



# ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS BULLETIN ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS

473, RUE ALBERT STREET  
8<sup>th</sup> FLOOR / 8<sup>e</sup> ÉTAGE  
OTTAWA ON K1R 5B4  
(613) 241-6789 telephone / téléphone (613) 241-5808 fax / télécopieur

## **AFN Expresses Concern Over Pickton Inquiry Mandate and Chairperson**

OTTAWA, Sept. 30 /CNW/ - Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, AFN Women's Council Chair Kathleen McHugh and AFN BC Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould are calling for full inclusion of First Nations and First Nations women in the public inquiry into the Robert Pickton investigation.

"As we expressed when the decision for the public inquiry was announced earlier this month, we welcome the investigation, however it remains essential that there be full confidence in the Commission of Inquiry, including the person charged with overseeing the inquiry and its overall mandate, as the issues here go beyond the police handling of the investigation," said AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo. "We need to examine the root causes of why too many Aboriginal women are placed in vulnerable situations and consider approaches to prevent further violence. Likewise, it is essential that this public inquiry does a thorough examination of procedures and decisions made by people with the authority to ensure accountability and correction for mistakes that may have been made."

The appointment of Mr. Wally Oppal to lead the public inquiry in the police handling of the Robert Pickton investigation was announced yesterday at a press conference in Vancouver. The AFN stands with the families and First Nation leadership in expressing concern of the choice of Commissioner given his former ties with the provincial government.

"The terms of reference for this inquiry are too narrow and will only serve to exclude the voices and issues that are required to fully understand what happened," said the Co-Chair of the AFN Women's Council, Kathleen McHugh. "First Nations are frankly shocked that this inquiry would be announced without any discussion with First Nations. We are calling on the provincial government to consider reviewing and expanding the inquiry's terms of reference and the choice of Commissioner to ensure it is useful, independent and will work to ensure this kind of tragedy never happens again."

AFN has advocated strongly for urgent and dedicated attention to address the issue and root causes of the over 520 unresolved cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. This position is supported by a number of resolutions passed by AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly, as well as ongoing support for the efforts of the AFN Women's Council and the Native Women's Association of Canada's Sisters in Spirit campaign, which calls for solutions to the violence encountered by all Aboriginal women in Canada.

"First Nations in BC have stood in support of the need for this inquiry to be impartial and inclusive," said AFN BC Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould. "We must work together to learn from the mistakes that were clearly made to ensure that our people, particularly our most venerable are safe and respected."

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada.

**For further information:**

Jenna Young, Assembly of First Nations Communications Officer at 613-241-6789, ext 401 or [jyoung@afn.ca](mailto:jyoung@afn.ca).