

# Serpent River First Nation

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## OPEN LETTER

**Wednesday, August 27, 2014**

**Dear Colleagues:**

- Ontario Premier, CoF Chairperson Honorable Liberal leader, Kathleen Wynne
- Assembly of First Nations Interim National, Chief Ghislain Picard
- National Aboriginal Women's Association of Canada, Ms. Michelle Audette
- Provincial and Territorial Aboriginal Leaders
- Premiers and Territorial Leaders

**Re: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women – Provincial and Territorial Action**

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Today as the Council of the Federation meets to discuss a critical agenda, I am urging you to consider and put a motion forward to secure a strong CoF mandate today on the following:

- 1) That within each of your respective legislatures and provincial parliaments, that motions be put forward and bills established making **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women** a formal priority under your respective provincial or territorial government;
- 2) That each respective provincial or territory line ministry, (Attorney General, Community Safety and Corrections, etc.) and government agency, (mental health, police services, etc.) be established as strategic partners in a provincial and territorial government action plan on the matter of **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women**;
- 3) That immediate investments be considered in each province and territory and that a motion come forward in your talks during today's Council of the Federation, that establishes a nation-wide commitment to convene a roundtable, and that this roundtable take immediate steps with all Aboriginal Groups and communities at the provincial and territorial levels to establish consortium plans and strategies to begin dealing with achievable efforts to eliminate the tragedy of **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women** in Canada;
- 4) That each respective province and territory support not only the ongoing effort for a national independent inquiry on the tragedy of **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women** in Canada, but that each province and territory support and give direction through its own processes to undertake comprehensive reviews, studies and/or full independent inquiries.

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**Our Vision** *Serpent River First Nation will have self-sufficient people within a community of caring and compassionate families.*

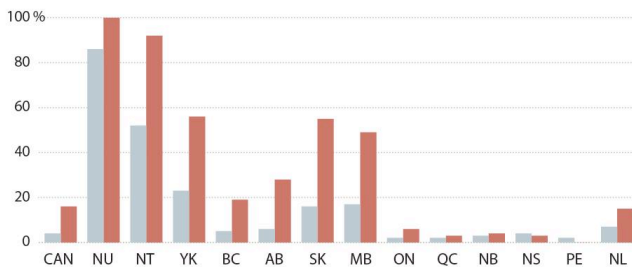
**Our Mission** *Serpent River First Nation will use all available financial, human, natural, technological and cultural resources to achieve self-sufficiency through the efforts of all Community Members. Our strong and unique cultural and spiritual identity will drive us to ensure a healthy community that is safe and secure for all generations.*

The issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in this country is a mark of deep tragedy that can only be resolved through strategic partnerships, commitments and investments. I want to thank all Council of the Federation members for taking up this important cause and heeding the calls for an independent national inquiry. Answers are needed so that action can be direct and successful. Your efforts are beyond vital.

### CANADA'S MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN

Between 1980 and 2012, there were 1,017 Aboriginal female victims of homicide in Canada, which represents roughly 16 per cent of all female homicides — far greater than their four per cent representation in Canada's female population.

ABORIGINAL FEMALES    % OF POPULATION    % OF FEMALE HOMICIDES



SOURCE: RCMP; STATISTICS CANADA

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Families and friends of Indigenous women and girls, who've gone missing or were murdered, are desperate for answers. Many times, these families and friends have gone above and beyond their means to get the word out to the public about losing their loved ones. If not for them, many of us would not know that there are nearly 1,200 **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women** in Canada. The fact that one particular group in this country is systematically being assaulted makes this issue a societal problem that should be of national concern. A national inquiry into MMIW is necessary to at the very least address the disconnect that exists between police and families on both sides of national

tragedy. The point of my letter is that despite the fact that the Conservative Government of Canada chose not to proceed with this important matter, you can and your colleagues should consider the same!

*Premier Wynne*, your leadership on this matter is critical and should be commended. Your position taken recently is one that was not just cultivated over the death of Tina Fontaine on August 17<sup>th</sup>, your position on Aboriginal issues, human rights and women's issues, has always been a hallmark of your leadership in Ontario. These are the exact type strengths that we need in combatting the issue of **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women** in this country and in each respective province and territory.

*National Chief Picard*, I am urging you, that as a voice on this important matter, you convey the specific points being suggested to the Premiers and Territorial leaders. Further, in light of the critical state that Indigenous People find their families and communities in and due to the fact that the Canadian government refuses to act; the Council of the Federation can make steps as a collective today that provide specific and immediate actions that will show immediate action in this country. "Walking the talk" means getting it done at home and in each respective community, region and province.

*Ms. Michelle Audette*, as the leader of the Native Women's Association of Canada, I look to you for your leadership in supporting and advocating strongly for this provincial/regional action. Please accept deep appreciation for your effort and commitment on this most imperative file. We desperately need results.

On behalf of our Women and those that have lost loved ones, and in memory of all **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** in Canada, please accept and where appropriate exceed these efforts and please take immediate action today.

Sincerely,

Chief Isadore Day, *Wiindawtegowinini*  
Serpent River First Nation

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