all sorts of violence. Witnesses highlighted that violence in many communities is intergenerational and accepted as “normal”. It is not openly discussed. Witnesses said it was difficult to assess whether violence was increasing or decreasing—violence in many communities is chronic and endemic.

Witnesses in all the site visits talked about the root causes of violence against women, including the role of colonization and the residential school system. The resulting loss of culture was seen as a significant manifestation of violence against Aboriginal women and men. The link between loss of culture and violence was a recurrent theme in all the site visits. For example, the Committee heard that disenfranchisement of men in Inuit society has led to a level of frustration which manifests itself in a number of ways, including violence.

Witnesses in Nunavut explained that, in their culture, men had held an esteemed role in hunting and providing shelter for the family. Women had played a key role in the household and the community. The role of men was more severely affected in the move to a Eurocentric model of society. They suggested that men have not made this transition successfully, and are lost somewhere between the two cultures, dropping out of school, unable to maintain jobs and provide for the needs of families. This has led to strong

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4 Jodi-Anne Brzozowski, Andrea Taylor-Butts, and Sara Johnson, “Victimization and offending among the Aboriginal population in Canada,” *Juristat*. Statistics Canada—Catalogue No. 85-002-XIE, Vol. 26, No. 3

feelings of disenfranchisement, which manifests itself as violence amongst men and against women.

Women's roles in the household have been more enduring through time, thus they may have suffered less than men from the cultural dislocation. Witnesses emphasized that cultural re-appropriation is a key part of rebuilding healthy individuals and safer communities. The Committee heard that Aboriginal people need an education system that promotes indigenous knowledge, as transmitted through their language. At the same time, the general public needs greater education on Aboriginal peoples, and their history, to counter negative stereotypes and misunderstanding.

Witnesses reminded the Committee that the issues they were raising were not new. The Committee recognizes that this is not a new situation, and emphasizes that the testimony it has heard on this subject mirrors the findings of previous reports, including the 1996 *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. That report identified a number of factors that are linked to violence in Aboriginal communities, including systemic discrimination against Aboriginal peoples, economic and social deprivation, alcohol and substance abuse, the intergenerational cycle of violence, the breakdown of healthy family life resulting from residential school upbringing, racism against Aboriginal peoples, the impact of colonization on traditional values and culture, and overcrowded, substandard housing.

Witnesses across the country emphasized two key approaches to moving forward to decrease the levels of violence which Aboriginal women face:

- A coordinated, holistic approach to violence against women; and
- The definition of priorities and solutions tailored to their particular circumstances by communities.

Many witnesses situated violence against women as a manifestation of the high levels of more generalized violence in their communities. In mainstream society, domestic violence is usually defined as a women's issue; however, witnesses in all the site visits emphasized the importance of taking a more holistic approach to violence. They stressed the importance of the family unit, and providing services not only to the women who are victims but also to the men who are violent. They urged the Committee to take a comprehensive approach to the problem of violence against Aboriginal women, an approach which takes into consideration larger systemic issues such as poverty, housing, and racism.

Witnesses in all the site visits also emphasized the importance of helping communities to develop the tools needed to find their own solutions, rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all model. Witnesses highlighted the importance of culturally-appropriate programming and the leadership of Aboriginal communities in the development of programs, services, and resources.

These two key ideas will form the guiding principles for the Committee as it moves toward developing recommendations for its final report.

## **MOVING FORWARD: GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Witnesses urged the Committee to use the *United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*<sup>5</sup> as a framework in the elimination of violence against Aboriginal women. Endorsed by Canada in November 2010, this *Declaration* establishes the “minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Article 22 of the *Declaration* states that: “States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.”<sup>7</sup>

In endorsing the *Declaration*, Canada “reaffirmed its commitment to build on a positive and productive relationship with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to improve the well-being of Aboriginal Canadians, based on our shared history, respect, and a desire to move forward together.”<sup>8</sup> Using this *Declaration* as a guide, the Committee wishes to highlight the principles of a holistic and Aboriginal-led approach as it develops recommendations for its final report on violence against Aboriginal women.

### **A. Listening to Aboriginal people and enabling communities**

By our actions we need to show that we trust them, recognize their rights, and have faith in their ability to take leadership and represent the women as their citizens. We need to hear them and respond to them.<sup>9</sup>

The Committee emphasizes the importance of working with Aboriginal people to find solutions to the violence in their communities. The Government of Canada’s Residential School apology, given on June 11, 2008 by Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, noted that the objective of the Residential School system was “based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal... Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused

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5 United Nations General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: resolution/adopted by the General Assembly*, October 2, 2007, A/RES/61/295, accessed February 24, 2011 at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/471355a82.html>.

6 Ibid., Article 43.

7 Ibid., Article 22.

8 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *Canada's Statement of Support on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, accessed February 24, 2011 at <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/ia/dcl/stmt-eng.asp>.

9 *Evidence*, Jo-Anne Fiske, Professor of Women's Studies, University of Lethbridge, as an individual, January 21, 2011.

great harm, and has no place in our country.”<sup>10</sup> The Committee affirms that acknowledgement as key to moving forward.

A respectful recognition of Aboriginal culture and beliefs requires that we listen to Aboriginal people and resist the temptation to impose solutions on their communities. The *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* commits Canada to recognizing the right of Aboriginal people to be active partners in programs and policies which affect them:

**Article 19**

**States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them...**

**Article 23**

**Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.**

In Winnipeg, the Committee visited the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, which serves as a hub for the urban Aboriginal community in the city. It was a thriving place which brought together Aboriginal children, youth and families. A key to its success is that the centre takes as a starting point that the community has the capacity and strength to do great things. The centre sees its role as building on the strengths of people—not meeting the needs that centre staff identifies for people, but rather responding to needs identified by the community. The staff works with the community to identify solutions and programs, and then turn to people in the community to run those programs. Ultimately these programs are more successful because they respond to the real needs of the community, rather than the perceived needs, and because programs are strengths-based rather than problems-based.

The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre is a living example of what witnesses all across the country were asking for—the ability to define their most urgent needs, to tailor solutions to their own communities, and to find ways to build on their strengths to meet the needs of their communities.

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10 Prime Minister of Canada, “Prime Minister Harper offers full apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian Residential Schools system”, June 11, 2008. <http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=2149>.

## **B. A coordinated, holistic approach to violence against Aboriginal women**

Change of this magnitude cannot be achieved by piecemeal reform of existing programs and services—however helpful any one of these reforms might be. It will take an act of national intention—a major, symbolic statement of intent, accompanied by the laws necessary to turn intention into action.<sup>11</sup>

The Committee understands that it is impossible to deal with violence against Aboriginal women without dealing with all of the other systems which make women vulnerable to violence and make it difficult for them to escape violence. What is required is a co-ordinated, holistic approach to violence against Aboriginal women. The vulnerability of Aboriginal women is not new; it is chronic.

During its last review of Canada, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) made specific recommendations to Canada, about violence against women and about missing and murdered Aboriginal women more particularly. The Committee recognizes that the testimony it received on violence against Aboriginal women reaffirms the findings of the CEDAW Committee that:

Aboriginal women in Canada continue to live in impoverished conditions, which include high rates of poverty, poor health, inadequate housing, lack of access to clean water, low school-completion rates and high rates of violence. They are underrepresented in all areas of the labour market, in particular in senior or decision-making positions, have higher rates of unemployment and face a greater pay gap in terms of their hourly earnings compared with men.<sup>12</sup>

The Committee plans to situate the question of violence within this larger context. As it works toward its final report, the Committee will take into consideration the request of witnesses who called on the federal government to put in place a national action plan, recalling once again that the CEDAW Committee had proposed that Canada:

[D]evelop a specific and integrated plan for addressing the particular conditions affecting Aboriginal women, both on and off reserves,... including poverty, poor health, inadequate housing, low school-completion rates, low employment rates, [and] low income...<sup>13</sup>

The violence experienced by Aboriginal women was most often placed in the context of breakdown in the whole community as a result of the generational impacts of colonization and residential schools, and of the systemic racism that continues to push Aboriginal people to the margins. The Committee heard extensive testimony about the

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11 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *People to People, Nation to Nation: highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, cited in FEWO, *Evidence*, Lisa Yellow-Quill, Co-manager, Aboriginal Women's Program, Battered Women's Support Services, January 18, 2011.

12 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Canada, CEDAW/C/CAN/CO/7, November 7, 2008, at para. 43.

13 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Canada, CEDAW/C/CAN/CO/7, November 7, 2008, at para. 44 as cited in B.C. CEDAW Group Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, *Nothing to Report*, January 2010, p.8.

violence that Aboriginal women face at the hands of their families as well as strangers. The Committee heard disturbing evidence of widespread discrimination and racism against Aboriginal people, including with landlords, police and social and health services in a number of cities.

The Committee is mindful that the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* commits Canada to the following:

#### **Article 21**

**1. Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.**

**2. States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous Elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.**

The Committee recognizes that addressing the violence against Aboriginal women will require interventions on a number of fronts in a strategic, coordinated effort. This includes addressing issues related to poverty, child welfare, missing and murdered Aboriginal women, the justice system, healing of communities, families and individuals, housing, empowering Aboriginal women leaders, and racism. The Committee also heard that federal and provincial/territorial governments must coordinate their efforts.

