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# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## News Release

*For Immediate Release*  
*November 27, 2008*

### **First Nations leaders call on Federal Government to conduct a full public inquiry into missing or murdered Aboriginal Women**

**Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, BC)** – The BC First Nations Leadership Council supports the recommendation of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, urging the Government of Canada to hold a detailed public inquiry into the 511 missing or murdered Aboriginal women in the country and to resolve problems with the law enforcement system.

“Unfortunately, BC First Nations are all too familiar with the cases of missing or murdered women from our communities, including in the Pickton case. All we have to do is look at the cases in the downtown eastside or the Highway of Tears (Highway 16). It is unacceptable that Canada continues to ignore the need for an inquiry into these 511 cases”, said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

“We must learn from and act upon the senseless murders and disappearances of our loved ones. We cannot continue to allow these tragedies to fall by the wayside; we must continue to fully advocate for the victims and their families by calling on Canada and the RCMP to conduct an immediate public inquiry and expand investigations in order to prevent further senseless and tragic deaths”, added Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

Both the BC First Nations Leadership Council and the National Assembly of First Nations have Public Safety Cooperation Protocols with the RCMP. The Protocols are an indication of First Nations’ desire to work with law enforcement agencies to develop their relationships through mutual respect and trust and to outline strategies to address community safety issues.

“In the spirit of the Protocol First Nations have signed with the RCMP, the First Nations Leadership Council is urging Canada and the RCMP to examine options to strengthen their response to these unsolved cases, thus preventing similar tragedies and providing answers and peace of mind to the grieving families” concluded Regional Chief Shawn Atleo of the BC Assembly of First Nations.

In a recent report of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the committee indicated Canada must explain why law enforcement agencies have failed to deal with the disappearance and murder of Aboriginal women across Canada and urged Canada to conduct an inquiry into the outstanding cases of 511 missing or murdered Aboriginal women and to resolve problems with the law enforcement system.

