

**One Year Anniversary of the Release of the Final Report of the
National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the one-year anniversary of the release of the Final Report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The previous Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the Honourable Caroline Cochrane tabled that report entitled “Reclaiming Power and Place” in the Legislative Assembly on June 4th, 2019.

The Final Report is split into two volumes with three main sections:

Section 1 presents a comprehensive person and community-centered understanding of the crisis of violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ persons.

Section 2 takes a deeper look at topics that present distinct issues or perspectives. It also describes opportunities to demonstrate, within a distinctions-based approach, how culture, health, security and justice can create particular challenges for specific groups, institutions, geographies, or other circumstances,.

Section 3 focuses on different models of healing and Indigenous-led best practices.

The report ends with the presentation of the 231 Calls for Justice covering a wide range of topics and themes including, culture, health and wellness and human security.

The Government of the Northwest Territories prepared an initial response to the Calls for Justice entitled Doing Our Part.

While the GNWT did not respond to specific Calls for Justice in Doing Our Part, we provided a list of thematic sections related to each of the Calls for Justice highlighting the work we are already doing or can build upon. We also set out a number of high-level questions that will need to be considered more fully by our government. Then-Minister Cochrane tabled this report in the Legislative Assembly on August 22nd, 2019. To date, the GNWT remains the only jurisdiction in Canada that has prepared a response to the final report.

The GNWT has also made a commitment to work with Canada on the development of the National Action Plan in a coordinated manner that involves all stakeholders. The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Affairs had committed to having the national action plan developed by June 2020. While that deadline has been pushed back due to circumstances related to COVID-19, the GNWT remains committed to working to move this work forward.

The GNWT has set up an interdepartmental working group for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to coordinate our response to the Calls for Justice. This working group is chaired by the Special Advisor to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and includes appointed representatives from the departments of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Health and Social Services, Justice, Housing Corporation and Education, Culture and Employment. Other departments are invited to meetings or asked for input, as required.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is aware that we cannot do this work alone. Our government is committed to working with all Northerners and with partners across Canada to support the work needed to address systemic causes of violence, inequality and racism, so that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people are able to feel safe and empowered in our territory and in our country.

According to Statistics Canada, the Northwest Territories has the second highest rate of violence against women in the country. As a government, we need to take the necessary steps to address the systemic causes of violence, inequality and racism that contribute to the problem in the Northwest Territories.

The Final Report shares stories we all need to hear: stories about someone's sister, someone's niece, someone's mother, someone's child. Sadly, Indigenous women and girls in the NWT continue to live these stories. Trying to put the pain that loved ones and communities deal with into perspective is difficult.

The NWT may be large geographically, but the events in one community can affect us all. That is why it is so important that we work together to address the ongoing violence being experienced by Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people. It will require many people willing to work together to explore ways in which we can end violence that continues to have a negative impact on the lives of many NWT residents. I recognize that change will not happen overnight but change MUST happen.

Mr. Speaker, violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people is not an individual problem or an issue only for certain communities. This violence is rooted in systemic factors woven in the fabric of Canadian society like economic, social and political marginalization, as well as racism, discrimination and misogyny. As the previous Minister Responsible for the Status of Women so eloquently put it and I quote *"We must keep this issue at the forefront of people's minds and consistently convey another truth: that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals are valued, loved and worthy of justice."*

To conclude, I would like to acknowledge the courage and strength shown by those who agreed to share their "truths" with the National Commission. I offer my thoughts, my prayers and my gratitude.

Quana/mahsi, Mr. Speaker