



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Minister Carolyn Bennett  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

July 24, 2017

Re: Open letter from the Coalition on MMIWG in BC regarding the National Inquiry

Dear Right Honourable Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Bennett,

The Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in BC (“the Coalition”) is comprised of family members and survivors, and more than 40 entities including Indigenous nations, Indigenous organizations, front-line service organizations, feminist and women’s organizations, legal advocates, faith-based groups and provincial organizations. The Coalition initially came together in response to the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI) in British Columbia, overseen by Commissioner Wally Oppal, and has grown since. The breadth of representation and our experience with the MWCI makes the Coalition well-positioned to respond to and inform the National Inquiry.

Our vision is that the rights and lives of Indigenous women and girls are fully upheld, honoured and protected, and that Indigenous women and girls have the right to participate fully and effectively in all of the decisions that affect their lives. We work together with a mission to eliminate systemic violence against Indigenous women and girls; uphold and demand justice for families of the murdered and disappeared; demand action and accountability from the provincial and federal government to stop the crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls; and to influence the public consciousness.

It has been close to two years since the announcement to proceed with a National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was made in December 2015. Many people, especially family members, have been frustrated by the process. Multiple people have

left significant positions within the National Inquiry with the latest resignation from Commissioner Marilyn Poitras. This disturbing trend should be cause for significant alarm for this government.

Over the years, family members, advocates and frontline workers alike have called for a National Inquiry. To have waited decades for a National Inquiry, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of this work at this moment. While we are utterly dismayed and disheartened by recent happenings within the National Inquiry, the Coalition remains steadfast in our desire to continue our longstanding work in supporting family members, raising awareness, and advocating for a public and inclusive National Inquiry, developed in partnership with Indigenous women and communities, with a commitment to implementation of results. As offered at our meeting with Minister Bennett in January, 2016, we continue to stand ready to share our expertise and experiences so that the National Inquiry does not make the same grave mistakes that the MWCI did.

As you have said yourself, Minister Bennett, the National Inquiry is seen by many survivors and families as “the chance of a lifetime” to tell their truth after waiting many years to be heard. Yet, we have learned that only a hundred family members or survivors have been asked to be witnesses in the inquiry. It was noted that due to privacy reasons, the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada has not shared the contacts obtained from the pre-inquiry phase. Those who participated in the pre-inquiry were required to sign in at the various locations where the Pre-Inquiry hearings were held.

While the government is absolutely correct in ensuring that privacy is respected, we would like to know if your department, Minister Bennett, has undertaken to pro-actively obtain the consent to share the names and contact information of the participants with the National Inquiry so that the National Inquiry can undertake to contact those individuals and to inform them of the work of the Inquiry and to invite them to participate. If the department has not yet done this work, we ask why not, and whether you will now expeditiously undertake to reach out to those individuals to seek their consent so you are able to provide the contact information to the National Inquiry as a means to assist them with their important work.

In addition, the Coalition has heard loud and clear that one of the biggest fears and concerns from families and survivors about reaching out to the National Inquiry is that they do not know what the process will look like. We cannot emphasize enough the significance of this concern given the history of colonial treatment and traumas experienced by families and survivors. The Coalition has consistently highlighted the need for ongoing consultation and transparency with impacted people and groups throughout the National Inquiry process in order to optimize participation. We acknowledge that different processes may be appropriate for different communities, making it more challenging to communicate clearly and proactively. Given that the National Inquiry has conducted its first hearing in Whitehorse, it should at the very least be able to communicate a basic procedural framework for families and survivors, and to answer the questions and concerns that many have about the process going forward. This outline of participant process needs to be communicated by better means than the existing FAQ section

on the website, which due to connectivity issues, is inaccessible to many who may wish to become involved in the Inquiry.

As indicated by Terry Ladue, a witness who participated in the Whitehorse hearings, “Dealing with this today, for me, is letting go of something that I haven’t let go of for 52 years, and that’s the anger I have towards the government officials and the anger I have towards the RCMP. “I don’t trust. You want my trust, you’ve got to earn my trust. If I see this fall apart, I’ll never trust again.”

Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Bennett, we hope you will agree that there should be no question in your mind that you and your government cannot and must not squander this opportunity. To ensure the success of the National Inquiry, it must go forward in a respectful way; to that end, much needs to be addressed in order for this Inquiry to reach its potential.

