



British Columbia All Chiefs' Task Force

Media Release

BC All Chiefs' Task Force Issues International Call to Action to Support the Families of Murdered and Missing Women

Coast Salish Territory, February 8th, 2010—Today, the British Columbia All Chiefs' Coordinated Action Working Group issued a call to action to Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples worldwide to support the families of murdered and missing women by joining the 19th Annual Women's Memorial March on February 14th, 2010. For those unable to attend the Women's Memorial March in Vancouver the Task Force is encouraging individuals to organize a support march in their respective communities to coincide with the Memorial March in Vancouver. This year on February 14th additional Women's Memorial Marches are being organized in Victoria, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and Edmonton.

Over 520 women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada since the 1970s. 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."

"Indigenous women continue to suffer violence, indignity and discrimination in Canada based on their gender and economic status," says Kathryn Teneese, Chair of the Ktunaxa Nation Council. "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."

The British Columbia All Chiefs' 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 will provide closure and answers for the family members still living with the loss of their loved ones and help determine the number of women that have gone missing across the country," says Chief Wayne Christian, spokesperson for the B.C. All Chiefs' Task Force. "An inquiry will help in developing a comprehensive action plan to protect First Nations' women from violence and discrimination."

About the February 14th Women's Memorial March:

At noon, all supporters will gather at the Carnegie Community Centre Theatre, 401 Main Street (corner Hastings, Vancouver) where family members speak in remembrance. At 1 pm, the March takes to the streets and proceeds through the Downtown Eastside, with stops to commemorate where women were last seen or found; speeches by community activists at the police station; a healing circle at Oppenheimer Park around 3 pm; and finally a community feast at the Japanese Language Hall.

In January 1991 a woman was murdered on Powell Street in Vancouver. Her name is not spoken today out of respect for the wishes of her family. This woman's murder in particular was the catalyst that moved women into action. Out of this sense of hopelessness and anger came an annual march on Valentine's Day to express compassion, community, and caring for all women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Coast Salish Territories.



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Nineteen years later, the march continues to honour the lives of missing and murdered women. Increasing deaths of many vulnerable women from the Downtown Eastside still leaves family, friends, loved ones, and community members with an overwhelming sense of grief and loss. Over 3000 women are known to have gone missing or been murdered in Canada since the 1970s.

Please respect the Memorial March and the leadership of those organizing it. This event is organized and led by women in the Downtown Eastside because women, especially Indigenous women, face physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual violence on a daily basis. This is a memorial not a protest; it is a deeply emotional time for family members and women affected especially in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Please do not bring your banners, flags, or leaflets as the Women's Memorial March carries only five banners specifically to honour the women.

Find additional information on the Women's Memorial March at: <http://womensmemorialmarch.wordpress.com/>

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About the British Columbia All Chiefs' Task Force

In August 2009, a First Nations Task Force composed of volunteer First Nation leaders from across the province, was established by First Nations to raise awareness and recognition of Aboriginal title and rights at the provincial, national and international levels, as well as with the general public.

Find additional information and news about the All Chiefs' Task Force at: <http://firstnationstaskforce.wordpress.com>

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