Emphasizing the importance of working in a comprehensive way, the Committee now turns to each of these pieces of the puzzle.

## **POVERTY**

Poverty plays a pivotal role in the violence which Aboriginal women face. In fact, many witnesses identified poverty as the most important factor.

First, poverty and unemployment can place stress on relationships and increase the risk of violence, particularly where compounded by other stressors such as overcrowded housing. In addition, the Committee has heard that “for women living in poverty, lack of access to safe, affordable housing options is a major issue in terms of preventing violence, escaping violence, and creating a life of safety for themselves and their children.”<sup>14</sup>

Poverty comes in many forms. On the one hand, the Committee heard that social assistance rates are too low to cover the basic costs of living, such as housing and food. Although the setting of social assistance rates is an area of provincial jurisdiction, witnesses reminded the Committee that Canada has been criticized by the United Nations for its low income assistance rates. On the other hand, for single mothers, lack of

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14 *Evidence*, Darcie Bennett, Campaigns Director, Pivot Legal Society, January 18, 2011.

affordable child care makes it difficult to survive on a minimum wage job. Thus, for many people, it is difficult to escape poverty.

Poverty was described as a root cause of the daily violence suffered by Aboriginal women. As one witness explained:

Poverty seems to drive almost all of [the abuse]. It's very difficult for a woman to leave an abusive relationship when there are issues of housing, when she's living on social assistance...it's not enough money to support someone, let alone children, when there's a lack of resources....<sup>15</sup>

Witnesses talked about the “vicious cycle” of poverty, addiction, and prostitution in which some Aboriginal women find themselves. In a number of cities visited by the Committee, witnesses suggested that there is a link between the high levels of poverty and the over-representation of Aboriginal women in the sex-trade industry. As Dawn Harvard of the Ontario Native Women’s Association pointed out:

[M]any are forced into situations of having unsafe living conditions in order to try to stay away from homelessness, a state in which they would be even less safe, and into dangerous life-threatening situations, and often the sex-trade industry, in which they're forced to sell their bodies on the street corners to try to feed their families. That's a situation nobody should have to be in, but it makes them extremely vulnerable, and thus contributes to the extremely high rates of violence.<sup>16</sup>

## **CHILD WELFARE**

Witnesses emphasized the role that child welfare played in the violence experienced by Aboriginal women. The Committee heard that women who were victims of violence often avoided seeking help from health or social service organizations for fear that their children would be apprehended by child welfare authorities, as Darcie Bennett, Campaigns Director, Pivot Legal Society, pointed out:

One of the key themes that came out of the last project we did with women who were involved with the child welfare system as parents was on male violence in their lives. It manifests itself in a lot of ways, but one of the biggest is actually fear of calling police if there's violence in the home, because they've seen children apprehended.<sup>17</sup>

Unable to afford adequate, safe housing on low social assistance rates, witnesses indicated that low-income Aboriginal women have to choose between decent housing or adequate food—and either choice risked flagging their children to child welfare authorities for neglect. In fact, witnesses across the country told the Committee that children often come into the care of child and family services not for abuse, but rather because their families are unable to provide the necessities of life.

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15 *Evidence*, Nancy Cameron, Program Manager, Crabtree Corner Community Program, YWCA of Vancouver, January 18, 2011.

16 *Evidence*, Dawn Harvard, President, Board of Directors, Ontario Native Women’s Association, January 14, 2011.

17 *Evidence*, Darcie Bennett, Campaigns Director, Pivot Legal Society, January 18, 2011.

It was brought to the Committee's attention that the costs of providing child and family services to First Nations people have increased dramatically. According to INAC, "funding to these service providers has more than doubled over the past decade, from \$238 million in 1998-99 to approximately \$550 million in 2008-09."<sup>18</sup> Witnesses suggested, however, that the money could be better spent on prevention and supports rather than on the costs of maintaining children in foster homes or group homes. The testimony of Donald Langford, Executive Director, Métis Child and Family Services Society, expressed a common frustration among witnesses:

I'm paying some of my foster parents \$6,000 a month tax-free to look after four or five children. Just think, if we gave \$2,000 to that family and provided some supervision and some guidance and support, how they could survive. We're putting the money in the wrong place.<sup>19</sup>

In its efforts to make the apprehension of children the last option, Community and Family Services in the Child Protection Program of the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority allocates funding directly to low-income families. Sheila Nelson, Manager of the program, explains:

As hard as it may be for people to believe, apprehending a child from a woman who has left an abusive relationship is the last option we want. We put out a significant amount of money to assist families that are on a very limited income, and sometimes income support just doesn't pay enough. It's not uncommon for us to give out gift cards on a regular basis.<sup>20</sup>

Ms. Nelson also stated that their department will pay utility bills and rental arrears, with the goal of ensuring suitable and safe housing for the families.

Witness expressed a number of other frustrations with the child welfare system. For example, on-reserve child and family services do not receive funding to provide services to their community members off-reserve, while off-reserve child and family services are often not culturally sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal people.

The Committee heard from several witnesses that young women who had grown out of the child welfare system are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviour, exposing them to violence. The testimony of Melanie Nimmo, assistant professor in Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg, and Member of the Board, John Howard Society of Manitoba, is indicative of what the Committee has heard:

As for what's happening in the foster care system, it's not like this child moves into a loving arrangement where they're cared for.... The number of placements that these sexually exploited girls go through is mind-boggling. So to think that they can have some

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18 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *Better Outcomes for First Nations Children: INAC's Role as a Funder in First Nations Child and Family Services*, Updated: July 2010, available at <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/hb/sp/fncf/cfsd-eng.asp>.

19 *Evidence*, Donald Langford, Executive Director, Métis Child and Family Services Society, January 21, 2011.

20 *Evidence*, Sheila Nelson, Manager, Community and Family Services, Child Protection Program, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, January 20, 2011.

sense of self-worth and self-respect, or that anybody gives a damn for them given the circumstances they're experiencing in their home life and their street life.... It's really disconcerting.<sup>21</sup>

Statistics show that First Nations children are over-represented in the child welfare system. As of March 31, 2010, about 8,682, or 5.4% of children living on reserves were in care outside the parental home. This proportion is almost eight times that of children living off-reserve.<sup>22</sup> Also, that number under-estimates the total number of Aboriginal children in care because it does not include the number of Aboriginal children, including Métis, Inuit, or off-reserve First Nation children who are in care under the auspices of provincial and territorial child welfare services.

The Committee was concerned to hear that “there are more First Nations children in child welfare care today than at the height of residential schools, by a factor of three.”<sup>23</sup> A number of witnesses warned the Committee that the child welfare system was the modern-day equivalent to residential schools, and suggested that it would be difficult to stop the violence in Aboriginal communities until we can somehow stop the tide of Aboriginal children who continue to be taken away from their families.

The Committee held a follow-up meeting in Ottawa on the subject of child welfare, with departmental officials and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. The testimony from that meeting will inform the Committee's recommendations in its final report on violence against Aboriginal women.

## MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN

[T]hese women...were mothers, daughters, grandmothers, aunties, and cousins. Indeed, there exist two prominent connecting features amongst missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls: they were Aboriginal, and they were all loved and cherished by their families.<sup>24</sup>

The Sisters in Spirit initiative, a Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) research and education project, has been gathering information on the disproportionately high number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.<sup>25</sup> The final report of this initiative has recorded the disappearance or death of more than 580 Aboriginal women and girls across Canada. Of these, Sisters in Spirit report that between 2000 and 2008, 153 were murdered. Their findings demonstrate that Aboriginal

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21 *Evidence*, Melanie Nimmo, Assistant Professor in Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg, and Member of the Board, John Howard Society of Manitoba, Inc., January 13, 2011.

22 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, “Chapter 4—First Nations Child and Family Services Program—Indian and Northern Affairs Canada,” in the *2008 May Report of the Auditor General of Canada*, p.5.

23 *Evidence*, Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, February 15, 2011.

24 *Evidence*, Nahanni Fontaine, Government of Manitoba: Special Advisor on Aboriginal Women's Issues, Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet, February 8, 2011.

25 Native Women's Association of Canada, *Sisters in Spirit*, accessed February 28, 2011 at <http://www.nwac.ca/programs/sisters-spirit>.

women are more likely than non-Aboriginal to be murdered—accounting for approximately 10% of the total number of female homicides in Canada, although Aboriginal women make up only 3% of the female population in Canada.<sup>26</sup> Aboriginal women are also much more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be murdered by a stranger.<sup>27</sup> Finally, the murderers of Aboriginal women are much less likely to be convicted.<sup>28</sup>

Witnesses throughout the country told their stories of friends and family members who had gone missing or were murdered—posters were distributed of a missing daughter, a presentation was dedicated to a murdered cousin, and stories were shared of missing and murdered friends.