For your reference, we have attached our February 13, 2016, submission to your government regarding the design of the National Inquiry, as well as notes from a January 12, 2016 meeting with Minister Bennett regarding the framing of the National Inquiry. Many of the recommendations within this submission hold true today, and must be addressed for a National Inquiry to meet the needs of those affected by its work. We also list a number of foundational issues below, especially pertaining to the Terms of Reference, which have been previously raised but remain outstanding. It is not too late to ensure that the National Inquiry is a success and we call on you to undertake meaningful action to address the following:

- 1) Families, survivors, families of the heart and friends must be empowered to participate in this Inquiry. This requires clear and concise communication from the National Inquiry. This means transparency and a shift from a colonial, top-down approach. This also means recognizing that families and survivors are the ones with the solutions and vision. Given that different communities may wish for different processes, we are mindful of the dilemma faced by the National Inquiry in developing informed processes while upholding transparency and good communication. At the very least, we suggest that a basic framework could be communicated, subject to community-specific modifications.
- 2) There is no explicit provision to examine the role policing has had in causing or contributing to the violence against Indigenous women and girls. The RCMP and other police departments, such as the Vancouver Police Department, have an extremely damaged relationship with Indigenous communities, and ignoring this reality is deeply problematic. Several Indigenous women and families in Canada have reported instances of racism, brutality, and negligence on the part of law enforcement. While the Commissioners may be able to look into this if they choose under the Terms of Reference, we feel that this must be an explicit mandate.
- 3) The Terms of Reference places emphasis on the examination of systemic causes of violence, proper and inclusive accommodations for victims and witnesses, and healing

for families and communities. The Coalition is pleased that the federal government has included these provisions, as British Columbia has failed to make significant progress on many of the recommendations from the MWCI, and has largely ignored these issues and alienated families. That said, we are also concerned that without a provision specifically for the investigation of policing, the National Inquiry will not lead to tangible change. The Coalition notes that systemic causes have been studied previously, and urges the National Inquiry to review existing reports and begin addressing these systemic causes.

- 4) The Terms of Reference state that if family members wish to contest old cases or report misconduct on the part of the police, the Commissioners are to direct them towards the “appropriate authorities”—the same authorities who caused them this injustice in the first place. This does not, in any shape or form, provide families with proper or adequate redress, or any form of closure or justice.
- 5) There must be an accountability framework in place to ensure that final recommendations from the Inquiry are fully resourced and implemented. It has previously been acknowledged that the BC provincial government cherry-picked which recommendations of the MWCI to implement (and which would be dismissed) without consulting with Indigenous community members and organizations. This cannot happen with the National Inquiry.
- 6) Provinces, territories, and federal authorities must work together at all levels to make this Inquiry a success. Progress on this issue is too valuable to be hampered by bureaucratic processes. For example, the recently announced Family Information Liaison Units (FILU) in BC were delayed due to the Provincial Election, which is unacceptable as this is a non-partisan issue. There must also be a coordinated strategy towards addressing rural and urban separation, as well as the fact that many affected by this tragedy move from place to place and may be affected by hearings and processes beyond one province, territory, or region.

The Coalition was pleased that the federal government mandated the National Inquiry to examine systemic causes of violence and has taken into account the needs of vulnerable communities and witnesses. However, given the importance and the promise of the National Inquiry, we are deeply concerned about the gaps in the framework and roll out of the National Inquiry that stand to undermine the good intentions that have led to its formation. Decades of ceaseless work by women across the country calling for solutions grounded in Indigenous laws has culminated in this Inquiry.

We therefore urgently ask that you both address these critical concerns.

In the meantime, as mentioned before, we feel strongly that your government should also take immediate action to ensure support is provided to those who are still at risk today by investing in the frontline organizations that are doing valuable work in support of Indigenous women and girls. Additionally, there are intersecting issues that disproportionately affect Indigenous

women and girls which your government must immediately address. These include that the federal government must comply with multiple orders from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to be in full compliance of Jordan's Principle; that the Federal government must take immediate steps to work with provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure adequate support is provided to families and their children who are at risk or are apprehended; and, inter alia, that the federal government make an immediate investment into the development of safe, secure affordable housing for Indigenous Peoples. There is no need to wait for the National Inquiry to finish its work before providing these vital supports.

We hope you will both agree that there is much important work to do to support Indigenous women and girls to live with dignity and in safety and security. We look forward to hearing from you as we continue to carry on our work and witness in honouring all those who have gotten us this far.

