



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Commissioners Express Profound Disappointment Short extension injustice to families, survivors and Canada

June 5, 2018

Vancouver, British Columbia – Today the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (National Inquiry) was granted a short extension of six months, to April 30, 2019 to conclude its research and submit its final report. The Commissioners expressed profound disappointment, stating that the extremely limited extension does a disservice to the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, survivors and families, some of whom advocated for decades for a National Inquiry.

“The systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ people are rooted in 500 years of colonization. The families and survivors who have shared their truths have informed all Canadians about this national tragedy. In seeking a two year extension we were striking a balance between the urgency of the issues and the need to do this work thoroughly. Now we believe political expediency has been placed before the safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ people,” noted Chief Commissioner Buller.

The National Inquiry is mandated to inquire and report on systemic causes of all form of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada, and to make recommendations on concrete actions that can be taken to remove systemic causes of violence and to improve the safety of Indigenous women and girls.

“The priority for the extension will be to finish gathering statements from the more than 500 family members and survivors already registered and waiting to share their truths. The timeline severely limits the capacity of the National Inquiry to adequately engage those who have been marginalized due to incarceration, homelessness, or human trafficking, and those who are currently living in violent circumstances,” said Commissioner Qajaq Robinson. “The National Inquiry will also not be able to conduct Regional Institutional nor Knowledge Keeper and Expert Hearings which would have allowed for regional examination of these issues.”

The members of the National Advisory Family Circle (NFAC), who provide advice to the National Inquiry are survivors of violence or individuals who have lost loved ones, and they have expressed that the decision is one more blow. “We believe that the requested two year extension was necessary to truly honour the loved ones lost as well as survivors. This is difficult work, and after waiting so long for justice and change, this is a short-sighted decision.” said Gladys Radek NFAC member.



National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Enquête nationale sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées



“We have been gifted a sacred responsibility. We recognize the enormity of the work. This is the first inquiry to be truly national in scope and include all provincial and territorial jurisdictions. The mandate of the National Inquiry is also broad in scope, including policing, justice systems and social services – each of which could be the subject of its own inquiry,” noted Commissioner Eyolfson.

The National Inquiry’s request for an extension was not unique nor a first for an inquiry initiated by the Government of Canada. In the past, the mandates of a number of inquiries have been extended to allow for the completion of work.

Since its inception, more than 1,273 witnesses have shared their truths with the National Inquiry through:

- 15 Community Hearings;
- Nine Statement Gathering events;
- Two Knowledge Keeper and Expert Hearings; and
- One Institutional Hearing.

A Knowledge Keeper and Expert Hearing on Racism is set to take place in Toronto, Ontario from June 12 – 14, 2018 and an Institutional Hearing on Police Policies and Practices in Regina, Saskatchewan from June 25 – 29, 2018.

“The National Inquiry will continue, of course, because the families of the missing and murdered and survivors have sacrificed too much,” concluded Chief Commissioner Buller. “We know family members are grieving their losses each and every day, and that the gaping void left when a family member goes missing or is murdered always remains. The National Inquiry is hearing families’ and survivors’ truths for all Canadians, so that we can make positive change from the devastating events and systemic harm done to Indigenous women, girls, Two-spirited people and Indigenous families. There remains much work to be done. We are disappointed that the Government of Canada does not believe this is worth another 24 months.”

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