The Committee was reminded that this issue has been subjected to international and national attention over the past decade. Specific examples are:

- Amnesty International has released two reports, in 2004 and in 2009, on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada and the need to protect their human rights.<sup>29</sup>
- In October 2008, the United Nation’s Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women called upon Canada to examine the cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and to remedy the system deficiencies related to failed investigations.<sup>30</sup>

Witnesses stated that if an equivalent percentage of non-Aboriginal women had gone missing or been murdered, Canadians would have been outraged and immediate action would have been demanded. Then-President of NWAC Beverley Jacobs told a University of Western Ontario class in 2008 that if the same percentage of non-Aboriginal women were missing or murdered, the number would be a staggering 18,000.<sup>31</sup>

Witnesses suggested that the indifference of society to the fate of these Aboriginal women renders Aboriginal women more vulnerable to targeted acts of violence against them, by strangers or acquaintances. As one witness explained, being an Aboriginal woman is “like walking around with an X on your back.”<sup>32</sup> The Picton case in Vancouver

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26 Native Women’s Association of Canada, *What Their Stories Tell Us: Research findings from the Sisters in Spirit Initiative*, 2010, p. ii, accessed March 22, 2011 at [http://www.nwac.ca/sites/default/files/reports/2010\\_NWAC\\_SIS\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](http://www.nwac.ca/sites/default/files/reports/2010_NWAC_SIS_Report_EN.pdf).

27 Ibid. p. 29.

28 Ibid.

29 Amnesty International Canada. *Stolen Sisters*, accessed February 28, 2011 at [http://www.amnesty.ca/campaigns/sisters\\_overview.php](http://www.amnesty.ca/campaigns/sisters_overview.php).

30 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Canada, CEDAW/C/CAN/CO/7, November 7, 2008.

31 David Scott, “What if a Small City Disappeared?” *Western News*, University of Western Ontario, April 11, 2008, accessed March 22, 2011 at <http://www.turtleisland.org/discussion/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=5945>.

32 *Evidence*, Marilyn George, Representative, Ending Violence Association of British Columbia, Outreach Services Coordinator, Smithers, British Columbia, January 18, 2011.

demonstrates the horrible implications of an inadequate response to the disappearance of women, many of whom were Aboriginal. The Committee shares the conviction of many witnesses that it is essential to respond to every instance of missing and murdered Aboriginal women with the greatest of diligence and to provide the necessary supports to the families of these women.

Given the magnitude of the situation, a number of witnesses demanded that the Government of Canada establish an independent public inquiry to examine the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

The Committee was told of the failure by police to take reports of missing and murdered Aboriginal women seriously, delays in investigations, and the lack of effort put into searches and public appeals. Some witnesses stated that racism and sexism continues to exist in certain police organizations, while others noted that there had been great efforts to provide cultural awareness training to police officers and to develop working relationships with Aboriginal organizations. Witnesses demanded that police organizations be held accountable for the mishandling of investigations into the disappearance and murder of Aboriginal women.

The Committee also heard that on-reserve police are not always sufficiently trained or resourced to properly investigate serious cases of violence against Aboriginal women. In addition, jurisdictional wrangling between on-reserve police forces, city or provincial forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) can jeopardize investigations. Ellen Gabriel, President of the Quebec Native Women Inc, called upon the police to implement a 2006 resolution from the Special Assembly of the Chiefs of Police of Canada that recognized the need for a special protocol to be developed to deal with murdered and missing Aboriginal women.<sup>33</sup>

The Committee heard from police organizations about initiatives whose aim is to prevent more deaths or disappearances and to investigate unsolved cases:

- Project E-PANA, created in 2005, is investigating cases of murdered and missing women along northern British Columbia's Highway 16, commonly referred to as the Highway of Tears.
- The High Risk Missing Persons Project (HRMPP) was established in 2003 by the RCMP and its police partners in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta in response to concerns of unsolved homicides and missing persons cases.
- Project KARE, the third phase of HRMPP, is conducted in co-operation with the Edmonton Police Services and aims to investigate cases of murdered or missing persons, especially sex-trade workers in the Edmonton area. Their pro-active team works towards prevention by

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33 *Evidence*, Ellen Gabriel, President, Quebec Native Women Inc., June 10, 2010.

creating communication networks with sex-trade workers and social agencies.

- Project Disappear, established in 2007 in Manitoba by the Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police, reviews data and addresses provincial standardization of policies and procedures with respect to missing persons.
- The Manitoba Integrated Task Force for Missing and Murdered Women, established in 2009 by the province of Manitoba, the RCMP and the Winnipeg Police Service, reviews cases of homicide and missing persons where the victim is female.

In Budget 2010, the Government of Canada invested \$10 million over two years to address the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women by improving law enforcement and the justice system, including through a new National Police Support Centre for Missing Persons, enhancements to the Canadian Police Information Centre database, and appropriate amendments to the *Criminal Code*.<sup>34</sup>

A number of witnesses recognized the important role which NWAC's Sisters in Spirit project had played in raising awareness about the missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and providing an important bridge between their families and the authorities. NWAC spoke to the Committee, on February 3, 2011, of a contribution agreement with Status of Women Canada in the amount of \$500,000 for a project entitled Evidence to Action I, which will develop tools and strategies to empower Aboriginal women and their communities to end the cycle of violence. An announcement, made on February 25, 2011, stated that NWAC will receive \$1,890,844 over three years for Evidence to Action II, which is intended to assist communities in preventing and responding to violence against Aboriginal women and will include training for police officers, educators, justice officials, frontline healthcare workers, social service providers and community leaders.<sup>35</sup>

When you think about someone in your life that has gone missing, you want them to be home every day. You think about it every day. There's trauma every day. When you're in that traumatized life and trying to come to terms with the fact that someone has gone

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34 Department of Justice, "Backgrounder A: Concrete Steps to address the Issue of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women," *News Release*, October 2010, [http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/news-nouv/nr-cp/2010/doc\\_32564.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/news-nouv/nr-cp/2010/doc_32564.html).

35 Status of Women Canada, "Government of Canada Invests in Community Project to Help End Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls," *News Release*, February 25, 2011, <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/med/news-nouvelles/2011/0225-2-eng.html>.

missing and they're not in your life anymore, you have loss and grief. Then, when they're found murdered, there's a whole process of grieving. Somebody you know is not in this lifetime anymore.<sup>36</sup>

Witnesses spoke of the need for victim services and support for the families of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. A majority of the missing and murdered Aboriginal women were mothers, leading to a significant intergenerational impact as children must cope with the loss. Beverley Jacobs, former President of NWAC said that the families of the missing and murdered women need resources for searches, funding for cultural healing services, loss and grieving counselling, assistance in dealing with the police and the courts, and family gathering funds.<sup>37</sup>

Families also call for ongoing updates from the police regarding the status of the investigations. Chief Kennedy, of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, spoke of their agreement with the RCMP that led to the creation of a First Nations community liaison worker in 2009. A central role of the officer is to act as liaison between the parents of missing and murdered women and the police.<sup>38</sup>

## **THE RESPONSE OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

A wide-ranging number of concerns were raised relating to the way the justice system deals with violence against Aboriginal women and girls. This included concerns with the police system, the judicial system, and the correctional system.

Witnesses raised concerns of the non-response of police services to cases of violence against Aboriginal women. In domestic violence situations, police do not always respond in a timely manner to calls for assistance. Witnesses also stated that police sometimes dismiss claims of sexual assault if the woman is Aboriginal and leads a "high-risk" lifestyle.

The Committee heard of challenges with the application of the laws, where double charges are applied by police and Aboriginal women are treated as offenders, rather than survivors or victims. In domestic violence cases, a woman is charged along with the man who has assaulted her, or in the sex trade, a woman is charged for defending herself against a violent john or pimp. The unanticipated effect is that these women are less likely to contact the police during a future episode of violence.

Women who are charged are often not aware of their rights. Janine Benedet, a law professor at the University of British Columbia, stated: "We continue to see women routinely pleading out to lesser offences, offences they may not be guilty of at all, simply to

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36 *Evidence*, Beverley Jacobs, Former President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, as an individual, January 18, 2011.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Evidence*, Chief Betsy Kennedy, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs: War Lake First Nation, January 13, 2011.

avoid the threat of federal sentences or life sentences, depending on the offence with which they are charged.”<sup>39</sup> Cuts to legal aid make it increasingly difficult for these women to be informed of and defend their rights.

In northern or remote communities, women face serious barriers in accessing the justice system. Judges are flown into town infrequently and their appearances can be postponed by weather. Emergency protection orders are difficult to obtain and enforce because there are often no judges and prosecutors in the local area. In addition, witnesses in a number of communities explained that women sometimes have to testify in public places where the court is temporarily set up, such as the local bar. A lack of access to police support was also highlighted, with witnesses in Yellowknife referencing 11 communities in the North that do not have RCMP access and rely on officers to come from other communities.<sup>40</sup>

The Committee has heard mixed testimony about whether alternative justice approaches are appropriate for domestic violence cases. In Iqaluit, witnesses told the Committee that Elders rarely ask that people be removed from communities, but prefer to deal with the accused as part of a family unit and as part of the community. Melanie Nimmo, assistant professor in Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg, and Member of the Board, John Howard Society of Manitoba, said that their restorative justice program instills accountability on the part of the offender while helping to heal the victim and that 89% of their clients successfully complete the program conditions without reoffending.<sup>41</sup> However, other witnesses voiced concerns that restorative and alternative justice practices were not a safe resolution for women who have experienced violence. Witnesses suggested that standards and screening guidelines must be established to ensure that female victims are not re-victimized or put in danger in the process.