Sincerely,

The Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in BC, including:

Yale First Nation Social Development  
Vancouver Council of Women, Rosemary Mallory  
Union Gospel Mission  
Union of BC Indian Chiefs  
RainCity Housing  
Myrna Cranmer, February 14<sup>th</sup> Memorial March Committee  
Jenny Kwan, MP for Vancouver East  
Holly Jarrett  
First Nations Summit  
Evelyn Youngchief, February 14<sup>th</sup> Memorial March Committee  
Downtown Eastside Power of Women Group  
Downtown Eastside Women's Center  
Christina Coad  
Carrier Sekani Family Services  
Butterflies in Spirit, Lorelei Williams  
BC Civil Liberties Association  
Battered Women's Support Services  
Amnesty International - Canada  
Aboriginal Women's Action Network, Fay Blaney

Cc: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

**Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**  
**Submission regarding National Inquiry Design**  
**February 13, 2016**

In response to the invitation to participate in the pre-inquiry process, below we have set out some of the Coalition's key recommendations with respect to the discussion questions provided. This submission builds on the 9-point document that the Coalition tabled with Minister Bennett during our January 12, 2016 meeting in Vancouver titled "A Rights Based Approach to the National Inquiry on Murders and Disappearances of Indigenous Women and Girls."

**What are the key issues that need to be addressed by the inquiry?**

The primary objective of the inquiry must be to eliminate violence against Indigenous women and girls by recognizing that Canadian governments and other state institutions have both the ability and an obligation under human rights law to address the root causes of that violence and adequately respond and investigate when it occurs. We suggest that the inquiry build on the significant amount of existing research identifying the systemic and systematic discrimination that Indigenous women and girls experience as a result of the legacy of colonialism, racism and sexism. This discrimination creates social and economic conditions that marginalize Indigenous women and girls, increase their vulnerability to violence, and adversely influence the state's response to that violence when it occurs.

In fulfilling the above objective, the inquiry must address two key issues: (1) it must identify what steps Canadian governments and institutions can take to remedy the social conditions that marginalize Indigenous women and girls and place them at disproportionate risk of violence; and (2) it must explore how Canadian police and criminal justice systems can correct past and ongoing failures in order to adequately respond to violence when it occurs.

In addressing these issues, we suggest that the inquiry must:

- Focus on Indigenous women and girls. Indigenous women and girls and male violence against them must be the central focus of the inquiry. The violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls and the state's lack of response is rooted in systemic and structural sexism that intersects with other forms of systemic oppression. The inquiry must take care to explore the role that gender discrimination plays in Indigenous women and girls' experiences of violence. Male violence against Indigenous women and girls is a tool used to maintain women's inequality and subordinates status in society, therefore, violence against Indigenous men and boys must be examined and addressed separately. Subsequent work may be necessary to address Indigenous men and boys' experiences of violence.
- Address social and economic marginalization. The mandate of the inquiry must examine Indigenous women's disproportionate experiences of:

- poverty;
- inadequate housing;
- inadequate healthcare;
- lack of access to safe transportation;
- inadequate access to legal aid to enforce fundamental rights;
- over-criminalization and over-incarceration;
- and ongoing structural discrimination within child protection systems;

Resource allocation and the participation of those with expertise on these issues within the inquiry process must ensure that these issues can be adequately and rigorously explored.

- Address political marginalization of Indigenous women. Indigenous women's political and leadership capacity has been severely undermined. The inquiry must:
  - Acknowledge and address the systemic predominance of male leadership at the expense of women's leadership;
  - Address the systematic de-funding of women's and indigenous women's organizations that advocate on these issues or support Indigenous women's autonomous leadership;
  - Ensure that Indigenous women's leadership is supported, encouraged, and that Indigenous women's voices are heard fully in the inquiry process.
- Acknowledge and examine harm to families and communities. Violence against Indigenous women and girls has broad and detrimental impacts on the families of women and girls who experience violence and on their communities. The family members have a right to diligent investigation of disappearances and murders and to redress for their loss, and the inquiry should ensure the sensitive and meaningful participation of family, adopted families, and community members to explore these issues. Many family members have concerns about inadequate or failed investigations into the violence against women and girls in their family. Cases that were closed may need to be re-opened in order to meet the needs of families and seek justice for the missing and murdered. The inquiry process should create an effective and transparent way to investigate these individual cases that will allow a continued focus on the systemic issues underlying the violence and that will not undermine potential recourse through the criminal justice system.
- Address gaps in data. Existing analyses of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada have highlighted the lack of systematic and transparent data on the actual occurrences of serious violence. The inquiry process must assess existing data collection practices and explore how these practices can be improved in consultation with experts on data collection on violence against women and girls.
- Be national in scope and take a coordinated, cross-jurisdictional national approach. Many of the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls and the

