

Issue Update

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ (MMIWG2S+)

History

For many years, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) pressed for a national inquiry into the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The AFN advocated for a national inquiry that would support survivors and families and ensure all governments and policing services meet their obligations to protect the fundamental human rights of Indigenous women and girls.

In 2021, the AFN Women's Council carried out a National Engagement process in all AFN Regions to develop the National Action Plan to end violence against Indigenous women and girls. The AFN Women's Council worked with regions to host 85 virtual sessions across Canada, with 1,144 people participating through virtual meetings, surveys, written submissions, and video submissions. The regional engagement informed the development of a First Nations National Action Plan in response to the 231 *Calls for Justice* from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) entitled: *Breathing Life into the Calls to Justice*. This First Nations National Action Plan will contribute to the federal government's MMIWG National Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (MMIWG2S+ NAP) and will be a driving force in the implementation of the 231 *Calls for Justice*.

AFN's recent advocacy

The AFN continues to call for the voices of the families of missing and murdered First Nations women and girls to be heard and respected. This important work will ensure that all governments, private sectors, and service providers implement the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice. Implementing the National Inquiry's *Calls for Justice* and the MMIWG2S+ NAP is crucial to recognizing and upholding the human rights of First Nations women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Following the 2021 Annual General Assembly, the AFN Executive passed Resolution 08/2021, *Implementation of the National Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA People*, providing the mandate for the next phase of work to address MMIWG by calling upon the federal government to maintain a "families first" and distinctions-based approach to all activities going forward. The resolution also directs the AFN to continue advocating for and seeking resources to carry out activities in support of the full and meaningful implementation of the *Calls for Justice* and MMIWG2S+ NAP.

The AFN hosted a hybrid National MMIWG2S+ Gathering in Vancouver, B.C., from February 14–16, 2023, which was planned with a “families first” and trauma-informed approach. The Gathering was an opportunity for MMIWG2S+ survivors and families to reflect on the work completed to date and discuss the actions needed to end violence against First Nations women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ Peoples.

On June 3, 2023, the AFN released the report *Connecting Hearts & Making Change – Building on Breathing Life into the Calls for Justice*, which reflects the voices of MMIWG2S+ survivors and families who attended the Gathering. *Connecting Hearts & Making Change* also reinforces the priority frameworks from *Breathing Life into the Calls for Justice* and provides unique additions to the four pillars: Justice, Human Security, Health and Wellness, and Culture as Safety.

Next Steps

The AFN continues important advocacy to raise awareness and work with governments to develop and implement action plans, policies, and partnerships as contained in the *231 Calls for Justice* of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The AFN will continue to advocate for the implementation of the National Action Plan and the *231 Calls for Justice* in accordance with a “families first,” trauma-informed, and distinctions-based approach and to advocate for survivors and families to be at the centre of implementation and monitoring processes. The implementation of the *Calls for Justice* and the National Action Plan will not only promote and ensure the safety and security of First Nations women and girls, but also uphold their important roles in ensuring the continued improvement, growth, and success of all First Nations.

The Government of Canada released Budget 2023, which included nearly \$125 million towards implementation of the MMIWG2S+ NAP, including \$2.2 million over five years to establish an oversight mechanism to monitor and report on the progress of implementation. The AFN will work to establish an independent accountability mechanism within the AFN to produce and publish an annual report on implementing the *231 Calls for Justice*. This will include tracking the actions and items undertaken and those still outstanding to report back to First Nations-in-Assembly. The AFN will also continue to advocate for long-term sustainable funding to address and prevent all forms of gender-based violence targeting First Nations women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ Peoples.