Racism continues to be a concern for Aboriginal people—in relation to both the police and the judiciary. Witnesses spoke of establishing a requirement to screen judges and police for prejudices before hiring and of offering anti-racism and anti-oppression training, specifically related to Aboriginal women. The case of ex-judge David Ramsay was referenced;<sup>42</sup> in 2004, in Prince George, Ramsay was charged, pled guilty and was convicted for sexual assault of Aboriginal girls whose cases he had presided over in court.<sup>43</sup>

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39 *Evidence*, Janine Benedet, Faculty of Law, University of British Columbia, as an individual, January 18, 2011.

40 *Evidence*, Lyda Fuller, Executive Director, YWCA Yellowknife, January 20, 2011.

41 *Evidence*, Melanie Nimmo, Assistant Professor in Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg, and Member of the Board, John Howard Society of Manitoba, Inc., January 13, 2011.

42 *Evidence*, Asia Czapska, Advocacy Director, Justice for Girls, January 18, 2011.

43 CTV-News, “Former B.C. judge gets 7 years for sex assaults,” June 2, 2004, [http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/CTVNewsAt11/20040602/ramsay\\_sentencing\\_20040601/](http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/CTVNewsAt11/20040602/ramsay_sentencing_20040601/)

Witnesses told the Committee that the *Criminal Code* offenses related to prostitution increased the vulnerability of women in the sex trade by forcing women to work in unsafe conditions and to distrust the police. While there was no general consensus on whether or how to amend the *Criminal Code* offenses, witnesses were in agreement that the burden of enforcement should not be on the women in the sex trade, but rather on their customers. Kate Rexe, the former director of Sisters in Spirit, stated that women who are arrested for prostitution are rarely given diversion programs, while male consumers are often given opportunities for “john school.”<sup>44</sup> The result is that Aboriginal women end up with criminal records, pushing them into a deeper spiral of marginalization.

The ongoing criminalization of Aboriginal women and girls has led to their disproportionate representation in prison. According to Kim Pate, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, self-identified Aboriginal women now make up more than a third of the federal jail population.<sup>45</sup> These Aboriginal women are further marginalized by society when they exit prison and are offered little assistance with reintegration.

A number of communities spoke of an improving relationship with police services. In Sioux Lookout, the First Step Women’s Shelter staff said the Ontario Provincial Police respond immediately to reports of missing Aboriginal women and will conduct an ongoing search until they find her.<sup>46</sup> Kari Thomason, a community outreach worker with the Métis Child and Family Services Society, said that trust has been developed over the past 10 years between the police and the women in the sex trade so that now the women are starting to report bad dates.<sup>47</sup>

Police services spoke of challenges with funding and resources. Funding agreements with Aboriginal police agencies result in different levels of pay for the various police services. On-reserve police were said to be underfunded when compared to their neighbouring communities.

The Committee heard from Staff Sergeant Mike Bartkus of the Edmonton Police Service of the concerted and innovative efforts to address violence against Aboriginal women, with a special focus on domestic violence. Staff Sergeant Bartkus said that receiving more resources depends on a paradigm shift in the community that would prioritize the issue of violence against Aboriginal women.<sup>48</sup>

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44 *Evidence*, Kate Rexe, Director, Sisters in Spirit, Native Women’s Association of Canada, April 21, 2010.

45 *Evidence*, Kim Pate, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, February 8, 2011.

46 Site visit, First Step Women’s Shelter, Sioux Lookout, January 14, 2011.

47 *Evidence*, Kari Thomason, Community Outreach Worker, Métis Child and Family Services Society, January 21, 2011.

48 *Evidence*, Mike Bartkus, Domestic Offender Crimes Section, Edmonton Police Service, January 21, 2011.

## SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALING

A meeting with a group of Aboriginal women and service-providers at the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre in Prince Albert concluded with witnesses telling the Committee: “We are a grieving nation. If only people took time to get to know who we are.” Indeed, the Committee has heard all across Canada that the on-going legacy of colonization and the residential schools has led to a great deal of dislocation, anger and sadness. This is compounded with the ongoing stresses placed on Aboriginal people in Canada today, including poverty, sub-standard housing, and racism. All of these contribute to violence against Aboriginal women.

This report has presented some of the larger systemic issues which need to be addressed to break the cycle of violence. While it is important to reduce the range of living conditions that continue to place stress on First Nations communities, it is also important to provide healing opportunities for communities, families and individuals to help break the intergenerational cycle of violence and addictions.

Many witnesses emphasized that the needs of Aboriginal women for services had been “researched to death”. Indeed, a report entitled *Researched to Death* made a number of recommendations in 2005 which were echoed in testimony to the Committee across the country, calling for culturally relevant and holistic healing services:

What is required is on-going funding to support culturally relevant Aboriginal programming and services that are designed, delivered and implemented by healthy, Aboriginal women, Elders and community workers. The programming and services need to include a counselling component specific to intergenerational trauma issues and be delivered from a holistic approach to healing, meaning, that the victim, offender, the victims’ and offender’s family would all need support in their healing to create long term community change.<sup>49</sup>

This section will provide a brief overview of the kinds of services witnesses identified for communities, families, and individuals. These services are provided by a wide diversity of service-providers, including non-profit organizations.

### A. Community healing

Witnesses emphasized the need to support community efforts to heal communities as well as to provide opportunities for families and individuals to get the support they need to heal.

Witnesses told the Committee that Aboriginal Healing Foundation projects had allowed communities to start to address the root of violence by giving them the opportunity to tap into the strengths which exists in their communities. Witnesses emphasized the importance of supporting community-driven healing initiatives. The Committee has seen

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49 Pacific Association of First Nations Women, BC Women’s Hospital and Health Centre, BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs, *Researched to Death: B.C. Aboriginal Women and Violence*, September 2005.

how communities have shown great courage, strength and creativity in developing opportunities for their community members to re-appropriate their voices.

Ayas Men Men Squamish Nation Child and Family Services in British Columbia, for example, hosts a variety of ceremonies to develop pride within the community: Elder honouring ceremonies recognize the value of Elders, puberty ceremonies recognize an important life moment for youth, and an Honouring Our Children ceremony invites family groups of all types, including biological and foster parents, to celebrate children. Other communities have provided opportunities to reinforce traditional teachings and languages so that the community can heal from the loss of its cultural connections. For many Aboriginal communities, community healing starts with retrieving their teachings and traditions.

## **B. Supports to families and individuals**

My grandmother's and mother's life stories combined with my own experience have taught me first-hand about the intergenerational nature of violence against Aboriginal women. It starts young, with violence against Aboriginal girls, and goes far back in history.<sup>50</sup>

The violence is serious and comes in many forms, that is to say it is physical, psychological and sexual. It is more widespread, but also more serious than among non-aboriginals. It starts earlier, in childhood. It is expressed over a very long period of life. It usually starts in childhood and continues into adulthood. It is a daily occurrence, trivialized and part of a family relationship dynamic, and thus arises between spouses, and it is trans-generational.<sup>51</sup>

Witnesses described the impacts of colonization, of residential schools, and of missing and murdered Aboriginal women as being intergenerational and intimately connected with the violence that is manifest in many Aboriginal communities and families. The violence, too, becomes intergenerational, as children come to accept violence as a “normal” part of family and community life.

Across the country, witnesses identified the urgency of breaking the cycle of violence, working within the family, with violent men and with boys before they become violent. While they called for more services for women who are victims of violence, they also called for services that meet the needs of the whole family, and the men who perpetuate the violence. The Committee was reminded that while Aboriginal men are perpetrators of violence, they are also victims of ongoing colonization and oppression. Too often the only “service” available to them is incarceration, though few programs in jails and prisons are in place to assist in their healing and learning.<sup>52</sup>

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50 *Evidence*, Darlene Rigo, Collective Member, Aboriginal Women's Action Network, January 18, 2011.

51 *Evidence*, Mylène Jaccoud, Full Professor, School of Criminology, University of Montréal, as an individual, June 10, 2010.

52 *Evidence*, Lisa Michell, Chair and Organizer, Women's Memorial March of Manitoba, January 13, 2011.

Witnesses pointed out that while women were in a shelter or transition house, they often returned home to men who had received no support or services that might help them contribute to a safer family life. In that context, the Committee heard of the need for addiction services and mental health services for men; programs to help men who were being released from jail, programs to help young boys learn about healthy relationships, and programs which allow men to be peer mentors for one another and to encourage each other to maintain healthy relationships.

However, the Committee has heard that there are very few programs to help Aboriginal men address issues of violence. Service providers told the Committee that First Nations communities do not get enough money to meet the need for counselling services, either through the health funding through the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch nor through INAC's social service funding streams.