systems in place to respond to that violence are totally or partially within provincial and municipal government jurisdiction. In order for the inquiry to result in meaningful change for Indigenous women and girls, the federal government *must* seek the cooperation and involvement of all provincial, territorial and municipal governments. Without commitment to meaningful cooperation and change from all levels of government, the success of the inquiry process will be severely hindered and the ongoing lack of coordination between levels of government will continue to put Indigenous women and girls at risk.

- Utilize a human rights framework. The inquiry must be grounded in a progressive, forward-looking understanding of the rights of Indigenous people, women and girls, as well as Canada's obligation to uphold these rights. In particular, constitutional and international human rights frameworks provide effective rulers against which to measure the evidence obtained in the inquiry process and the current laws, policies and practices that do not effectively eliminate violence and discrimination against Indigenous women and girls.

These legal tools provide an already agreed upon framework regarding what is required to ensure the fulfillment of the basic human rights of Indigenous women and girls. Further, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have both issued recommendations to Canada, after their investigations into the murders and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls in Canada as a whole, and in British Columbia, in particular. These recommendations must be implemented as a matter of priority and obligation.

We do not wish for this inquiry to re-create/re-visit the work of these Commissions- we call on Canada to make the implementation of these recommendations as a 'given,' the base line of the changes that will occur, and the inquiry must be structured to investigate what additionally must be done. The inquiry should be expressly tasked with examining any recommendations which require further detail regarding how to implement effectively.

### **Who do you think should provide views or have an opportunity to participate in the inquiry?**

We strongly urge you to not repeat the mistakes of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, and note that some members of the Coalition wrote *Blueprint for an Inquiry: Learning from the Failures of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry* (MWCI), which sets out a number of necessary considerations for future inquiries and states:

- If there were only one recommendation to come from this report, it would be that commissions of inquiry that ...are called in response to the concerns of marginalized communities, must consult thoroughly at every stage with those communities and the organizations that work with those communities.

While not an exhaustive list, the following groups must have an opportunity to meaningfully participate in the inquiry process:

- The families, adopted families and families of the heart, and community members of Indigenous women and girls who have experienced violence must be able to participate in the inquiry to share their experiences of the broad-reaching impacts of violence as well as how the police and justice system responded to their experiences.
- Indigenous women and girls who have experienced and/or are currently experiencing violence.
- Indigenous women must be central participants in the inquiry process, as well as organizations that represent the interests of Indigenous women, people and organizations that work directly with them and those that advocate on their behalf.
- Women's-led and women serving organizations, service providers, outreach and support workers, and advocates whose expertise and service mandates in the issues facing murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls must be able to both provide support to and represent women and girls directly affected by the issues.
- Indigenous communities and Indigenous organizations must be fully included in the inquiry given that they are integrally connected to the murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, and have critical and unique experiences that draw upon their intimate first-hand knowledge of the very same racism, sexism and colonialism that the inquiry will be examining.
- Experts in socio-economic marginalization and systemic discrimination based on race and gender must participate in the inquiry process so that the inquiry can take advantage of existing expertise on these issues.

In addition, there are particular suggestions for inquiry process design to ensure that these groups can meaningfully participate that are explored in the section below.

### **How can the process be set up so it results in providing concrete and practical recommendations for specific actions?**

While we support the call for developing concrete and practical recommendations we caution that this call must not be taken to mean that intricate and systemic issues will be unaddressed. The highest priorities for action will obviously be those capable of bringing about the most meaningful change. While broad systemic issues might be complex and difficult to remedy, it is work that must be done to ensure that the inquiry process is effective in improving the safety of Indigenous women and girls so that they can live free from the ongoing threat of violence and fully participate in their communities. To limit the outcome of the inquiry to subjectively "practical" recommendations at the outset is a mistake.

