



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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First Nations Summit recognizes the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, BC) – The First Nations Summit (FNS) today, on the National Day of Remembrance and Action to End Violence Against Women, remembers the 14 young women who were senselessly murdered 21 years ago at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. Today, the 21st anniversary of these horrific events is also a time to reflect on women who have been or continue to be subjected to acts of violence.

"It is disheartening that in this day and age, violence against women, and in particular Aboriginal women, is so prolific in our society. Statistics show that Aboriginal women in Canada have a 3.5 times higher risk of being the subject of violence" said Grand Chief Edward John of the FNS political executive and Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). "It is time for all of us to stand and work together in unity to stop the violence and create a safe environment for all women and girls".

Article 22 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the need for unity to stop violence by stating; '*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*'.

"While today is also a day to remember all missing and murdered women, we are extremely disappointed and angered to hear the BC government is planning an 'Internet only' release of the final report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI)", stated Dan Smith also of the FNS political executive.

"The BC Government should be working with Aboriginal organizations to create positive actions to stop violence against Aboriginal women. Clearly, ignoring and marginalizing the families of the missing and murdered women from the release of the final MWCI report is counter to that approach" added Mr. Smith.

The First Nations Summit is also voicing support for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) who have all passed resolutions calling on the Government of Canada to establish a public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in recent decades.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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