Where such programs have been developed, the Committee heard that they are welcomed by communities and intervene with children as well as adult men, to contribute to the respectful relationships that many saw as key to ending the cycle of violence.<sup>53</sup>

Across the country, successful programs are locally developed and incorporate a cultural component. For example, the Committee heard about innovative peer support programs initiated by Aboriginal men to help other men stop the cycle of violence. These include the "I am a Kind Man" model and the Warriors Against Violence group in Vancouver. These use traditional approaches and teachings.

Warriors Against Violence, a Vancouver-based organization, works with men to prevent violence and trains facilitators to take the model to other communities. Using culture and traditional values, the program brings men together to develop a spiritual connection among them, and to teach that violence is not among the traditional responsibilities men hold in Aboriginal families and communities.<sup>54</sup>

### **C. Support to deal with addictions**

In the communities, they often say it takes an entire community to raise a child.... [Many] parents don't provide any encouragement because they have alcohol and drug addiction problems. As a result, a child grows up thinking that it's perfectly normal to use these substances. And violence reigns; the children don't know where to go and they don't know what a normal life really is.<sup>55</sup>

Because it is common for the local schools in remote First Nations communities to end at grade nine, many First Nations youth move to urban centres such as Winnipeg to

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53 *Evidence*, Beverley Jacobs, Former President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, as an individual, January 18, 2011.

54 *Evidence*, Russell Wallace, Vice-President, Board of Directors, Warriors Against Violence Society, January 18, 2011.

55 *Evidence*, Mélanie Denis-Damée, Provincial Representative, Council for Young Women, Quebec Native Women Inc., June 11, 2010.

finish their high school education. The cultural dislocation and distance from their families makes them easy targets for gangs and drug dealers, drawing them into a culture of addictions.

Witnesses at all sites talked about how substance abuse, including alcohol abuse and prescription drug abuse, has a devastating impact on the whole community. They identified the high levels of alcohol and drug use as being both contributors to violence against Aboriginal people as well as a symptom of that violence.<sup>56</sup> Some described it as self-medicating, as a mechanism to cope with all the other challenges in the family and community. Generally, addiction treatment and mental health services were combined in most communities.

Further, many programs do not recognize and take into account that addictions are more potent now, and thus need longer rehabilitation periods. For Aboriginal women seeking treatment, there is a dearth of services available in many communities, and what services do exist often will not accept the women's children with them, raising the spectre of apprehension of child apprehension while in treatment. Both serve as barriers to treatment among women.

Insufficient follow-up to the programs makes it easier for people to fall back into old ways when they are returned to their communities. Witnesses suggested that there is a need for better post-addiction treatment, including reunification of the family in a supportive environment. Witnesses suggested the need for more family treatment centres, for services in or near First Nations communities so that women do not have to leave their children behind.

While the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program provides funding to First Nations communities, the Committee has heard that the funding levels are not high enough to meet the needs, nor even high enough to cover the salary of a person with the required credentials to do the job.

#### **D. Federal government funding for non-profit organizations**

There is a need for programs that go beyond crisis shelters and pilot projects. Witnesses identified the need to address the socio-economic challenges in communities, to put in place violence prevention programs starting with children, to do ongoing awareness-raising, and to put in place well-funded, long-term health and social services. The Committee heard that all levels of government need to help with the establishment of long-term projects; pilot projects are damaging because of their inconsistency and short-term nature.

Many organizations meet needs of their communities by patching together funding from various government departments and levels of government. Witnesses identified a

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56 See, for example, *Evidence*, Darlene Rigo, Collective Member, Aboriginal Women's Action Network, January 18, 2011, and *Evidence*, Barbara Lacey, Manager, Clinical Supervisor, Community Mental Health and Addictions, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, January 20, 2011.

number of concerns with the way all levels of government allocate project funding to organizations. Witnesses applauded multi-year funding programs, such as those provided through Status of Women Canada. Witnesses suggested that program funding must have more long-term options, so less work is put into applying for grants and more effort is put into providing programs.

They told the Committee that it was difficult for them to respond to short turn-around times between the announcement of funding criteria and the deadlines to submit applications for funding. Unilateral changes in funding priorities by federal and provincial/territorial governments make it difficult to continue offering successful programs to people, and make it necessary for organizations to tailor programs to meet the needs of funders rather than the needs of their communities.

Long delays in processing applications have a number of negative consequences for organizations. Smaller organizations experience a lack of continuity in the services they provide. Larger organizations sometimes shoulder the costs of continuing programs as they await a funding decision. Delays in confirming funding create challenges for service-providers, their staff, and most importantly, the clients who rely on those services.

There are other funding regulations which make it difficult for organizations to serve Aboriginal people. The inability to include the cost of food as an allowable expense in some programs poses a challenge in working with people who are coming from places of real hunger and real challenge in terms of their food security. Some organizations told the Committee that project-based funding will not allow for the organizational costs such as paying for the executive director or for the management structure. As Leslie Spillett, Executive Director, Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc., told the Committee:

The challenge is that you need a management structure to effectively administer an organization, and the project-based funds don't permit that. Reporting is a challenge. We have multiple reports, monthly reports, and we're doing it.<sup>57</sup>

## **CONTINUUM OF HOUSING**

For women seeking to escape family violence, or even to prevent it, housing challenges can serve as a major deterrent. A safe and healthy home requires adequate space for family members. To leave when violence occurs, emergency shelters must provide a place to which a woman can escape, ideally with her children. To relocate her family, even within a reserve community, requires adequate affordable housing to which she and her family can move. Aboriginal women and service providers told the Committee that these housing resources are rarely, if ever, available, leaving too many with little choice but to stay in a violent situation, or to return to one. While the situation of women in smaller and isolated communities and those living in or relocating to larger cities are different, the lack of services and shelter spaces is a constant for all Aboriginal women seeking to escape violence.

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57 *Evidence*, Leslie Spillett, Executive Director, Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc, January 13, 2011.

## **A. Shelters, transitional/second-stage housing**

When somebody is in a place where they're ready to finally leave that abusive situation, sometimes that window of opportunity is very small. Maybe they go back into the home, where they continue to be dominated, and it's not safe for them to come out until sometime later. So when those opportunities come when somebody is ready to leave, and they want to leave now, it's really imperative that we have some place to place them.<sup>58</sup>

This message from staff of a shelter in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan that is operating at 99.9% capacity highlighted for the Committee the urgency of being able to provide shelter space when a woman is ready to leave. Yet, the Committee heard across Canada that there are simply not enough shelters. Funding restrictions often result in limits on stays of as few as six days in some Quebec shelters,<sup>59</sup> to three weeks in Edmonton shelters.<sup>60</sup>

The Committee also heard that there is little second-stage or transitional housing available for Aboriginal women leaving violent situations.

### **1. Funding for shelters and second-stage housing**

We knew that we had to support the existing shelters that were underfunded and we knew that the women keep asking us for services for their partners, so with limited funding, how do you do that?<sup>61</sup>

For many years we've been trying to get funding for a women's and children's shelter within the grand council area, but many struggles have occurred, and we have not been able to access any funding.<sup>62</sup>

The Committee heard that shelters and their programs are funded from a variety of sources, ranging from INAC for some on-reserve shelters, to federal funding through Aboriginal Healing Foundation or Homeless Partnering Initiative or Status of Women Canada funding, to provincial funding through social services departments. The uncertainty of funding, its project basis, and the short-term nature of some funding programs all contribute to limit the services that can be provided to women seeking to leave violent situations.

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58 *Evidence*, Angie Bear, Community Development Worker, ISKWEW Women Helping Women Co-operative Health Centre, January 12, 2011.

59 *Evidence*, Sandra Tucker, Manager, Abuse Prevention Policy and Programs, Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association, January 20, 2011.

60 Site visit, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Edmonton, January 21, 2011.

61 *Evidence*, Lyda Fuller, Executive Director, YWCA Yellowknife; Representative, Northwest Territories Coalition Against Family Violence, January 20, 2011.

62 *Evidence*, Shirley Henderson, Chair, Women's Commission of the Prince Albert Grand Council, January 12, 2011.

The lack of second-stage housing was also evident in large and small communities across the country. Compounded with the lack of affordable housing, this shortage often forces women to make difficult choices when they leave shelters. Many still require counselling and help with life-skills issues before they can successfully transition to living on their own, but this is often not available. For too many women, this means returning to an abusive situation.

## 2. Costs to get to shelters

Aboriginal women in northern remote communities have a very unique experience, not the same as what we have in Toronto or the experience of a lot of the women around the table, in that we could take a taxi cab to a shelter, but if you have to get an airplane to fly out of your community, the option to just flee violence becomes extremely more complex. And without taking these very real circumstances into consideration, the governments, whether federal, provincial, or municipal, or our first nations governments, and our communities are not addressing the unique situation of Aboriginal women or in fact protecting their right to live free from violence and to be safe.<sup>63</sup>

The Committee heard that 70% of northern and remote communities do not have safe houses or emergency shelters.<sup>64</sup> When women in these communities have to relocate to city centres to get to a safe house, in addition to cultural and language barriers, they may be faced with costs that are not anticipated in the budgets of the service providers in their own communities or in the communities to which they must travel.<sup>65</sup> If such funds are controlled by the Band, for example, in small communities the victims may be seeking funding from relatives of the perpetrator of the violence.