With the above in mind, we make the following suggestions for the inquiry process to ensure that it gathers the information necessary to create meaningful recommendations for change:

- The Commissioner(s) must be independent from government and any bodies that are subject to investigation under the inquiry's mandate must not influence the inquiry process or funding allocation. As recognized after BC's Missing Women' Commission of Inquiry, experts must be chosen for their expertise and not because they can provide low-cost services or because they are soliciting involvement. Basic conflict of interest assessments must apply to inquiry staff and retained experts, and there must be complete transparency as to how and why the Commissioner(s) is/are chosen.
- Consultation and transparency with impacted groups must continue throughout (and beyond) the inquiry process, particularly with marginalized communities to ensure that any participation barriers that may arise can be addressed in a timely and effective manner.
- Culturally appropriate psychosocial, legal and other supports must be available to witnesses and participation before, during and after their participation to ensure that marginalized groups can meaningfully participate. The inquiry process should recognize that some individuals and organizations that have relevant expertise and experience do not have the resources to participate in a complex inquiry process without funding to do so, or without legal representation to navigate the process. Adequate funding and legal representation must be made available to all those individuals and groups who participate. Further, the inquiry must support the participation of Indigenous women, families and organizations who live in remote and northern communities and may wish to consider sending teams into those communities.
- Procedural protections, and flexible rules of evidence should be utilized to ensure that marginalized participants are comfortable participating, including appropriate disability accommodations as required. With input from service providers, community organizations and Indigenous organizations, creative, low-barrier, and accessible evidence gathering methods should be explored to ensure that all those with relevant expertise can meaningfully and fully participate. Inquiry staff should receive training to assist them in understanding culturally appropriate and effective ways to gather evidence and conduct legal processes.

A commitment to implement recommendations flowing from the inquiry, or a commitment to a transparent and structured post-inquiry implementation process, should be in place from the outset of the inquiry. This includes a specific budgetary commitment toward implementation of recommendations, additional to the budgetary commitment toward holding the inquiry.

### **Who should lead the inquiry?**

The inquiry should be led by Indigenous women. Their expertise, knowledge and skills should be recognized and utilized at every level throughout the process. Indigenous women and their organizations should be given the opportunity to assist other Indigenous women to participate in the inquiry's processes.

In order to ensure a broad range of knowledge and experience among those leading the process, it is suggested that there be four Commissioners chosen from different areas of the country.

**Is there anything else you would like to add to help design the inquiry?**

We urge you to remember and recognize the extreme stress that this inquiry will place on many families and communities, and ask you to ensure that the inquiry provides sufficient time to both listen to people share their stories as well as facilitate their input. This work cannot be rushed, and the process is going to be incredibly important- we need to reach a national inquiry process that the great majority of families and communities agree with, and that helps bring justice for the murdered and missing, as well as addresses the broader topic of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

**Endorsed by:**

Amnesty International Canada  
Atira Women's Resource Society  
Battered Women's Support Services  
BC Assembly of First Nations  
BC Civil Liberties Association  
Butterflies in Spirit  
Carrier Sekani Tribal Council  
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre  
Ending Violence Association of BC  
February 14th Women's Memorial March Committee  
First Nations Summit  
First United Church  
Native Women's Association of Canada  
PHS Community Services Society  
Pivot Legal Society  
Poverty and Human Rights Centre  
RainCity Housing and Support Society  
Union of BC Indian Chiefs  
Vancouver Council of Women  
Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre  
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter  
West Coast LEAF  
WISH Drop-In Centre Society  
Women Against Violence Against Women  
Jenny Kwan, MP for Vancouver East  
Holly Jarrett, Founder of #AmINext Campaign, family member  
CeeJai Julian, family member/ survivor  
Melanie Mark, MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant  
Mona Woodward, family member

**Key Points for Meeting of Coalition on MMIWG with Honourable Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, January 12, 2016**

**Re: A Rights Based Approach to the National Inquiry on Murders and Disappearances of Indigenous Women and Girls**

**1. Human Rights Framework**

- The national inquiry needs to have a human rights framework so that it can assess throughout its work what steps are necessary in order to meet Canada's constitutional and international human rights obligations. Attempts to evade responsibility or human rights obligations are wholly unacceptable.
- Human rights are evolving, and the inquiry must be grounded in a progressive, forward looking understanding of Indigenous peoples rights, women's human rights and the rights of children, as well as Canada's obligations to uphold these rights.

