



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Quebec Native Women presents today a report on the situation of aboriginal women to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.

Montreal, the 21st of January 2007 - Ellen Gabriel meets today with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to present a report which denounces the violence Aboriginal women are victims of and the inadequate help and services they can access to.

Aboriginal women are more likely than any other group in Canada to be victim of conjugal violence. Although there are very few statistics available concerning the rate of violence against Indigenous women in communities in Quebec specifically, a 2006 report entitled *Measuring Violence against Women* by Statistics Canada demonstrated that the rates of spousal violence and spousal homicide are higher for Indigenous women than for non-Indigenous women or Indigenous men. According to this same report, they are also significantly more likely than non-Indigenous women to report the most severe and potentially life-threatening forms of violence (54% of Indigenous women compared with 37% of non-Indigenous women).

In the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*¹ (RCAP), a number of factors that are linked to violence in Indigenous communities were identified such as systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples, economic and social deprivation, alcohol and substance abuse, and the intergenerational cycle of violence that partly stems from the consequences of residential schools.

Aboriginal women were target of institutionalised legal discrimination since 1867 with the creation of the *Indian Act* which deprived many of them of their rights as member of an Aboriginal nation and the amendment of 1985 Bill C-31 did not resolve any of the discriminations they suffer from. Such political inequality is at the origin of many divisions, inequalities, spousal violence and family, sexual and racial violence. Women are left without power or access to property or justice.

The effects of such policies are still present today. Violence against aboriginal women doesn't have a clear answer, because of remote communities or inadequate services available in urban areas. Aboriginal women's shelters only receive one third of the funding allocated to Women Shelters in Quebec while their dire needs are more complex and have been denounced several times by Quebec Native Women.

Quebec Native Women has been working on violence against women for 19 years and the rate of violence has not decreased. It is now part of our international efforts to bring the issue to international community to put pressure on the Government of Canada to create awareness and change.

This situation will be presented by Ms Gabriel at a Round-Table organized this Tuesday, January 22, from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm as part of a Conference on "The Challenge of sexual violence: the state of the struggle against impunity". The UN Special Rapporteur will be present at the Conference that will be held at the auditorium of Grande Bibliothèque and is organized by the Table de concertation sur la région des Grands-Lacs.

Our organization:

Founded in 1974, Quebec Native Women Inc. (QNW), a non-profit organization, represents women from the First Nations in Quebec and Aboriginal women living in urban areas. QNW advocates on behalf of the Rights of Aboriginal women and their families.

¹ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*: Vol. 5 Renewal: A Twenty Year Commitment, Ottawa (file 13691)



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Entrance to the event is free upon registration at emi@web.ca. The Round-Table will be held at the Auditorium of Grande Bibliothèque, 475, boul. de Maisonneuve (Metro Berri-UQAM), Montreal (www.concertationgrandslacs.com).

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