In communities accessible only by plane, women fleeing to a shelter must secure a flight out of their communities. Representatives of a shelter for women in Sioux Lookout told the Committee that the shelter covers the cost of flying women out of their communities to the shelter, since these costs are not covered by communities. Whether funds were budgeted and by whom varied across the country. Further, the costs are another obstacle to leaving with children, creating another significant barrier for many women who want to leave a violent relationship.

Finally, in some cases, women aren't aware that there may be funding for them to seek services elsewhere, so they don't even consider leaving violent homes.

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63 *Evidence*, Dawn Harvard, President, Board of Directors, Ontario Native Women's Association, January 14, 2011.

64 *Ibid.*

65 *Evidence*, Christine Simard, Director of Women's Development, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, January 14, 2011.

### **3. On-reserve or off-reserve shelters?**

The Committee explored whether shelters should be built on reserves and in other smaller communities, and found that witnesses were divided about the need for shelters on reserve. While the transportation costs and cultural and language barriers suggest that a more local solution would be preferable, some witnesses suggested that in small communities where everyone knows each other, it would not be safe or appropriate to have shelters. Indeed, the Committee heard of at least one case where a shelter is being used by the community to absorb the unmet housing need of the community rather than for its initial purpose.

In this situation, as in others, witnesses cautioned against using a one-size-fits-all approach to developing and sustaining safe shelter for women who are victims of violence. In some communities, particularly larger communities, it would be useful to have a well-funded shelter. In other communities, it might be more appropriate to ensure that there is enough funding available to transport women to a shelter outside of their communities, either in a larger First Nations community or in a neighbouring city.

### **4. Culturally appropriate services**

In the non-Aboriginal safe houses, they talk a lot about feminist approaches, and women are encouraged to find a certain self-sufficiency when they are victims of violence. They are encouraged to take care of themselves. The often talk about being self-sufficient and taking care of themselves. However, we don't talk like that to Aboriginal women. These women don't want to leave their husbands. They want to unite the family. In their minds, when you're married, you're married for life.<sup>66</sup>

Whether shelters are provided on or off reserves, witnesses emphasized the importance of ensuring that there are culturally appropriate services available to Aboriginal women fleeing violence. The description above, offered by staff at an Aboriginal shelter in Montreal, is similar to what the Committee heard across the country. Witnesses emphasized that people in First Nations communities view violence in the wider context of the family and community, so services that emphasized the need to break with the past and to focus on their own safety alone would not address that larger context.

### **B. Housing availability and affordability**

The current situation for a woman coming to Transition House, especially when they have to leave their community and come to an urban area—most of the women live in rural communities—is that they have to go back to their same situation, to their same community, because there's no affordable housing for them.<sup>67</sup>

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66 *Evidence*, France Robertson, Coordinator for the women's shelter and non-violence file, Quebec Native Women Inc., June 10, 2010.

67 *Evidence*, Natalie McBride, Executive Director, Gignoo Transition House Inc., June 4, 2010.

Housing is one of the core issues we work on at Pivot. While violence happens to women from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, for women living in poverty, lack of access to safe, affordable housing options is a major issue in terms of preventing violence, escaping violence, and creating a life of safety for themselves and their children.<sup>68</sup>

Housing issues were raised by witnesses right across the country. In urban centres, the issues were affordability, and appropriateness: in almost every hearing, witnesses said that women relying on social assistance were unable to find housing that was safe and adequate for their families without spending not only the housing portion of their assistance cheque, but also a substantial part of money intended to feed their families. The Committee also heard that in many communities, what affordable housing did exist has been increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few landlords, which can lead to rising rents. Given the racism that was described by many witnesses, particularly with respect to housing, fewer landlords owning more and more units makes Aboriginal families more vulnerable to discrimination by landlords.

The Committee also heard that the housing challenge is greatest in the North and on reserves. For example, workers at the Qimaavik Transition House at the YWCA in Iqaluit told the Committee that there is a six-year waiting list for housing in that city, making it difficult for women to leave the shelter. Consequently, that facility is consistently operating at 105–150% capacity. Similarly, in Labrador and many other parts of the country, there is no or very little second-stage housing available.

Witnesses told Committee members that overcrowded and substandard housing causes stressors that can trigger violence. The vast majority of witnesses emphasized the need for more investment in housing in Aboriginal communities, including second-stage housing for those moving out of shelters. Many witnesses told the Committee that the lack of housing options results in Aboriginal women having no choice but to return to violent homes.

## **RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT ABORIGINAL WOMEN AS LEADERS**

For First Nations women living on reserve, the Committee heard that Band Councils are responsible for making decisions about how resources are allocated. This leads to differences between communities in how they deal with specific incidents of violence. This discretionary power extends to decisions such as who will be flown out of a remote community to access the services of a women's shelter. Ensuring that Chiefs and Councils are sensitive to the needs of women who face violence requires ongoing work on the part of Aboriginal women in those communities.

Aboriginal women who addressed the Committee talked about the need to support grassroots, regional and national Aboriginal women's groups to raise awareness about issues of concern to women and their families, and to facilitate the emergence of strong Aboriginal women who can advocate for those needs.

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68 *Evidence*, Darcie Bennett, Campaigns Director, Pivot Legal Society, January 18, 2011.

Witnesses told the Committee that the implementation of the *Indian Act* had profoundly changed the role of women in many Aboriginal societies. The example provided by Dawn Harvard, President, Board of Directors, Ontario Native Women's Association, is representative of what the Committee heard:

[Aboriginal women] are still suffering from the legacy of that, having had to fight for years to try to regain access to that ability to function, to be Aboriginal women contributing members of [their] communities, and to have authority and responsibility in [their] families....<sup>69</sup>

Chief Angus Toulouse explained:

Our women enjoyed incomparable respect and even reverence from their families and from their nations. For example, the Haudenosaunee maintained a system of governance whereby the women held unprecedented political and social powers. They owned all the property of their nations. They maintained their own political councils in a clan system and had the power to remove their chiefs from office if they failed in their duties. Everyone had specific responsibilities to their families, to their nations, and to the Creator. Interwoven with these responsibilities was an essential principle that our collective existence depends upon our ability to demonstrate respect and to provide safety and security for the women of our nation. It's important to point out how things were in the past in order to understand the full horror of the context in which we, and in particular our women, now live.<sup>70</sup>

While Aboriginal women disproportionately interact with services within the community, they are not well represented in governance roles. The Committee has heard that it is critical that voices of Aboriginal women are heard in developing response to violence. Aboriginal women have called for ongoing support to access leadership positions.

## **RACISM**

We live in a society in which Indians are still thought of as inferior. We're still thought of as we were historically, as being primitive. So part of this whole process is not only about what's needed for Aboriginal communities, but it's also what's needed for white mainstream communities to educate themselves about the role they play as the descendants of treaties,<sup>71</sup> as descendants of colonizers, because they also need to end the violence of racism.

The Committee was disturbed at the level of racism with which Aboriginal people are confronted. The Committee heard that this racism comes from other Canadians in the general public and through the media. Most disturbing of all was the systemic nature of the racism, affecting Aboriginal women in their relations with the government agencies tasked

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69 *Evidence*, Dawn Harvard, President, Board of Directors, Ontario Native Women's Association, January 14, 2011.

70 *Evidence*, Chief Angus Toulouse, Ontario Regional Chief, Chiefs of Ontario, January 14, 2011.

71 *Evidence*, Beverley Jacobs, Former President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, as an individual, January 18, 2011.

with providing them security, health and social services. Racism is sometimes overt, other times systemic.

This racism has many harmful consequences. In the first place, witnesses talked about the internalization of the racism by Aboriginal women which results in them not questioning the violence and poor treatment they receive at the hands of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Many witnesses shared personal stories of their experience of racism, such as the story of Sandra Lockhart:

I went through the whole system of education, foster care, and residential school, and what I learned to do through all of that to survive emotionally and feel some kind of dignity was to internalize that racism. I hated being Aboriginal. I was ashamed of Aboriginal people. I missed all the teachings from my grandmother.<sup>72</sup>

Secondly, the Committee heard that racism which turns a blind eye to the violence faced by Aboriginal women renders them even more vulnerable to violence. Justice for Girls in Vancouver told the Committee that Aboriginal girls are targeted by violent men partly because these men count on the non-response of the police and the courts to violence against Aboriginal women.

Many witnesses told the Committee that Aboriginal women are afraid of social services, hospitals, government services and police—some choose to live with violence rather than reach out from help from these organizations.