**2. Inclusion of Families**

- Each family has particular knowledge and information related to the disappearance and/or murder of a particular woman or girl. This valuable source of data/information must be included in the inquiry.
- Right to participate (recognized under UNDRIP) includes effective supports for family members to participate in inquiry procedures that affect their lives and well-being, including coverage of costs, social supports, counseling, legal aid, and other necessary supports
- Rights to prompt and diligent investigations, appropriate prosecution have been violated, and an independent and safe procedure for examining closed, uninvestigated or incompletely investigated cases, and prosecutions, should be a component of the national inquiry. Analysis of these investigations should inform the inquiry's findings.

**3. Indigenous Women**

- Indigenous women and violence against Indigenous women and girls must be the central focus of this inquiry. The primary goal of the inquiry must be to devise the steps so that all Indigenous women and girls can live their lives free from the threat of violence.
- The inquiry process must support and include the meaningful participation of Indigenous women and those that work with and advocate for them. The inquiry cannot repeat the same mistakes made by the Oppal inquiry in British Columbia and leave out voices that are critical to fulsome outcomes.
- Specifically, women's organizations need to be funded to support and encourage their full participation.

**4. Systemic Focus**

- The national inquiry must be focused on systemic causes of discrimination rooted in Canadian institutions and government practices and policies. The

examination of systemic causes of the violence needs to include the social and economic conditions of Indigenous women and girls, including their poverty, inadequate housing, over criminalization, lack of adequate access to detox and addictions treatment programs, and failures of the child welfare system, and the systematic de-funding of women's and indigenous women's organizations and leadership. These Canadian institutions and government practices promote violence or fail to address violence, including criminalization of men's violent behavior

## **5. National Inquiry, not Federal Inquiry**

- The national inquiry needs "buy in" from provincial and territorial governments, and needs to be able to examine systemic issues in the failure to police men's violence, and the justice system, especially alternative justice models/programs. They must also examine systemic issues in social policy and social service delivery that are understood to lie in provincial and territorial jurisdiction. A key issue identified by both the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is the lack of co-ordination between levels of government and the harm this does to the enjoyment by Indigenous women of their rights

## **6. Public Education Component**

- The national inquiry needs a public education component in order to enable it to educate the public, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, throughout its work about what is being learned and revealed about violence against Indigenous women and the harms it causes.

## **7. Incorporate Ceremony and Activities to Promote Healing**

- The national inquiry needs to be guided by Indigenous communities to incorporate appropriate protocols and ceremonies, which may differ between regions and communities.
- While it cannot be expected that healing will happen as a result of a national inquiry, input should be elicited from participants about activities that could promote healing. It may be appropriate to follow best practices from other family group meetings to provide opportunities for loved ones of missing and murdered women to come together to support each other.

## **8. Commitment to Implement Inquiry's Recommendations**

- Other inquiries have suffered from, among other things, inadequate commitment and budgets for the implementation of recommendations. Commitments should be made from the outset to ensure that the Inquiry's work does not end when investigative processes conclude and that there are specific, funded mechanisms to implement, monitor and publicly report back on Inquiry recommendations.

## **9. Pre-Inquiry Consultation**

- Ministers Bennett, Wilson-Raybould and Hajdu need to meet face to face with organizations of Indigenous women, feminist organizations that work with and advocate for Indigenous women . These groups have expertise and knowledge to offer that must also help to shape the inquiry.
- Although the Coalition is grateful for this one hour meeting, we request another meeting with Ministers Bennett, Wilson-Raybould and Hajdu in order to provide further input into the design of the inquiry, regarding the terms of reference, commissioners and other matters.
- The pre-inquiry consultation period should be long enough to ensure that the issues of design are fully canvassed and examined.

**Endorsed by:**

Amnesty International Canada

Battered Women Support Services

BC Assembly of First Nations

BC Civil Liberties Association

Butterflies in Spirit

Carrier Sekani Family Services

Carrier Sekani Tribal Council

Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

Ending Violence Association of BC

February 14<sup>th</sup> Women's Memorial March Committee

First Nations Summit

First United Church

Native Women's Association of Canada

PACE Society

PHS Community Services Society

Pivot Legal Society

Poverty and Human Rights Centre

RainCity Housing and Support Society

Reconciliation Canada

Union of BC Indian Chiefs

Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre

Vancouver Council of Women

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter

West Coast LEAF

Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) Rape Crisis Centre

Wish Drop-In Centre Society

Jenny Kwan, MP, Vancouver East

Melanie Mark, NDP Candidate for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant