



First Nations

Assembly Of First Nations

A First Nations Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People

NOTE TO READER: This summary provides a brief overview of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls, the full AFN Framework Action Plan can be accessed at: www.afn.ca

Background

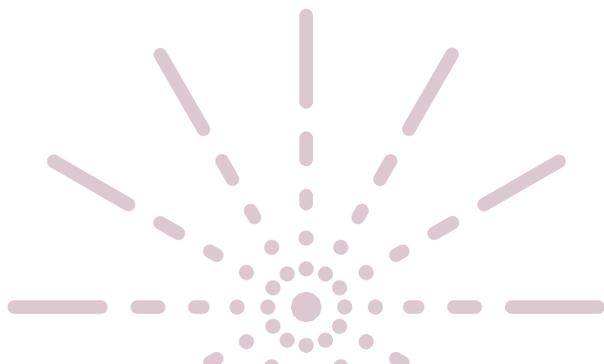
The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is the national representative body of 634 First Nations and First Nations citizens across Canada, regardless of where they reside. The AFN is comprised of several main organs including the Women’s Council. The AFN Women’s Council works with the AFN Secretariat to ensure that the concerns and perspectives of First Nations women inform the work of the AFN. This First Nations Framework Action Plan is just one part of the First Nations response to the National Inquiry’s 231 Calls for Justice and provides a specific national lens to the identified actions. In addition to this action plan, regional action plans will be added to the First Nations National Framework as complementary components to help advocate for implementation of the 231 Calls for Justice.

Supporting Families and Survivors

There is an urgent need for “wrap-around” services for families and survivors. Some examples of services needed include toolkits or information on what immediate actions to take when experiencing violence or when a loved one goes missing or is murdered. Families and survivors also require mental health and grief supports as well as information on police procedures and the legal system.

Prevention

First Nations women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have the right to live free of violence and all forms of discrimination. Effective solutions must be nation-based and nation-driven. Prevention initiatives must recognize the diversity among First Nations. Dedicated and sustainable funding for First Nations is needed to take immediate action to prevent, reduce and eliminate violence against First Nations, women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.



Calls for Justice: National Perspective on 4 Key Themes

1. Justice

When First Nations women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people go missing, their families' complaints are not taken seriously, their cases are not investigated properly, their families are not updated on their loved one's investigations, their cases are prematurely deemed accidents, and the perpetrators are not apprehended or punished in the same manner as when the victims are non-First Nations. It is vitally important that the RCMP and other police services be more accountable for their treatment of families and survivors, and for how they investigate missing and murdered First Nations women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

2. Human Security

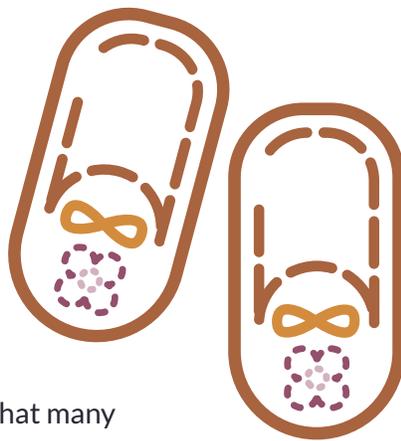
Families and Survivors have expressed the urgent need they see within their nations for more safe spaces, shelters, transition housing, and safe modes of transportation in remote areas. They also felt that the onus unfairly falls upon women and children to leave their homes to flee the violence they are experiencing. This increases the risk of First Nations women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experiencing unemployment, poverty, food insecurity and increases the likelihood of negative interactions with police and the child welfare system. Families and survivors have expressed the urgent need for more safe spaces, shelters, transition housing, and safe modes of transportation in remote areas within their First Nations. They also felt that the onus unfairly falls upon women and children to leave their homes to flee the violence they are experiencing.

3. Health and Wellness

Health concerns are intrinsically linked to violence that many First Nations women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people face because when health is in jeopardy, so is safety. The long-term impacts of violence on health must also be seen in the context of settler-colonialism in Canada. The Indian Residential School system and the effects of intergenerational trauma combined with systematic discrimination and under funding of health services for First Nations have all led to the poor social determinants for health and wellness of First Nations people. The AFN heard from survivors and families that health and wellness were traditionally thought of in a relational and holistic way. Those First Nations who are fortunate to still have Knowledge Keepers who possess knowledge about traditional medicines and healing want to ensure that First Nations Citizens have the ability to incorporate those practices into their health and wellness care.

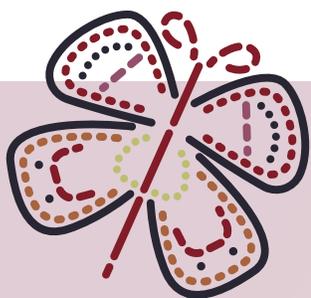
4. Culture

First Nations families and survivors have highlighted how pivotal cultural identity is for both prevention activities, to support people during times of crisis, and for healing from trauma and providing aftercare support. First Nations know best what is needed for cultural revitalization and preservation within our nations. There needs to be more effort put forward to design and maintain ongoing training for all government workers with the content provided by First Nations Knowledge Keepers and experts.



Implementation

National Inquiry's Final Report found that many jurisdictional issues impact the safety of First Nations women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Interjurisdictional cooperation is crucial to addressing many immediate concerns pertaining to violence against First Nations women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The federal government has committed to achieving meaningful change and action for First Nations. For this to happen, all levels of government must work in partnership with First Nations and develop First Nations-led solutions that are reflective of the unique history, context, and lived reality of First Nations. Long term sustainable funding that results in preventative action will require First Nations to be engaged so that their unique needs are met.



Accountability

All governments, including First Nations, are responsible for the implementation of the 231 Calls for Justice. Calls for Justice number 1.1, 1.10-1.11 call for the development of independent mechanisms to report on the implementation of the Calls for Justice. Mechanisms for evaluation of the implementation of the Calls for Justice must be directly accountable to families, survivors and First Nations.

What is also needed are transparent accountability frameworks that break down specifically the actions items that have undertaken and those still outstanding. Accountability mechanisms should provide information on timeframes, partners, indicators, objectives, and provide clear demonstration of which federal departments and agencies are responsible for monitoring progress for each action item.