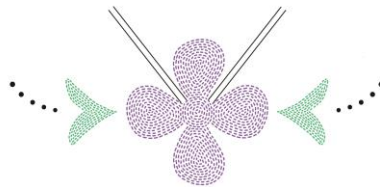


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process – Part 1 Public Hearings
Hotel North Two, Conference Room Hotel Bonaventure
Montreal, Quebec**



PUBLIC

Wednesday March 14, 2018

**Public Volume 66
Panel Discussion: The Healing Journey of Inuit Women
Witnesses: Reepa Evic-Carleton, Karen Baker-Anderson,
Annie Arnatuk, Mary Thomassie, Lizzie Aloupa
& Rebecca Jones**

**Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller and
Commissioners Qajaq Robinson & Brian Eyolfson**

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II

APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Daniel Cunningham (Legal counsel)
Assembly of First Nations Quebec- Labrador	No Appearance
Concertation des Luttes contre L'Exploitation Sexuelle	No Appearance
Conseil des Anicinabek de Kitcisakik	No Appearance
Directeur des poursuites pénales et criminelles	Anny Bernier (Legal counsel)
Government of Canada	Jennifer Clarke (Legal counsel)
Government of Quebec	No Appearance
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami	Elizabeth Zarpa (Legal counsel)
Innu Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani- Utenam	No Appearance
Naskapi Nation of Kawawachi- kamach	No Appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre	Beth Symes (Legal counsel) Anne Curley (Representative) Karen Baker Anderson (Representative) Annie Arnatuk (Representative)
Quebec Native Women Association	No Appearance
Regroupement Mamit Innuat Inc.	No Appearance
Les Résidences oblates du Québec	No Appearance

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Public hearing Volume 66	
Inuit Panel: Reepa Evic-Carleton, Karen Baker-Anderson, Annie Arnatuk, Mary Thomassie, Lizzie Aloupa and Rebecca Jones	1
Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller and Commissioners Qajaq Robinson & Brian Eyolfson	
Commission Counsel: Fanny Wylde	
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Clerk: Maryiam Khoury	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	

IV

LIST OF EXHIBITS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
	Inuit Panel: Reepa Evic-Carleton, Karen Baker-Anderson, Annie Arnatuk, Mary Thomassie, Lizzie Aloupa and Rebecca Jones Exhibits (code: P01P13P0303)	
1	"Working Together for a Common Purpose: Report of the Inquiry into Missing or Murdered Nunavimmiut" Pascale Laneuville, published 2017 (Saturviit) (48 pages). Link: http://www.saturviit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Saturviit Missing-Women English Full-Report.pdf	54
2	Report "Bring Hope and Restore Peace: A Study Report on the Life and Concerns of Inuit Women of Nunavik," Pascale Laneuville, published June 2015 (Saturviit) ISBN: 978-0-9948550-1-5 (163 pages). Link to long version: http://www.saturviit.ca/women-concerns/bring-hope-and-restore-peace/	55
3	DVD "Breaking the Silence" (Saturviit, 2015, 24 minutes 40 seconds).	55

Montreal, Quebec

--- Upon commencing on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 16:14

MS. MOREEN KONWATSITSAWI MELOCHE: Okay.

All right. If you can get the people from the cheese table. Did you notice how all the veggies stayed there yesterday, but all that cheese and crackers was just devoured? Everybody loves cheese. It's so fun to have a great spread like that, so thank you all. Like somebody said earlier to -- even the staff of the hotel was pretty great. Yes.

Okay. So, going to get started, just text your fellow friends. So, we are starting, we are a little bit behind schedule. So, this is supposed to go a couple of hours, so everyone is pretty much getting ready.

So, we have a panel here, the Inuit Panel -- Panel Inuit. I'm just going to introduce the *recherché*. And, I'm practicing my Inuktitut, so she was trying to translate it for me in English and then she says, no, no, that's English. I said, well, I can speak English, I can do that. I'm not too bad in English. Je peut parler francais un petit peu, but I'm pretty much better in English. And, she says, okay, Koh-per-qua-luk, you can say it like that, or she says, you can say my name as the researcher, as Lisa *Kho-per-qwaaa-logk* (phon). Koperqualuk, say it. She says, "Say it fast, practise!"

1 So, I practised. So, that's the best I could do, sorry.

2 No offence, you know?

3 So, I didn't do bad, I'm trying, but I will
4 practise and brush up on my Inuktitut. So, I will pass it
5 on, this is our Inuit -- beautiful, incredible Inuit Panel
6 here. Yes, they're just ready to rock this world. So, you
7 just get ready, these women just got it going on. Okay,
8 c'est un panel Inuit. So, it's an Inuit panel we'll hear
9 this afternoon. Lisa - Kwaa-quaa-lok (phon). Okay,
10 *Nakurmiik.*

11 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** [Speaks in
12 Inuktitut]. Thank you very much, and for all who are here.
13 Here we are on this Wednesday afternoon, and sitting here
14 with six ladies who are from various parts of the North and
15 I'll introduce them to you. [Speaks in Inuktitut]. Yes,
16 we'll be -- they will each be speaking as they wish, either
17 in Inuktitut or in English, whichever they are most
18 comfortable with.

19 And so, we have, starting with Lizzie
20 Aloupa, who is from Quaqtuq; Annie Arnatuk beside her;
21 Karen Baker-Anderson; Mary Thomassie from Kangirsuk, Reepa
22 Evic-Carleton and Rebecca Jones. Each of these beautiful
23 ladies have -- are survivors and will tell you their
24 stories, and their healing journeys, and what has brought
25 them up to today. And, they'll be introducing themselves

1 further, but before we go ahead, I'd like to ask Bryan to
2 come and give them their oath.

3 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** You
4 will need to do your truth statements and your
5 confirmation.

6 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay. Great. I guess
7 we'll start with Rebecca. Rebecca, there are various
8 options, you can swear on a Bible or just make a solemn
9 affirmation, which would you like to do? Solemn
10 affirmation? Great. Rebecca, do you solemnly affirm that
11 the testimony you'll share today will be the truth, the
12 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

13 **MS. REBECCA JONES:** I do.

14 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Thank you. And, Reepa,
15 same option, affirmation or would you like to swear on a
16 Bible? Affirmation. Reepa, do you solemnly affirm that
17 the evidence you'll give today will be the truth, the whole
18 truth and nothing but the truth?

19 **MS. REEPA EVIC-CARLETON:** I agree.

20 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** You agree, thank you.
21 Mary, same option, affirmation or you can swear on the
22 Bible. It's your choice. Okay. So, affirmation or on --
23 affirmation, great. Mary, do you solemnly affirm that the
24 evidence you'll give today will be the truth, the whole
25 truth and nothing but the truth?

