



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS BULLETIN ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS

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Assembly of First Nations Withdraws from BC Missing Women's Commission of Inquiry

(Ottawa, ON) – Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo announced today the Assembly of First Nations will regrettably withdraw from the British Columbia Missing Women's Commission of Inquiry, citing limitations of the Inquiry itself and an imbalance and inequity in legal resources made available to the parties.

“The Assembly of First Nations is no longer confident the Inquiry will bring justice for the families of missing and murdered women in Canada,” said AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo, adding that the national First Nation advocacy organization has exhausted every option and appealed for cooperation and conciliation between the parties to better ensure a united and common purpose in finding truth and answers for the families.

“The principle objectives behind AFN's participation from the beginning have been to support the families, to bring to light systemic issues that gave rise to these tragedies and finally to identify efforts toward resolution of those issues,” said National Chief Atleo. “We hoped the Inquiry would shed light to uncover truths that could help with the healing process for the families as well as to begin to point the way forward so that all women and the most vulnerable have access to justice. Without equity and balance, systemic issues will not be brought forward and will therefore not be reflected in the recommendations of the Inquiry.”

In a joint letter with other parties to the Inquiry, the AFN appealed to the British Columbia Premier as recently as on September 28, 2011 as a last effort requesting a meeting of all parties to salvage a way forward. The B.C. Attorney General sent an unequivocal response indicating that such a meeting would not be convened. The AFN continues to urge the Government of British Columbia and the Commission of Inquiry to find remedy and ensure that justice is served.

“The families of the many murdered and missing women fought for this Inquiry as an essential vehicle to uncover the truth behind their personal tragedies,” said Jody Wilson-Raybould, AFN Regional Chief for British Columbia. “The current uneven configuration of the Inquiry seriously limits if not eliminates the potential of the Inquiry to achieve this most basic interest.”

Ending violence against Indigenous women is a key priority for the AFN and First Nations across Canada consider the reality of missing and murdered Indigenous a national tragedy that requires immediate attention by all levels of government. First Nation Chiefs across Canada are working to raise awareness of this issue and have passed a number of resolutions supporting action to

ensure the safety of Indigenous women across Canada and support for the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

“The AFN will continue to press for justice and will re-double our efforts to bring focus, attention and most importantly action to this issue,” said National Chief Atleo. “We will press for action and commitment from all levels of government. First Nations resolved by consensus to press for a national level inquiry and we will continue this struggle for justice through [other](#) avenues including through international and multi-jurisdictional forums within Canada. ”

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada. Follow AFN and National Chief Atleo on Twitter [@AFN_Updates](#), [@AFN_Comms](#) and [@NCAtleo](#).

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