The discussion of racism was raised in the context of the many Aboriginal women who have gone missing or been murdered in Canada. Witnesses commented that the media feeds into racism in the relegation of coverage of tragedies involving Aboriginal people to inside and back pages of newspapers. As well, the media treatment of missing and murdered Aboriginal women often links these women with “at-risk behaviour” such as hitchhiking or prostitution. Jo-Anne Fiske shared a story which illustrated this:

When women go missing on Highway 16, if it's a young, blonde woman... that child's picture [is] on the first or second page in every paper in the nation for days. At the same time, one of my extended family members was found dead, and the only comment in the paper was that she was found dead where prostitutes were known to be. Well, thank you just the same, but it's also where I walk my dog and play with my granddaughter and have other family activities. The fact that it was a public park was never mentioned. Her name was not mentioned—a grievous problem with media, public education, and the authorities that so identified her.<sup>73</sup>

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72 *Evidence*, Sandra Lockhart, Chair, Aboriginal Peoples Committee, Public Service Alliance of Canada, as an individual, January 20, 2011.

73 *Evidence*, Jo-Anne Fiske, Professor of Women's Studies, University of Lethbridge, as an individual, January 21, 2011

Witnesses emphasized the need for educating non-Aboriginal people “about the role they play as the descendants of treaties, as descendants of colonizers, because they also need to end the violence of racism.”<sup>74</sup> There is a need to address racism at all levels of society and to incorporate awareness-raising at the earliest levels. Witnesses told the Committee that the whole mainstream education system needs to change the way history is taught, and talked about the need for ongoing training in Aboriginal awareness for all service-providers, to develop relations of understanding, respect and trust.

Racism arises not only from a lack of education and training of the general public, but also from the policies and legislation arising throughout Canada’s history. The Committee has heard that this systemic, institutionalized racism continues to limit the ability of Aboriginal women to benefit from the opportunities available to other Canadians. Though policies and practices may appear neutral on the surface, they can lead to terrible acts of discrimination, whether these are intentional or not. The *Indian Act* is a case in point. Many witnesses identified the *Indian Act* as a source of discrimination for First Nations people, and more specifically, for First Nations women. One witness even suggested that “the *Indian Act* inspired the apartheid regime in South Africa.”<sup>75</sup> Muriel Stanley Venne, President and Founder, Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, identified how systemic racism has played an ongoing role in the lives of Aboriginal people.<sup>76</sup>

For every aboriginal woman I know, the *Indian Act* was very harmful. It went from denying their rights to be an Indian to denying their own identity to everything else that's included in that act. I have stated many times that every single act of discrimination against indigenous people has been legislated by the government. There is no other way to state that. Everything that has been done has been legislated by the government. When they were taking away the children, by law they had no defence. We as Canadians need to address the horrific outcome of legislating against... the people of this land.<sup>77</sup>

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74 *Evidence*, Beverley Jacobs, Former President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, as an individual, January 18, 2011.

75 *Evidence*, Mylène Jaccoud, Full Professor, School of Criminology, University of Montréal, as an individual, June 10, 2010.

76 *Evidence*, Muriel Stanley Venne, President and Founder, Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, January 21, 2011.

77 *Ibid.*



# APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p><b>Assembly of First Nations</b> Elizabeth Cloud, Women's Council</p> <p><b>Métis Nation Saskatchewan</b> Helene Johnson, Regional Director, Eastern Region 2</p> <p><b>Métis National Council</b> Wenda Watteyne, Executive Director</p> <p><b>Native Women's Association of Canada</b> Kate Rexe, Director, Sisters in Spirit</p> <p><b>Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association</b> Joyce Ford, Manager, Special Projects Tracy O'Hearn, Executive Director Sandra Tucker, Manager, Abuse Issues</p>	2010/04/21	12
<p><b>Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development</b> Line Paré, Director General, External Relations and Gender Issues Branch Mary Quinn, Director General, Social Policy and Programs Branch</p> <p><b>Department of Justice</b> Carole Morency, Acting General Counsel, Criminal Law Policy Section</p> <p><b>Department of Public Safety</b> Ed Buller, Director, Aboriginal Corrections Policy Division Daniel Sansfaçon, Acting Executive Director, National Crime Prevention Centre</p> <p><b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b> Russ Mirasty, Director General, National Aboriginal Policing Services Bob Paulson, Assistant Commissioner, Contract and Aboriginal Policing</p>	2010/04/26	13

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>As an individual</b> Michelle Mann, Lawyer and Consultant</p> <p><b>Minwaashin Lodge</b> Irene Compton, Manager, Cultural Program</p> <p><b>National Association of Friendship Centres</b> Conrad Saulis, Policy Director</p>	2010/04/28	14
<p><b>Fredericton Native Friendship Centre</b> Tamara Polchies, Executive Director</p> <p><b>Gignoo Transition House Inc.</b> Natalie McBride, Executive Director</p> <p><b>Lennox Island First Nation</b> Melissa Cooke, Women's Shelter Coordinator</p> <p><b>Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island</b> Roseanne Sark, Director of Health Program</p> <p><b>New Brunswick Aboriginal Women's Council Inc.</b> Gail Nicholas, Vice-President Sarah Rose, Representative</p> <p><b>Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network</b> Sheila Robinson, President</p> <p><b>Public Service Alliance of Canada</b> Tanna Pirie-Wilson, Female Aboriginal Representative, National Aboriginal People's Circle</p>	2010/06/04	21
<p><b>As an individual</b> Marie-Pierre Bousquet, Associate Professor, Faculty of Anthropology, University of Montreal Mylène Jaccoud, Full Professor, School of Criminology, University of Montreal</p> <p><b>Amnesty International</b> Karine Gentelet, Coordinator of Aboriginal Rights, Canadian Francophone Section Béatrice Vaugrante, Executive Director, Canadian Francophone Section</p> <p><b>Native Friendship Centre of Montreal Inc.</b> Pamela Shauk, Outreach Worker</p> <p><b>Native Women's Shelter of Montreal</b> Carrie Martin, Evaluation Coordinator</p>	2010/06/10	24

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>Native Women's Shelter of Montreal</b> Nakuset, Executive Director</p> <p><b>Quebec Native Women Inc.</b> Carole Brazeau, Justice and Public Security Coordinator Ellen Gabriel, President France Robertson, Coordinator for the women's shelter and non-violence file</p> <p><b>Stella</b> Émilie-Cloé Laliberté, General Coordinator</p>	2010/06/10	24
<p><b>As an individual</b> Renée Brassard, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Université Laval</p> <p><b>Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador</b> Grand Chief Anne Archambault Stéphane Savard, Suicide and Family Violence Prevention Counsellor, First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission</p> <p><b>Huron-Wendat First Nation Council</b> Ann Desnoyers, Social Worker, Health, Leisure and Social Services Department Guy Duchesneau, Social Services Coordinator, Health, Leisure and Social Services Department</p> <p><b>Quebec Native Women Inc.</b> Mélanie Denis-Damée, Provincial Representative Substitute Representative, Council for Young Women</p>	2010/06/11	25
<p><b>Mushuau Innu First Nation</b> Kathleen Benuen, Health Director Joanne McGee, Health Consultant</p> <p><b>Nunatsiavut Government</b> Michelle Kinney, Deputy Minister, Health and Social Development</p> <p><b>Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation</b> Germaine Benuen, Director of Operations</p> <p><b>Violence Prevention Labrador</b> Carmen Hancock, Executive Director</p>	2010/10/26	32

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>Department of Health</b></p> <p>Eric Costen, Director, Mental Health and Addictions, Community Programs Directorate, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch</p> <p>Kathy Langlois, Director General, Community Programs Directorate, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch</p>	2010/12/14	44
<p><b>Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development</b></p> <p>Alia Butt, Director, Policy and Reconciliation</p> <p>Aideen Nabigon, Director General, Settlement Agreement Policy and Partnerships</p>		
<p><b>ISKWEW Women Helping Women Co-operative Health Centre</b></p> <p>Angie Bear, Community Development Worker</p>	2011/01/12	45
<p><b>Prince Albert Métis Women's Association Inc.</b></p> <p>Lisa Goulet-Cook, Urban Aboriginal Coordinator</p>		
<p><b>Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation</b></p> <p>Wanda Daigneault, Treasurer</p> <p>Eva McCallum, Representative</p>		
<p><b>Women's Commission of the Prince Albert Grand Council</b></p> <p>Shirley Henderson, Chair</p>		
<p><b>As an individual</b></p> <p>Kelly Gorkoff, Professor of Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg</p>	2011/01/13	46
<p><b>Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs</b></p> <p>Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation</p> <p>Francine Meeches, Representative, Swan Lake First Nation</p>		
<p><b>Government of Manitoba</b></p> <p>Carolyn Loeppky, Assistant Deputy Minister, Child and Family Services</p>		
<p><b>Ikwe Widdjiitiwin, Women's Crisis Shelter</b></p> <p>Sharon Morgan, Executive Director</p>		
<p><b>John Howard Society of Manitoba, Inc.</b></p> <p>Kate Kehler, Assistant Executive Director</p>		

