

## **NWAC RESPECTS FAMILIES' RIGHT TO HAVE A VOICE AT MMIWG INQUIRY**

April 26, 2018

OTTAWA, ON – The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) continues to support the right for families to be heard at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Our hope is that the announcement of a new Executive Director at the National Inquiry will allow for positive outcomes.

In spite of the ongoing operational shifting, we will steadfastly remain focused on the families. The instability from the beginning has caused harm and retraumatization to many families. NWAC President Francyne Joe stated, "Upon hearing about another operational change at the inquiry, our first reaction was that we need to speak to families immediately. First and foremost, we offer our love and support to the survivors of violence and families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls that continue their journey of healing. We have communicated directly with as many families and Elders as possible since learning of the operational changes, most of whom are in favour of supporting an extension of the Inquiry. We also sympathize with the families and support those that have been so harmed by operational inconsistencies and Inquiry actions that they feel they can no longer support this inquiry. However, as long as there are families who want to use this inquiry as a vehicle for healing and truth telling, we will work to ensure their voices are heard."

The operational shortcomings have unfortunately impeded the journey to healing from the beginning. It is noted that Mr. Calvin Wong's guidance as interim Executive Director did spawn favourable outcomes. NWAC is also pleased that the inquiry has chosen an Indigenous woman to guide the inquiry and we look forward to productive conversations with Jennifer Moore Rattray as she assumes the new role.

President Joe went on to say, "Too many voices of Indigenous women have already been silenced as a result of the continuing crisis of missing and murdered women. To stop the process now would mean more Indigenous voices will be silenced by virtue of families no longer having the ability to speak their truth at the inquiry."

NWAC will offer our third report card on performance of the National Inquiry in the coming days, offering definitive insights and recommendations. It is essential their right to be heard is respected and from that, we continue to hope for a successful outcome from the National Inquiry. NWAC will always stand with the mothers and families to ensure their voices will be heard and the healing continues.

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The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women. NWAC is an aggregate of thirteen Native women's organizations from across Canada and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1974.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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