



British Columbia All Chiefs' Task Force Fact Sheet

Missing and Murdered Women

Increasing deaths of many vulnerable women from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside still leaves family, friends, loved ones, and community members with an overwhelming sense of grief and loss. Over 3000 women are believed to have gone missing or been murdered in Canada since the 1970s, yet only 520 are officially recognized. Last year, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women issued this statement: "Hundreds of cases involving Aboriginal women who have gone missing or been murdered in the past two decades have neither been fully investigated nor attracted priority attention."

- ✚ B.C.'s Highway of Tears, the stretch of highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert has seen 32 women missing or murdered since 1969. Most of the victims have been young Aboriginal women. The first six victims of Canada's highest profile serial killer, Robert Pickton, were Aboriginal women. B.C. leads all provinces in murdered or missing women by a wide margin with 137 total cases.
- ✚ Indigenous women continue to suffer violence, indignity and discrimination in Canada based on their gender and economic status. Efforts must continue to bring justice and restore the dignity and respect for First Nations women to ensure the safety of our grandmothers, mothers, daughters, sisters, teachers, and leaders. First Nations women must not be forgotten. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples highlights the need to protect Aboriginal women in article 22 which states: *"Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children, and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration. 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."*
- ✚ Despite continued requests to the Federal government to investigate the cases of murdered and missing women in Canada, there has been no response from the Conservative government. Provincial governments have taken it upon themselves to launch their own investigations. Manitoba recently formed a murdered and missing women task force in August of 2009, and BC formed a Missing Women Investigative Task Force which is currently ongoing.

The British Columbia First Nations Task Force is asking the Federal Government for a public inquiry into all the cases involving murdered and missing women in Canada. A public inquiry would not only provide closure and answers to the family members still living with the loss of their loved ones, but would also help identify the exact number of women that have gone missing across the country.