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>John Howard Society of Manitoba, Inc.</b> Melanie Nimmo, Member of the Board, Assistant Professor in Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg</p>	2011/01/13	46
<p><b>Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc.</b> Suzanne Chartrand, Representative Shannon Cormier, Project Facilitator Val James, Representative Leslie Spillet, Executive Director</p>		
<p><b>Native Women's Transition Centre</b> Margaret Marin, Board Member Jojo Marie Sutherland, Staff Member</p>		
<p><b>Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad (Ndinawe)</b> Cathy Denby, Child and Youth Care Program Instructor, Red River College</p>		
<p><b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b> Bill Robinson, Commanding Officer, "D" Division, Winnipeg</p>		
<p><b>Stopping Violence Against Aboriginal Women Action Group</b> Shawna Ferris, Member, Assistant Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, University of Manitoba Lisa Forbes, Member, Asset Building Program Coordinator, Supporting Employment &amp; Economic Development (SEED) Winnipeg Inc.</p>		
<p><b>Women's Memorial March of Manitoba</b> Lisa Michell, Chair and Organizer</p>		
<p><b>Chiefs of Ontario</b> Chief Angus Toulouse, Ontario Regional Chief</p>	2011/01/14	47
<p><b>Equay-wuk (Women's Group)</b> Darlene Angecone, Coordinator, Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership Project Karen Kuzemczak, Community Wellness Facilitator</p>		
<p><b>Beendigen Inc.</b> Patricia Jurivee, Executive Director</p>	2011/01/14	48
<p><b>Catholic Family Development Centre</b> Rob Barrett, Executive Director Ron Bourret, Board of Directors</p>		

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>Catholic Family Development Centre</b> Carol Cline, Program Manager</p> <p><b>Nishnawbe Aski Nation</b> Lorraine Crane, Member of the Women's Council Christine Simard, Director of Women's Development Theresa Sutherland, Member of the Women's Council</p> <p><b>Ontario Native Women's Association</b> Dawn Harvard, President, Board of Directors</p> <p><b>Robinson Superior Treaty Women's Council</b> Marlene Pierre, Advisor</p>	2011/01/14	48
<p><b>As an individual</b> Janine Benedet Beverley Jacobs, Former President of the Native Women's Association of Canada Jane Miller-Ashton, Professor, Criminology Department, Kwantlen Polytechnic University</p> <p><b>Aboriginal Women's Action Network</b> Laura Holland, Collective Member Darlene Rigo, Collective Member</p> <p><b>B.C. CEDAW Group</b> Shelagh Day, Representative Sharon D. McIvor, Representative</p> <p><b>Battered Women's Support Services</b> Lisa Yellow-Quill, Co-manager, Aboriginal Women's Program</p> <p><b>Ending Violence Association of British Columbia</b> Marilyn George, Representative, Outreach Services Coordinator, Smithers, British Columbia Tracy Porteous, Executive Director</p> <p><b>Justice for Girls</b> Asia Czapska, Advocacy Director</p> <p><b>Pivot Legal Society</b> Darcie Bennett, Campaigns Director</p> <p><b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b> Bruce Hulan, Team Commander, Project EPANA</p>	2011/01/18	49

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b>  Russ Nash, Officer in Charge,  E Division Major Crime Section</p> <p><b>Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs</b>  Michelle Corfield, Representative</p> <p><b>Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter</b>  Hilla Kerner, Collective Member</p> <p><b>Walk4Justice</b>  Gladys Radek, Co-founder  Bernie Williams, Co-founder</p> <p><b>Warriors Against Violence Society</b>  Russell Wallace, Vice-President,  Board of Directors</p> <p><b>Women Against Violence Against Women</b>  Darla Laughlin, Aboriginal Outreach Coordinator and Youth  Counsellor</p> <p><b>YWCA of Vancouver</b>  Nancy Cameron, Program Manager,  Crabtree Corner Community Program  Leslie Wilkin, Violence Prevention Worker,  Crabtree Corner Community Program</p>	2011/01/18	49
<p><b>As an individual</b>  Sandra Lockhart,  Chair, Aboriginal Peoples Committee of the Public Service  Alliance of Canada</p> <p><b>Centre for Northern Families</b>  Arlene Hache, Executive Director</p> <p><b>Native Women's Association of the Northwest  Territories</b>  Sharon Thomas, Representative  Therese Villeneuve, President</p> <p><b>Northwest Territories Coalition against Family  Violence</b>  Lyda Fuller, Representative,  Executive Director, YWCA Yellowknife  Lorraine Phaneuf, Representative,  Executive Director, Status of Women Council of the Northwest  Territories</p>	2011/01/20	50

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association</b></p> <p>Sandra Tucker, Manager, Abuse Prevention Policy and Programs</p> <p><b>Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority</b></p> <p>Barbara Lacey, Manager, Clinical Supervisor, Community Mental Health and Addictions</p> <p>Sheila Nelson, Manager, Community and Family Services, Child Protection Program</p> <p><b>YWCA Yellowknife</b></p> <p>Lyda Fuller, Executive Director</p>	2011/01/20	50
<p><b>As an individual</b></p> <p>Jo-Anne Fiske, Professor of Women's Studies, University of Lethbridge</p> <p>Jennifer Koshan, Professor, University of Calgary</p> <p>Sandra Lambertus, Author</p> <p><b>Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society</b></p> <p>Josie Nepinak, Executive Director</p> <p><b>Edmonton Police Service</b></p> <p>Mike Bartkus, Domestic Offender Crimes Section</p> <p>Nancy Leake, Criminal Intelligence Analyst, Serious Crimes Branch</p> <p>Bill Spinks, Inspector, Serious Crime Branch</p> <p><b>Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women</b></p> <p>Muriel E. Stanley Venne, President &amp; Founder</p> <p><b>Little Warriors</b></p> <p>Jo-Anne Hansen, Representative</p> <p><b>Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Women Calgary</b></p> <p>Suzanne Dzus, Founder and Chairperson</p> <p><b>Metis Child and Family Services Society</b></p> <p>Donald Langford, Executive Director</p> <p>Kari Thomason, Community Outreach Worker</p> <p><b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b></p> <p>Mike Sekela, Criminal Operations Officer, "D" Division</p>	2011/01/21	51

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Stolen Sisters Awareness Walk and Movement</b> Gloria Neapetung, Representative April Eve P. Wiberg, Founder	2011/01/21	51
<b>Native Women's Association of Canada</b> Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, President Claudette Dumont-Smith, Executive Director Katharine Irgaut, Acting Director, Sisters In Spirit	2011/02/03	53
<b>Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies</b> Kim Pate, Executive Director	2011/02/08	54
<b>Government of Manitoba</b> Nahanni Fontaine, Special Advisor on Aboriginal Women's Issues, Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet		
<b>Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg</b> Bridget Tolley, Member Caitlin Tolley, Representative, Youth Representative for Quebec, Assembly of First Nations Gilbert W. Whiteduck, Chief		
<b>Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council</b> Courtney Wheelton, Representative, Project Coordinator, Yukon Sisters in Spirit		
<b>Department of Indian Affairs and Northern            Development</b> Corinne Baggley, Senior Policy Analyst, Social Programs Reform Directorate Sheilagh Murphy, Director General, Social Policy and Programs Branch	2011/02/15	56
<b>Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations</b> Patricia Schuster, Executive Director, Saskatchewan First Nations' Women's Commission		
<b>First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of            Canada</b> Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director		
<b>Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation</b> Sharon Matthews, Vice-President, Assisted Housing Sector	2011/02/17	57

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>Department of Human Resources and Skills Development</b></p> <p>Barbara Lawless, Director General, Homelessness Partnering Secretariat</p> <p>Gail Mitchell, Director General, Community Infrastructure Branch, Regional Operations Sector</p> <p>Michael Rice, Senior Policy Advisor, Innovation and Partnerships Directorate</p> <p><b>National Aboriginal Housing Association</b></p> <p>Charles Hill, Executive Director</p> <p>Jim Lanigan, Treasurer</p> <p><b>Nunavut Housing Corporation</b></p> <p>Alain Barriault, President</p>	2011/02/17	57
<p><b>Department of Justice</b></p> <p>Lisa Hitch, Senior Counsel, Office of the Senior General Counsel, Family, Children and Youth Section</p> <p>Hon. Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice</p> <p>Marc Rozon, Director, Innovations, Analysis and Integration Directorate</p> <p><b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b></p> <p>Kevin Jones, Acting Director General, National Aboriginal Policing Services</p> <p><b>Status of Women Canada</b></p> <p>Hon. Rona Ambrose, Minister for Status of Women</p> <p>Suzanne Clément, Coordinator, Head of Agency, Office of the Coordinator</p> <p>Linda Savoie, Director General, Women's Program and Regional Operations</p>	2011/03/01	58

## **APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS**

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### **Organizations and individuals**

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**Amnesty International**

**Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador**

**Brassard, Renée**

**Government of Manitoba**

**John Howard Society of Manitoba, Inc.**

**Lennox Island First Nation**

**Murphy, Juanita**

**National Association of Friendship Centres**

**Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network**

**Nishnawbe Aski Nation**

**Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres**

**Pivot Legal Society**

**Public Service Alliance of Canada**

**Stella**

**Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle**

**Royal Canadian Mounted Police**

**Walk4Justice**

**Fiske, Jo-Anne**

**Lambertus, Sandra**

**Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society**

**Edmonton Police Service**

**Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women**

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## **Organizations and individuals**

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**Stolen Sisters Awareness Walk and Movement**

**First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada**

# MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings ([Meetings Nos. 12, 13, 14, 21, 24, 25, 32, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 60 and 61](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.  
Chair

