

MEDIA RELEASE

NWAC CALLS ON MANITOBA HYDRO AND RCMP TO TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALLEGED ABUSE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN

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Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada



The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is saddened, but not surprised, by the sexual abuse allegations of Manitoba Hydro employees against Indigenous women from the 1950s - 1980s. NWAC continuously speaks out on the horrific, violent actions carried out by energy industries against Indigenous women and calls on Manitoba Hydro and the RCMP to take accountability for the alleged abuse against Indigenous women.

"The rates of sexual exploitation and violence against Indigenous women didn't just appear from nothing, they are a process of history," said NWAC's President, Francyne Joe. "Sexual violence is nothing new for Indigenous women. It is the history of a war against our people. A war taken out on our women."

The Clean Environment Commission report released in 2018 included cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) failure to take the complaints of Indigenous women seriously. These allegations highlight the past and present connections between the energy industry, policing, and the ongoing epidemic of violence against Indigenous women in Canada. This is especially evident in resource heavy regions like Manitoba.

The destructive and often forced practices of resource extraction demonstrate how colonialist conquest and genocide continue today. The simultaneous violence against the land and Indigenous peoples, disproportionately affects women and girls.

"It is the same ethic that allows industries to feel entitled to desecrate our sacred lands that allows them to feel entitled to the bodies of our women and children," said Joe.

These experiences are well documented in the more than 1000 cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women in the past decade. "Indigenous women aren't inherently vulnerable. They are vulnerable because they are targeted," said Joe. Closer attention must be paid to the social and economic ways in which industry and development are impacting Indigenous women's safety, right to life, and the right to a life free of violence.

NWAC calls on Manitoba Hydro and the RCMP to take responsibility for their neglect and active participation in the exploitation and abuse of Indigenous women involved in these cases. Indigenous women need safe spaces to come forward and tell their stories. Additionally, to ensure accountability, Manitoba Hydro and the RCMP must submit to a collaborative review of their current process. This is to prevent the continuation of violence, to recognize their failures and to acknowledge how these failures continue to impact Indigenous women today.

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