

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

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

October 3, 2016

## **Good Public Policy Should Be Built On All Available Data**

### **A Request to the Government of Canada to Expand the Scope of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women**

Indigenous peoples represent the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population and are an important part of Canada's prosperity.<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has stated that "*no relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit.*"<sup>2</sup>

The plight of our Indigenous population in regard to the issue of missing and murdered individuals is one that is well known and documented in most Canadian provinces. Efforts to understand the background and surrounding circumstances amongst missing and murdered Indigenous peoples is currently in the pipeline under the auspices of the Canadian government. As we know, the proposed inquiry focuses on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls with the pre-inquiry process already completed and report presented.

The decision to exclude data concerning murdered and missing Indigenous boys and men appears to have been made, although never explicitly stated. The purpose of this document is to summarize the well established evidence concerning the significance of missing and murdered

---

<sup>1</sup> Budget 2016, Government of Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Remarks to the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly, December 8, 2015.

Indigenous boys and men and to request that the Government of Canada expand the scope of the inquiry to include all Indigenous victims, regardless of gender.

**We are requesting a clear response as to the Government's intentions with respect to the inclusion of boys and men in the Inquiry.**

While commending the national government on their effort to ensure that the inquiry which many have pushed for years is actualized, it must be highlighted that this inquiry cannot be complete without its inclusion of boys and men. The evidence is overwhelming that boys and men are also affected by these issues, and in a greater proportion. Statistics Canada data on murdered Indigenous peoples over a 29 year period (1982-2011), as compiled by Penny Handley, show that over 70% of murdered Indigenous Canadians were men and boys (Jones 2015).<sup>3</sup> According to Statistics Canada (2014) *“the rate of homicide for Indigenous males was 7 times higher than for non-Indigenous males (10.86 per 100,000 population versus 1.61). Among females, the rate was 6 times higher (3.64 per 100,000 versus 0.65).”*

Outside of murder rates, the collection of data on the victimization of boys and men is often avoided altogether, making a full analysis impossible. While data is routinely collected on missing Indigenous females, such data is not usually collected for missing males. Data is collected on the rate at which murders of Indigenous females are solved, but data on the rate at which murders of Indigenous males are solved is usually not compiled.

Furthermore, Indigenous boys and men suffer from a host of related issues that this Inquiry should address, including disproportionately high rates of homelessness, addiction and incarceration, in comparison to non-Indigenous people and in comparison to Indigenous females.

The disproportionate rate of male Indigenous victimization has now been well articulated in the mainstream press, including editorials supporting the expansion of the Inquiry in the National Post,<sup>4</sup> the Globe and Mail<sup>5</sup> and the Vancouver Sun.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada (2014) ‘Aboriginal victims and accused persons of homicide in 2014’, Homicide in Canada, 2014 (Online). Available from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14244-eng.htm#a13> (Accessed 26 September 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Jones, A. (2015) ‘Aboriginal men are murdered and missing far more than aboriginal women. A proper inquiry would explore both’, *National Post* April 27 (Online). Available from:

Douglas Todd, writing in the Vancouver Sun, argues that a comprehensive Inquiry that is inclusive of both genders as pushed by various stakeholders may be “*the only way to gain a full picture and find healing.*” This agrees with an editorial from the Globe and Mail which states: “*The fate of missing and murdered indigenous women cannot be considered in isolation. To reduce violence and increase their safety, it will be necessary to improve the lives and livelihood of all native Canadians. The inquiry needs open minds, and open eyes.*”

As a result, a coalition of Indigenous organizations have joined together with the national educational charity Canadian Association for Equality, under the banner of the *Necktie Campaign*, in demanding that the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls be expanded to include boys and men. The Necktie Campaign was launched by Lydia Daniels, a member of the Long Plain First Nation in Manitoba, whose son Colten Pratt has been missing since 2014.

Several prominent Indigenous individuals and community organizations support the inclusion of boys and men in the Inquiry. This includes Janine Cunningham, who serves on a national indigenous committee of the Canadian Association of Social Workers and belongs to B.C.’s Tsilhqot’in (Chilcotin) tribal group. The Necktie Campaign has featured a series of events across Canada in 2016, with participation from several prominent Indigenous individuals and groups, including the Mi’kmaw Native Centre in Halifax, Indigenous leader and author Chief Ernie Crey, Interim National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples Kevin Daniels, and Grand Chiefs Thomas Square and Roger Fleury.

The Chief Commissioner of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Marion Buller, has stated: “*When an Indigenous woman is murdered or goes missing or*

---

<http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/adam-jones-aboriginal-men-are-murdered-and-missing-far-more-than-aboriginal-women-a-proper-inquiry-would-explore-both> (Accessed 26 September 2016).

<sup>5</sup> The Globe and Mail (2016) ‘The inquiry can’t just be about the women’, Globe editorial (Online). Available from: [http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/the-inquiry-cant-just-be-about-the-women/article31279736/?utm\\_source](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/the-inquiry-cant-just-be-about-the-women/article31279736/?utm_source) (Accessed 26 September 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Todd, D. (2016) ‘Support grows for adding men and boys to murdered aboriginal women inquiry’, Vancouver Sun Jan. 01 (Online). Available from: <http://www.vancouversun.com/life/support+grows+adding+boys+murdered+aboriginal+women+inquiry/11665421/story.html> (Accessed 26 September 2016).

*is lost, we all lose.*” We agree entirely, and we believe the same loss occurs when a boy or man goes missing or is murdered.

The federal government has commitment to evidence-based public policies. In order to get at the root cause of violence and find effective solutions we cannot ignore two thirds of the available data.

**The Necktie Campaign coalition is hereby requesting a clearly articulated decision from the Government of Canada as to whether data on murdered and missing boys and men will be included in their National Inquiry.**

We thank you for your time and consideration in responding to this request.

Please send your response to

Necktie Campaign Coalition  
% Canadian Centre for Men and Families  
201 - 2 Homewood Ave.  
Toronto, ON, M4Y2J9

Best regards,

Justin Trottier,  
Executive Director, Canadian Association for Equality