1 **MS. MARY THOMASSIE:** Yes.

2 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Thank you. Karen?
3 Affirmation. Okay. Karen, do you solemnly affirm that the
4 evidence you'll give today will be the truth, the whole
5 truth and nothing but the truth?

6 **MS. KAREN BAKER-ANDERSON:** I do.

7 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay. Thank you. And,
8 Annie, same question, affirmation or on the Bible? Sorry?
9 Affirmation, okay. Right. Annie, do you solemnly affirm
10 that the testimony you'll share today will be the truth,
11 the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

12 **MS. ANNIE ARNATUK:** Yes.

13 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay. Thank you.
14 Lizzie, what would you like to do now? Affirmation as
15 well? Lizzie, do you solemnly affirm that the evidence
16 you'll give today will be the truth, the whole truth and
17 nothing but the truth?

18 **MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA:** I will.

19 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay. Thank you.

20 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** [Speaks in
21 Inuktitut]. *Nakurmiik*. Thank you. Before we begin, we
22 have members, including Ayolla Meetaq (phon) who is with us
23 here today. Andy Weeks (phon) and Xavier Duq (phon), they
24 are both here from Nunavik area, and they have been
25 protectors of Inuit lands. Thank you for being with us

1 today. We will begin now. Lizzie Aloupa will be the first
2 one to proceed with this session.

3 **MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA:** [Speaks in Inuktitut].

4 So, my name is Lizzie Aloupa. Like I was saying earlier, I
5 was asked by Lisa to share about being a survivor. Like I
6 was speaking earlier this morning, I've survived a lot of
7 tragedies in my family, I've survived a violent
8 relationship.

9 So, as it's stated in the paper, I'm not a
10 police officer, I'm a prevention counsellor for the Kativik
11 Regional Police Force in Kuujjuaq. My home is in Quaqtac,
12 but my other home is Kuujjuaq. And, I am a mother of eight
13 children, all of them are adults; and I'm a grandmother to
14 16 grandchildren.

15 And, in what's written about me, it's
16 talking about how I went to a healing session, but I went
17 to a healing school. And so, I was married at a very young
18 age of 18 years, 18 years of age, and I was brought up as a
19 very precious child. Like I was telling you earlier, I'm
20 the oldest of my living siblings, and so I was very
21 precious to my mother.

22 My father was sent off to the hospital two
23 weeks after I was born, so I didn't know him the first two
24 years of my life. But I always knew in our little village,
25 I was a very special, loved child, and I always assumed

1 that's how it was going to be -- I mean, I just took it for
2 granted that my life would be like that. But, it ended up
3 that, when I was in that marital relationship, that I first
4 discovered people can be physically violent and that I have
5 to watch what I say or whatever.

6 So, I started experiencing violence when I
7 was just around 19 years old. And, over the years, we had
8 children. I went -- because we were living in his
9 community; when I decided I would go back home, so I went
10 back home to Quaqtaq, where my mother was and my siblings
11 were, and my husband came along with me.

12 The point I really want to make is that,
13 when you are going through an abusive, violent
14 relationship, there is no one there to talk to, we always
15 think we're the only ones going through this. In my case,
16 I always thought he's angry because of something I did or
17 something I didn't do; and I had no one, no where to ask
18 for support or for advice.

19 So, finally, in the year 2002, it was the
20 last time he attacked me, and it -- the abuse, or the
21 physical abuse didn't happen regularly. It would maybe
22 take four years, a few years, and we were a good family.
23 Everyone thought we were a really great family. There was
24 no alcohol involved in our lives; so when I was almost
25 strangled to death, everyone thought that we had been under

1 the influence of alcohol, but we were not.

2 So, when it was time for me to be seen by
3 the nurse, I went to see her, but it was really hard for me
4 to press charges because it's something we were not taught.

5 Even though I had been interpreting for the
6 justice criminal court for a few years, when it became my
7 personal life, it was really hard. I really felt like this
8 man is the strongest man. If the police come and arrest
9 him, he'll just throw them and they can't do anything with
10 him.

11 This is how abuse makes us think. We think
12 this abusive person is the most powerful person on earth.
13 By the time we finally come to -- like, a dead -- when I
14 finally came to the point where I had to report and press
15 charges, it was very hard. It's very difficult. And, when
16 I finally left -- because at that time we were separated
17 for a while, but we -- for the sake of my children, I tried
18 to take him back again without any counselling from anyone,
19 and it just didn't work. Like, it never did work before
20 because we did not communicate. Communication is so
21 important.

22 So, by the year 2008, after I had been at
23 the healing school in Orangeville, Ontario, I finally had
24 enough inner strength to say, "Okay, I'm not going to
25 continue in this relationship. I want to live. And, this

1 is not living." We are told so often by our people, our
2 Elders: you are married till death parts you. This is
3 your marital agreement.

4 But, the -- so I've -- after the healing
5 school experience, I started really thinking, it shouldn't
6 have to be like that. Because we were taught at the
7 school, you were never meant to feel bad about yourself.

8 So, I went back home -- I didn't leave right
9 away, but it became really hard to live at home again. So,
10 I left and things started getting better for me, even
11 though it was very difficult; because up there, if you
12 leave your marriage, you're like an outcast. You become an
13 outcast. You don't fit anywhere anymore.

14 So, I have been telling the younger women,
15 if you live in a violent relationship, you have to realize
16 he didn't change last year, he's not changing this year,
17 most likely he'll still be the same next year, so it's best
18 to get yourself to a safe place even though you're married.
19 You're not safe in your own home.

20 And, to this day, we still have to face
21 people who say, you have to stay in that marriage. It's
22 your fault. You're the one who talks a lot, so it's your
23 fault. You have to stay in it. And, because we don't have
24 counsellors, we're only starting to recently discover that
25 we also can have therapists, and people are getting

1 therapists now, thank God.

2 But, we are very behind. What you enjoy
3 here, doesn't exist in the Arctic, so we are very behind in
4 that. So, if we have to go to court, we are very scared,
5 so we don't report a lot of criminal stuff to the police
6 because we always think it's me that's going to send the
7 perpetrator to prison. So, our thinking is based a lot on
8 misunderstanding of the justice system.

9 I just want to add that I've been working on
10 childhood sexual abuse prevention and healing for the past
11 seven years now. And I have come to realize that childhood
12 sexual abuse in our region is the main cause for all the
13 violence and raging and all the violence that goes on, all
14 the beatings that go on. We have come to realize that
15 sexual abuse as a child -- having been sexually abused as a
16 child is the main cause for all the violence.

17 And, when we went to visit the men in prison
18 at Laval, we met 25 men, and one of them at the end of the
19 sessions -- I will never forget what he said. He said, " I
20 realize most of us were sexually abused." So, that's -- my
21 passion is to help people to break the silence on their
22 sexual abuse and to start on their healing journey from
23 sexual abuse.

24 I think I've used up my time already, right?

25 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank you, Lizzie.

1 Could you explain a little bit the program or the
2 awareness-raising program that you coordinate, that you
3 work?

4 **MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA:** Okay.

5 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Yes, thank you.

6 **MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA:** Thank you. So, when we
7 first started -- well, the Regional Health Board decided
8 that we would prioritize sexual abuse in Nunavik. At that
9 time, we didn't know what to do, where to begin. I was the
10 only Inuk in a committee that decided to work on that.

11 So, in the beginning, we tried out -- we
12 pilot-projected the 'Good Touch, Bad Touch' program. The
13 Health Board had taken this program and we went over it, we
14 translated it, we adapted it to what we needed, and we did
15 that in kindergarten and grade 1, and I was -- because I'm
16 a certified teacher -- I went to teach the program in two
17 schools.

18 In the second school, we realized that one
19 teacher and one worker could not even bear to hear the word
20 sexual abuse, so I realized before we go into the
21 classrooms, we have to work with the frontline workers
22 first. So, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada had this
23 program called The Hidden Face -- or had this resource
24 called The Hidden Face. It's about a woman who was
25 sexually abused and she's from Greenland.

1 So, we built a two-day healing workshop
2 using that resource. So, when we travel, we only go to
3 communities that request the program, because sexual abuse
4 is rampant in all the communities, or was. So, when we're
5 invited to a community, we take the frontline workers; give
6 them the two day Hidden Face healing workshop; and give
7 them orientation to sexual abuse; and then we go into the
8 school.

9 We do the same thing with all the staff of
10 the school, and then finally we go into the classrooms and
11 we teach each class three times, as prescribed by the
12 program. And on the fourth day, we meet each child to make
13 sure that what we taught them was understandable.

14 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** And, how long has
15 this program been on now?

16 **MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA:** It's going into six
17 years now, because we started in May 2012.

18 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank you, Lizzie,
19 [Speaks in Inuktitut]. And, I think I'll leave the
20 questions to the end? Yes. And, we'll continue with our
21 panelists. [Speaks in Inuktitut]. And, we're now passing
22 the microphone to Reepa Evic-Carleton. Thank you, Reepa.

23 **MS. REEPA EVIC-CARLETON:** Thank you for
24 having me here and thank you for all the people that shared
25 before us. It's been really impactful and we feel for the

1 people.

2 I just want to share a little bit about my
3 early beginnings. I was born in an outpost camp when mom
4 and dad were still living on the land. So, I have
5 wonderful memories of that life, that Inuit had. Up to the
6 1950s, '60s, we were forcefully moved to the settlement of
7 Pangnirtung Nunavut when I was about six years old.

8 So, I was really brought up in a really good
9 traditional way. I was surrounded by wonderful Elders and
10 adults in that small camp, because we only had, like, 10
11 per camp, and I thought we were the only people, before we
12 were introduced to others, other than Inuit. So, that was
13 my early beginning.

14 We used the *quliq* to light and to cook and
15 to keep warm; and I was born in a hut, in a *qarmaq*, so my
16 mom -- my mom's helper, it was my [Speaks in Inuktitut]
17 till she passed away. And so, she treated me in a very
18 special way all throughout her life and she even told me
19 that there were certain things that she said when I was
20 born that she wanted to see in me as skills or characters.
21 And so, I think of it and I think, wow, that was a really
22 good start for a little infant. So, my memories are
23 wonderful of that time when mom and dad, and other families
24 were still living solely off the land.

25 So, after the relocation, mom and dad always

1 went back to that area where I was born when they went out
2 camping. Let's say May to September, that was our long
3 holiday. It would be nice to have that again. So, after
4 the relocation, we were told to go to school; so the
5 learning that I would have gotten from my mom and the other
6 women stopped because we were now in school for the day. I
7 didn't go to residential school, but my oldest brother and
8 younger sister had gone to residential school.

9 So, life was pretty good up until I was
10 sexually abused by this man who became my husband after
11 several years. Because I -- like a lot of people, it was
12 very hard to share what had happened to me. I remember my
13 mom was awake when I came home. I normally didn't stay out
14 that late. But, I believe she, kind of, felt something was
15 up with me because she was awake. And I really wanted to
16 say something to her, but the shame came, and the guilt, so
17 I had buried that deep inside of me at a young -- 15 years
18 old.

19 Then, I became pregnant with him and -- so
20 he really, kind of, said, "Since you're pregnant, we have
21 to get married." And, there was not a lot of help back
22 then. And so, I married him, and he was very, very abusive
23 to me throughout the nine years we were together. We had
24 three children. My oldest is in her 40s now.

25 So, life was really hard. There were lots

1 of times when you felt like totally alone, nobody was
2 really there to help you. When I had to flee because of
3 safety reasons for myself and my three children, it would
4 be to mom and dad, because there were no shelters.
5 Absolutely no shelters.

6 And I always wondered why -- why do women
7 and children have to leave and make a big life change, when
8 he's only one? But, that's still the same today. It would
9 be so nice if women could stay with their children because
10 they're very -- it's a very, very difficult time when a
11 woman is living in an abusive relationship.

12 So, that's still a question in my mind,
13 because women have to flee, women have to go outside the
14 community to go to a shelter because most communities don't
15 have a shelter. So, that would be one of my
16 recommendations, is to look at safe homes for women and
17 children, in their community.

18 So, mom and dad always took me whenever I
19 needed to flee -- and it was a lot around my safety. Not
20 so much the children, but it was my safety because he would
21 become very violent. There was one time I remember -- I've
22 always worked, I've always been a caregiver that always --
23 I always worked and I always looked after my children; but
24 there was one time he met me outside. And I was going
25 home, and he was very, very angry, and he dragged me from

1 outside to my -- to our home. And people did nothing.

2 There was few people that saw this, they did nothing.

3 So, after I had left him, I came across a
4 woman who was very -- who was being beaten severely outside
5 and all these people were passing by. I could not. So I
6 stepped in and took her home. That's what violence does to
7 you: You really do care for what's happening to others,
8 because you remember how it was when help was not
9 available. So, you put yourself in situations that could
10 be dangerous. He could have turned on to me, but I did not
11 care.

12 Sometimes the community turns against you
13 because they're small communities, "Why did you -- why did
14 you help her? Why did the police come and he was in
15 trouble?" So, smaller communities are difficult in that
16 way. And, like the first speaker was saying earlier, for a
17 mom, particularly my mom, it was like, "You married him,
18 he's going to change, he will change, you stay in this
19 relationship." So, I lived with that for quite a long
20 time, then I realized I had to leave. I had to make a
21 decision for me and my kids.

22 Another incident was where I was carrying
23 our youngest baby in my *amautiq* because that's how we care
24 for our babies, carrying them in our *amautiq*. We were
25 house sitting at his brother's little matchbox house when

1 they were still around, and he got very angry again for --
2 for really no reason. And he was very jealous; and so,
3 every time he would go into that mindset, it was like he
4 would try at me till -- who I saw, or was I with anybody
5 ever. Like, I really had no words to tell him because I
6 had never been with somebody else other than him.

7 So, he wouldn't believe me and he wouldn't
8 let it go, so he got a knife and he put it against my neck
9 here and my baby is in my back. That was really, really
10 scary. I looked out this big window of this little
11 matchbox house and there was my mom, looking inside. But
12 she didn't come in. And, he seemed to stop. I don't know
13 if he saw her or it was just me. So, when I saw my mom the
14 next day, I said, "Why did you not come in and stop what
15 was happening?" She told me she never came.

16 So, I really believe in -- somebody was out
17 -- looking out for me. So many occasions, I can tell lots
18 of stories about these kinds of things, but we don't have a
19 lot of time. And, what eventually really started happening
20 to me was: feeling hopeless and helpless, nobody to really
21 talk to. And, the police would be called, the social
22 services would be called, but nothing was ever done. It
23 was kept under the carpet back in that time.

24 So, despair started to happen within me
25 internally and -- I still functioned, I still worked, I

1 still cared for the children, but there were times I just
2 wanted to disappear. I didn't know how to get out of this
3 mess.

4 One day, I seemed to woke up mentally and I
5 realized the mess I was in. I wasn't using drugs or
6 alcohol. And, I realized it was like a wake-up call: I
7 either get out of this or I'm going to die. He's going to
8 kill me or I'm going to go in such a state of mental
9 illness or something like that, that I -- it woke me up.
10 It seemed to wake me up and I cried. I cried a lot that
11 day. And, I didn't know -- I didn't know. I didn't know
12 what to do. I didn't know how to get out of it, but I knew
13 I had to get out.

14 So, that's when I left him and I started
15 talking to an Elder. What really helped me was I really
16 had to share what was going on with me, so I started
17 sharing with an Elder and she listened and listened, never
18 judged. And, I cried a lot. I didn't even know what was
19 happening to me because I've never lived this kind of a
20 life before.

21 So, by the time I left my community back in
22 1989, I had post-traumatic stress disorder like Barb was
23 sharing. We were -- because I moved south with my second
24 husband, we were in training for trauma and addiction
25 because we were opening up a treatment centre back in the

1 early 2000s. Listening to our instructor and reading
2 through the material, I diagnosed myself, I had full-blown
3 PTSD. I suffer panic attacks, I -- lots of paranoia, and
4 again an Elder helped me through that.

5 I've never taken medication for it, but an
6 Elder was always there when I needed her, even through
7 telephone, long distance. She's a very wise lady. She's
8 still with us. Barb mentioned her name, Meeka Arnakaq.
9 She's also my first cousin. So, she was there for me
10 throughout these years and I highly recommend anybody who
11 is going through stuff like I went through to start -- even
12 with one person. That's enough. And, it's better like
13 that sometimes, just to be able to talk to someone,
14 otherwise it will drive you crazy.

15 I wasn't suicidal, but the thought of
16 wanting to disappear was getting very close to suicidal
17 thoughts. So, I really realize I was in big trouble within
18 myself and that's really when I started to reach out.

19 So, I became very passionate about wanting
20 to help my people. Being brought up in a way that my mom
21 and dad brought me up, having that stability in my first
22 years, I think really helped me when I was really
23 struggling as a person.

24 And, I also really believe in letting people
25 talk in their language when they're really going through

1 their stuff. We've seen that over and over and over at the
2 Mamisarvik Healing Centre when it was still operating.
3 And, I really stress that, we need healing centres, we need
4 centres open across our North. It's one thing to have a
5 centre in the South, but it would be great to have these
6 services available in our northern communities.

7 And also help for the men, because when
8 somebody's not feeling great about themselves, that's when
9 these things do happen. So, centres for men or -- would be
10 great to see, because we need our men. And, on-the-land
11 programs are also very effective. We did a one month on-
12 the-land program just before Mamisarvik closed down in --
13 outside Inuvik, and it was wonderful. Hard work, but
14 wonderful. So, I would highly recommend on-the-land
15 programs when people are going through their healing
16 process.

17 I think for a lot of us, we've had family
18 members that have committed suicide. And I'm -- and a lot
19 of it -- because when you are traumatized and you have
20 these things going on within you, without help - it doesn't
21 stay just the same. It does progress. So, we need
22 services, more services for our people; young people;
23 families.

24 So, I've made a life outside my Territory.
25 I've been in the South for over 20 years now. When the

1 healing centre closed down several years ago, I took a good
2 long break and I thought I was going to retire. But I went
3 back to the work force and I'm now working with the Ottawa
4 Inuit Children's Centre and I'm really loving it. We hear
5 the voice -- because we work -- the building is where the
6 children are, the day care, the preschool, the Head Start.
7 So, we're surrounded by wonderful laughter, wonderful
8 children, and it's so healing. It's wonderful to work
9 there. And, I always hear the children laughing outside
10 our facility because the playground is right within the
11 yard there.

12 So, I work as a mental health counsellor and
13 we work with the family. We run the parenting courses, the
14 Inunnguiniq parenting courses, we've -- this is our second
15 session that we're running. It's 20 weeks long and it's
16 for Inuit parents. So, it's been really wonderful to have
17 that running. And, we usually have about 20, 15 to 20
18 parents every once-a-week that we gather. And these are
19 based on Inuit-traditional way of parenting. And we also
20 have our women sharing circles and men sharing circles once
21 a week. So, there's lots of good programming happening out
22 of the centre that I work for now.

23 So, just to go back to the first relocation,
24 many people don't talk about that. It's coming up more and
25 more, but I've always, kind of wondered about the effects

1 of those decisions that were made for my people without
2 their presence in these meetings. So, I was too young to
3 remember, but I've had opportunities where I've asked
4 questions to my Elders, how it was when they were
5 forcefully moved.

6 One lady, I'll never forget, when I asked
7 her the question, she started to cry, and she cried, and
8 she cried, then finally started to share her story of how
9 it was for her. So, from then on -- that was like 30 years
10 ago. From then on, I realized there's a lot of grief and
11 loss within my people, and it needs to be dealt with. If
12 not, then it just goes from generation to generation.

13 So, there's lots of stories. I think I'm
14 taking a bit too much time, so I'm going to pass it on.
15 Thank you for listening.

16 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** [Speaks in
17 Inuktitut]. Thank you for your incredible story and your
18 healing journey. Now, I introduce Karen Baker-Anderson.
19 Please go ahead.

20 **MS. KAREN BAKER-ANDERSON:** I'd like to just
21 start off by just saying how incredibly grateful I feel to
22 be in this room. In the last two days I have witnessed
23 incredible strength; the wisdom of women; the courage of
24 people. I have seen, heard and witnessed incredible pain,
25 but a strength and a spirit that has touched my heart.

1 I was asked -- our legal counsel, Beth, who
2 is here and has been incredible support for all of us, had
3 asked -- we're part of the standing committee with
4 Pauktuutit -- had asked that we come and speak about our
5 programming at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre.

6 But, before I do that, I'd like to talk a
7 little bit about the urban situation. Currently, 26
8 percent of Inuit have chosen or, in some cases have had had
9 no choice but to live outside of their home regions.
10 Ottawa is home to a large urban Inuit population that is
11 hard to get an exact count on, but as we heard today from
12 Cathy, from TI, it's estimated to be around 5,000.

13 When we look at who makes up that
14 population, we have found that there is a group of Inuit
15 who moved to Ottawa to live permanently; for employment,
16 health services, to be with family. There is another group
17 that live in Ottawa on a temporary basis.

18 They come for medical services again, and
19 some, and it's an unfortunate story -- on any given day in
20 Ottawa, there will be 60 youth who have left their home
21 Territory in the Baffin region to live in Ottawa. Because
22 they're involved -- because they're in need of support of
23 mental health services for the youth; or they're involved
24 in child welfare and have not been able to be placed in
25 their own region, so they are therefore living in Ottawa.

1 Fifty percent, which is really interesting,
2 of the population that we work, with are now born in
3 Ottawa. We deal with many children who have never, in
4 fact, lived or seen or experienced the North in any way,
5 shape or form, other than the cultural stories and the
6 pictures that are passed down to them as they visit the
7 Centre and speak with their families.

8 The issues that we see when Inuit come to an
9 urban setting is that there are systems everywhere that
10 they need to navigate. I remember two years ago being in
11 CHEO, and a woman came in; and a really obviously tough
12 part of her life, her child was there for medical services
13 -- CHEO is our pediatric hospital. And, I heard her ask
14 somebody, "How do I get to the third floor?" And, somebody
15 quickly in English responded to, "Go down the hall, turn
16 right and to take the elevator."

17 And, I stopped for a moment and thought,
18 "Has this woman ever been in an elevator? Did she
19 understand what was just said to her?" I took her hand and
20 together we went and found her sick child.

21 There are so many systems to navigate in an
22 urban setting. Over and over again, we ask people to prove
23 who they are. We ask them, "Do you have birth
24 certificates? Do you have medical records? Do you have
25 your child's report cards? Do you have assessments on your

1 children?" And when people don't have these things, people
2 in the system query why you wouldn't. There's lack of
3 understanding of the systems in the North.

4 The other thing that Inuit face when they're
5 in Ottawa is there is an assumption that pan-Aboriginal
6 services will meet their needs. The Inuit, and from what I
7 have seen, quietly go to programs and are grateful for
8 services, while yet acknowledging that they wished those
9 services were in their language and that were of their
10 culture.

11 I experienced this firsthand with my
12 daughter, Anika (phon), who we adopted at birth, and her
13 birth mother is Reepa. Anika came home from school one day
14 and she had gone to -- the night before actually, she had
15 gone to Wabano, our amazing Indigenous health care centre
16 and gone to a cultural event. She said, "Mom, they were
17 smudging. Do we smudge?" And, I said, "No, Anika, in your
18 culture, you don't smudge." But, it was a cultural
19 activity.

20 So, when kids are in Ottawa, they struggle
21 with what is their own identity, and as staff, we need --
22 are constantly educating people that there is a difference
23 between Métis, Inuit and First Nations. Because there is
24 an assumption that when they know about one of those
25 groups, that they can apply what they know to all three

1 groups.

2 Inuit in Ottawa experience racism. There is
3 no question in my mind and in my heart. I have non-
4 Indigenous men stand in my office and tell me, blatantly,
5 that they go to a particular bar on a certain -- during a
6 certain time of the month because they're certain to find
7 Inuit women who are intoxicated; that they then know or
8 feel that they have the right to abuse. I can tell you I
9 have said, "Don't let the door hit you on the back of the
10 head as you exit my office."

11 I'm not here to tell my story. I am, in
12 fact, not Indigenous. I am a white woman who, 23 years
13 ago, found herself somehow employed at Tungasuvvingat
14 Inuit. I don't know what brought me there, but like Reepa,
15 I'm very spiritual. My husband and I had gone through
16 infertility treatment for a number of years and couldn't
17 understand why this middle-class family -- couple, was not
18 able to conceive a child. It's all I had ever wanted my
19 entire life.

20 I think there's a connection to why I ended
21 up working at TI, in children's programs. I didn't have
22 the education. My background was in business and adult
23 education. But, somebody said to me, my dear friend, Liz
24 Lightford, who I still work with to this day and who
25 developed all of the family programs at TI, "You light up

1 when you're around children. It's where you need to be, it
2 is your calling."

3 The Inuit community allowed me to fulfil my
4 passion and work with children. Every day I wake up and
5 think, how the heck did this crazy white chick from
6 Manotick get to be the executive director of an Inuit
7 organization. I wasn't sure that I should be here today,
8 in fact, to speak.

9 Yesterday, a memory came back to me. The
10 memory of being 30 years old, it was a while ago -- quite a
11 while ago; and just having started in the community. And,
12 this beautiful Inuk woman came to me and said, "I'm going
13 to the Royal Ottawa tomorrow, I am -- I had become -- my
14 family is involved in child welfare, I need to deal with my
15 alcoholism. I'm going for an intake, can you come with
16 me?"

17 I had no idea what that meant. I had no
18 idea what was needed of me. I had never done work of that
19 nature. But she had asked me. I said, "Absolutely. Tell
20 me what you need." She said, "I need you to drive." And,
21 for people in this room who have ever seen me drive, that
22 was very, very brave of her. And, she said, "I need you to
23 hold my hand and I just need you to be there."

24 During the hour of that intake, I learned
25 that the human spirit can endure so much. I had not heard

1 or ever experienced such a story of horrific pain in my
2 life. She told the story like she was telling somebody
3 about a trip to Walmart to pick up groceries. She didn't
4 cry. She stared at the person doing the intake, and just
5 went on.

6 She talked about being abused not by one
7 person, two people, even three people. She talked about
8 having family members missing, murdered. I had never in my
9 life experienced hearing such a story. As we left, I will
10 never forget her putting her hand on my shoulder and
11 saying, "Are you okay?" That is the gift of Inuit. Always
12 checking on each other.

13 We drove in silence. I dropped her off. I
14 went home and I threw up for two hours straight. I could
15 not believe as a Canadian, in this country -- with so much
16 wealth, so much knowledge, that we could ever have a
17 Canadian be treated the way that that woman had been
18 treated. To have been let down by so many systems. My
19 heart changed that day. It was a call to action for me
20 that I could no longer, as a Canadian, stand by and not be
21 affected by what I had heard.

22 The other thing that came to my mind this
23 morning was when we adopted our beautiful Anika from Reepa
24 and her husband, Boyd. It was a traditional adoption. It
25 kind of, confused the people in the hospital when she was

1 born, because we were all in there and Reepa gives birth to
2 a 10-and-a-half-pound baby; I said thank goodness it wasn't
3 me. And, breastfeed -- she says, "Well, I think she's
4 hungry." I said, "Well, feed her." So, she breastfeeds
5 her, and then hands her to me and I breastfeed her, because
6 I had been pumping so that I could breastfeed her. And,
7 the total look of confusion on the doctor's face was quite
8 precious.

9 When I adopted Anika, I met with Meeka
10 Arnakaq, the same Elder we have spoken about many times,
11 and I said, "I need to hear from you what I need to do
12 because this is an incredible gift I had been given." And,
13 she said, "You need to raise her as part of her community,
14 she needs to know who she is as an Indigenous woman, but
15 also as a white woman because Reepa's husband, Boyd, is
16 from Scotland heritage." Just three minutes before we got
17 up to speak, my daughter, our daughter -- we obviously have
18 a very open adoption -- sent this to me. She's at McGill
19 University here in Montreal studying political science.
20 She said, "Mom, sending strength to you all and what is
21 surrounding you today. I just participated in a walk-out
22 with the Indigenous Student Alliance to raise awareness for
23 the injustice that continues to be committed against our
24 community. I don't want to go to my next class." I said,
25 "Follow your heart, sweetie, and don't go then." She will

1 be joining Reepa and I this evening to have dinner. That
2 is my inspiration to serve.

3 Twelve years ago, the Ottawa Inuit
4 Children's Centre started, and I was hired as the executive
5 director. It started with one program, five staff, and a
6 budget of \$300,000. Today, as we sit here, our budget is
7 now \$4.5 million; we employ 60 people; and we offer a
8 multitude of services. The services are nothing but a
9 toolkit to help people.

10 People ask, "How have we grown this agency?"
11 And, it's simple. We have done what the Inquiry needs to
12 do. We have asked Inuit: "What do you need?" We have
13 listened, and we have responded. The community built this
14 agency. It is theirs. You can see it in the eyes of the
15 children when they walk through the doors. You can hear it
16 with the staff and how proud they are of their work.

17 Yesterday I was sent a picture from our
18 staff. Currently we have 30 Inuit kids -- actually, 40
19 Inuit kids out on an on-the-land camp with five Elders.
20 And so, they were sending me pictures yesterday. We offer
21 a multitude of services. And, yesterday, when I refreshed
22 my memory on ITK's policy or strategy to end suicide --
23 everything is in that report.

24 There needs to be healing, we need to get
25 back to what Inuit always know and have known: that

1 children are the center of the universe. Without children,
2 there is no community.

3 I do three things -- or have three things in
4 my office. One is a picture that somebody gifted me of a
5 blanket toss, and I love that image of people holding
6 around a circle or a blanket with a child in the middle,
7 and they're throwing the child up. The second thing I
8 have, is a huge picture that was taken by Prime Minister
9 Trudeau's photography team, and it was a group of our
10 children who went to perform. I have a little crush on
11 Trudeau I have to tell you, I find his hair lovely.

12 I did not go that day. But, the children
13 returned all happy, and I said, "Where were you guys?"
14 And, they said, like it was an every day occurrence to
15 them, "Oh, we were performing in a nice building for some
16 nice guy," with big smiles on their face. And, what I
17 loved about that moment is our mission at our agency is
18 really simple: to ensure that each and every Inuk child
19 that walks through our door has a sense of pride in who
20 they are. The hope in that is that years down the road,
21 they will then to contribute back to a healthy community.

22 When I looked into the eyes of that children
23 that day, I saw hope; I saw pride; I saw a sparkle. It
24 wasn't about Trudeau. It was about them. It was so clear
25 to me how they felt. I have that picture on my wall.

1 The third thing is I will never forget
2 hearing a First Nations Elder speak about living on reserve
3 and children being taken from a community, sent to
4 residential school and how the sound changed in the
5 community, that they would open their windows and not hear
6 the sound of children playing.

7 I work with my window open so that I can
8 every day be reminded it's not about politics, it's not
9 about funding: it's about those kids. They bring meaning
10 to our work. The programs that we do have, we have a half-
11 day Head Start program, a full day childcare centre. And,
12 I have to tell you, every single community needs a
13 childcare centre. They don't just need a childcare centre,
14 it needs to be funded appropriately. We pay our staff on
15 average \$25.00 an hour to work in the childcare centre.

16 When I was at the National Strategy for
17 Childcare, I heard about the rates of pay in the North,
18 where the cost of living is so much higher in Ottawa and
19 left quite pissed off, to be honest with you, that people
20 doing such important work were paid so low.

21 We have youth services, parenting services,
22 mental health services. We have four staff that work in
23 the Ottawa Carleton school board doing cultural
24 presentations, and we are working on system change. But,
25 all of that is because that's what the community told us

1 they wanted. We have just followed their voice.

2 And, again, if you read through ITK's
3 suicide-prevention strategy, it's all in there. We just
4 need to stop doing all -- this Hearing is obviously
5 important. Reports of such nature are important. But,
6 this has to be a call to action. Thank you. I know I've
7 gone on way too long, but that happens with me. Okay. So,
8 I'm going to pass it on. Thank you.

9 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank you very much,
10 Karen. Thank you for sharing. We have three more
11 panelists, and I don't know if you would like to take a
12 break or we shall continue. [Speaks in Inuktitut]. Yes.
13 They can continue if you are all right as well. Good. All
14 right. We will continue. So, we have, next up, Rebecca
15 Jones. Yes, please.

16 **MS. REBECCA JONES:** How do I start? So, my
17 name is Rebecca Jones. My family is originally from Coral
18 Harbour, Nunavut. I semi-grew up there; we moved there
19 when I was about 12 years old, and went in and out of the
20 community up until 2008. I've lived everywhere pretty much
21 in the North and in southern Canada.

22 I, too, am a survivor of domestic violence.
23 I left my ex-husband back in 2009 for the last time. A lot
24 of what the women were sharing earlier resonates with me
25 very much. I think for a lot of us Inuit women living in

1 the smaller communities in Nunavut, experience very much
2 the same things. With lack of services, nowhere to go, and
3 we're all being told what Reepa had shared earlier to just
4 stay in the marriage.

5 We're often told by the Elders ...

6 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. REBECCA JONES:** ... "It
7 will be okay again, just stick with it, he will change
8 eventually if you're just patient."

9 **MS. REBECCA JONES:** I can tell you patience
10 does not work. There's nothing anybody can do to change
11 anybody else. There's nothing anybody can do to force
12 their partner to heal, because as mentioned, people that do
13 that are injured persons themselves.

14 Initially, I had thought I would speak about
15 some of the traumas that I had gone through, but it just
16 kept bringing me back to my ex and the things he's gone
17 through. And, there are not enough services and programs
18 for our men and boys. Men in general have a harder time
19 speaking about things that have happened to them,
20 disclosing abuse. And, I just really want to express the
21 importance of having more programming for Inuit men and
22 boys.

23 And, the importance of keeping our children
24 safe, teaching them to be proud of who they are.

25 Encouraging those people that are in those kinds of

1 situations, those kinds of abusive relationships, to leave
2 and not to stay and -- not to be patient, but to leave.
3 And, if in the future, yes, if he does change on his own,
4 then that's your choice, if you want to go back to him.
5 But for now, you need to get out.

6 But, unfortunately, there are, I think only
7 two, two or three shelters in the whole Territory. And,
8 for those of us who have, kind of been known to have a
9 stronger voice, were asked to take on this added stress.
10 Even while I was going through these things, I was
11 constantly asked to help others and to open up my home.
12 And I did, to some. I allowed people to come in with their
13 six kids and, like -- even though I was quite stressed out
14 myself, but I had no choice because these people had
15 nowhere else to go, which also caused a lot of strife
16 between myself and the husband.

17 I have been through a lot, but coming to
18 Ottawa has really helped me realize the importance of
19 Inuit-specific programming; healing groups, whatever you
20 want to call them. Because I feel that many Inuit are lost
21 in who they are, they need that sense of self-identity to
22 begin their healing journey.

23 Even for myself, I grew up in both worlds,
24 I'm half-white, and so I grew up both in the Inuit world
25 and *hanoonat* (phon) world. But I would always walk around

1 and I would always -- "Why is everybody so messed up?" You
2 know, and I'd be saying these types of things without even
3 realizing the affects that colonization and inter-
4 generational trauma and all these things have had on so
5 many Indigenous peoples.

6 I'm not saying it's an excuse to do bad
7 things, whether to others or to yourself, but it definitely
8 plays a role in why Inuit society is the way it is. With
9 violence being so prevalent in our societies, sexual
10 violence, physical violence; you name it, it's everywhere.
11 That's how I would see it. And, that was my main reason
12 for leaving the North, because I didn't want my children to
13 grow up thinking that that's normal, to see somebody
14 walking down the street, you know, yelling at their wife
15 and she already has a black eye, you know? And, everybody
16 just, kind of, "Ah, that's just them."

17 I didn't want my children to grow up
18 thinking that that's normal. And even though I know in my
19 heart that that wasn't normal, it became a norm to me too.
20 It was just a part of every day life. And, I don't want
21 our society to be like that and I don't want any child to
22 ever think that that's normal.

23 I think education is key, in every sense of
24 the word. Not just education through school, but educate
25 people on the effects of alcohol. You know, it may be all

1 fun and games for now, but then later on, you're going to
2 develop an addiction and not a lot of people are aware of
3 that, because it is a fairly new thing that was introduced
4 in Inuit society.

5 My mom, just one generation before me, they
6 were born on the land. And a lot of people don't realize
7 that either, that we're a very new society, new Territory,
8 that it's going to take a lot of work; but I recommend that
9 we work on our youth because it's that next generation
10 that's going to be the change.

11 When I was growing up, there wasn't anything
12 for youth. And from what I understand, there still isn't
13 very much. And, everyone knows what happens when young
14 people are bored, they'll think of anything to do. They'll
15 just take whatever is available if they're not taught
16 properly.

17 I had written a couple of things down. So,
18 I started working for OICC, Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre,
19 a little over a year ago, or it's been maybe two years now,
20 something like that. But Karen had mentioned earlier a few
21 things that don't sit well with me as well.

22 Being an Inuk woman, in this day and age you
23 would think I would be able to walk safely down the street
24 in one of the safest city's in Canada, but I can't.
25 There's a particular area of town where sex trade workers

1 are known to frequent, and if I'm walking down there
2 because I'm coming from a meeting or things like that, cars
3 will pull up to me, assuming that I'm a prostitute. And,
4 I've had very racist things said to me while living in
5 Ottawa. I've only been there for about two and a half
6 years now; but it's that lack of education, it's -- on the
7 general public, that lack of education, the assumption that
8 we're all drunks.

9 I find myself, every single time I meet a
10 new person that I'm having to explain myself, having to
11 explain the difference between First Nations, Métis, Inuit;
12 having to explain that statistically, Indigenous people
13 drink less than any other culture in Canada; having to
14 explain, "No, I've never been a prostitute."

15 Like, I think that's pretty sad in 2018, to
16 have to be constantly explaining myself when I should be
17 comfortable in my own home. I should be comfortable enough
18 to walk down the street. I shouldn't be looked at any
19 differently than anybody else. And, I think unfortunately
20 a lot of Inuit women especially feel that way, and it's
21 quite scary, it's a scary thing to experience and feel.

22 But my number one recommendation is
23 education for the general public on who we really are.
24 It's all fine and dandy to have it in the curriculum now in
25 schools, but again, it's just a general overview of things

1 that can be very easily misunderstood at that -- actually,
2 one of our ladies that acts as our services, was approached
3 by a man on the bus who had thought Inuit are extinct. He
4 thought we were an extinct people because this is what he
5 learned in his university class, in his Indigenous studies.
6 Despite his -- he was so ecstatic to have met what he
7 thought was an extinct people -- yes. But, yes, she had to
8 educate him on the bus. So, she said, "I should be a
9 professor."

10 But these are just the types of things that
11 we have to go through. And, I'm still on my healing
12 journey, but because of places like OICC, because I feel so
13 supported there, I finally have the courage to speak up or
14 speak out.

15 And, I just wanted to share something, I'm
16 very proud of it. So, I developed with others -- with the
17 help of others this little resource kit, and I want to
18 share it with others so that maybe you can do a similar
19 thing in your regions. It's a mini-resource kit which
20 contains -- so there's a few cards in there.

21 One is for listing resources; one is a
22 calendar which -- I got the idea off of -- I had gone to a
23 conference and they had mentioned an app that's available
24 in the States, where one big part of it is a calendar, so
25 that the woman can track her feelings or incidents that may

1 have happened in order for her to reflect back onto her
2 situation. Because when you're in that situation, you
3 don't have time to think about it, process it, process the
4 feelings and thoughts surrounding that whole thing. And
5 then the next thing happens, and then the next things
6 happens, and you just don't have the time or energy to
7 process all of it. But when you start reflecting back
8 using a calendar, then it helps the woman to maybe make
9 that next step of leaving.

10 And, that's about it. And then there's a
11 resource list. And, if need be -- it's small enough to fit
12 in a purse. We tried to design it so it's small enough to
13 fit anywhere. But if need be, there's an emergency card
14 with numbers -- like emergency numbers. If need be, she
15 can just grab that card and flee. And we're hoping that --
16 we have a very good relationship with the Ottawa Police and
17 we're printing out extra cards like this for them to carry
18 around in their pocket.

19 So, I encourage every community or every
20 urban centre to develop something like this, just to help
21 your women get out of that situation. I think that's it.

22 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank you, Rebecca.
23 Can you tell us if this new toolkit is being used yet, and
24 if not, when will this be available?

25 **MS. REBECCA JONES:** So, what I'm showing you

1 here is just a prototype. It should be done within the
2 next month or so, and we're going to be sharing it with
3 centres across Ottawa, all the shelters and places that
4 provide services for Inuit women and girls.

5 And, we're also sending them to the North
6 because of the lack of resources up there, some women are
7 sent to Ottawa from the Baffin region to access services or
8 to go to a shelter. So, we'll be sending them up there to
9 police officers and whoever, to hand out once -- if they
10 come across a woman that needs to flee to Ottawa.

11 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Very good. Thank
12 you. [Speaks in Inuktitut]. I would next like to
13 introduce Annie Arnatuk, who is also president of the
14 Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik. [Speaks in
15 Inuktitut]. You can speak English or Inuktitut.

16 **MS. ANNIE ARNATUK:** Thank you, Reepa.

17 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. ANNIE ARNATUK:** I am an
18 Inuk and I am blessed to be an Inuk. I'd like to share my
19 experiences as an Inuk who was sexually abused. I was
20 underage and this was recurrent as I was growing up, and I
21 had no concept of how a young woman was to connect with
22 men. And I cried for years -- for over 30 years for the
23 experiences I had gone through.

24 I have gone through my healing journey and I
25 have attended healing circles. And, for nine months I saw

1 a psychiatrist in regards to that experience, as I lived a
2 frightful journey with thoughts of committing suicide with
3 so many children, with eight children, because I was -- had
4 thoughts of suicide. I felt like I was not a reliable
5 person. A French instructor also sexually molested us with
6 these experiences. And then my grandfather also abused me,
7 so I would self-inflict myself with pain.

8 In the 1980s, the population was around 200,
9 and I started mentioning my experience. I thought joy
10 would finally be in my path, but once I shared this, it was
11 a frightful moment. I am saying this to seek for help;
12 instead it was fright, as if I was at a war with people
13 killing each other. It was the heaviest burden I had
14 experienced.

15 My grandfather who was highly regarded in
16 the community, he was a true man in the sense, in the
17 community, and I was only a grandchild, and people were
18 saying I was telling lies and that was a heavy burden when
19 they didn't trust me or believe me. Because he is an Elder
20 and everybody trusted him, I went silent.

21 This possibly occurred for four years, as if
22 I was his wife. "If you ever disclose, I will kill you and
23 I will also kill your relations, and then I'll kill
24 myself." That was the heaviest burden I had carried as a
25 young person.

1 But through healing, I have regained
2 strength. I have almost killed myself, but through a
3 psychiatrist -- I didn't trust the psychiatrist at first
4 because he was male. But through my efforts and
5 willingness. That experience I had within my community
6 almost killed my spirit. I could have become mental or
7 taken my own life. Those were traumatic experiences I've
8 had. Just as I was about to take my own life at a young
9 age of 40, I had a grandchild of -- my daughter's child --
10 and that is what prevented me from taking my life. I loved
11 my grandchild so much.

12 Therefore, I was so fatigued living that
13 lifestyle; with depression, sadness, wanting to take my
14 life; being the mother, being the provider; and keeping
15 silent. Therefore, I decided to stand on my two feet and a
16 woman in my community realized my life had changed, even
17 though I was a social worker and being a woman of
18 Christianity; that was a heavy burden to carry.

19 My husband was tired of my lifestyle.
20 Whenever -- the start of the months were the hardest
21 moments for me. I have no hatred or don't target anyone
22 with my story. The one I loved intensely was the one who
23 prevented me from taking my life, so I initiated my healing
24 journey, seeing a psychologist.

25 My eldest grandchild ended up dying in good

1 health as -- and through my healing journey, that has
2 brought me to safety. And, I shared about the French
3 instructor. There were nine of us who took the education
4 board in the year she identified. We sought for that
5 French instructor, we even went to the Supreme Court. And,
6 the prosecutor insisted that you have to take charge; that
7 the French instructor we sought for was sought globally.
8 Previously in the U.S. and not in Canada, guilty for -- who
9 wrote a book and the challenge he experienced with the
10 French instructor. And, this teacher happened to be at the
11 same locale with that French instructor. I was frightful.
12 Spoke to him in French.

13 My French learnings had been lost, but he
14 knew I spoke French and that I understood it had a
15 comprehension of French and I was frightful, but I
16 approached him. "Where is that French instructor, Roger
17 Garso (phon)? Where is he? Do you know where he resides?"
18 And, he responded, "Annie, he has changed his name. He is
19 no longer just Roger. Dr. Joseph Garso is his name now."
20 "Where is he now? We are seeking for him. Where is he?"
21 He is here. He passed away a year ago here in -- outside
22 of Montreal.

23 There are seven to nine of us who were
24 abused. Because of those experiences we've gone through,
25 we haven't been able to provide well for our children. One

1 of them have taken his or her own life, a good friend of
2 mine. He was in Quaqtaq for six months and this is the
3 ruins he has brought us into today.

4 I enjoyed learning French. As I enjoyed
5 learning French, I had a good comprehension, and I've
6 enjoyed it into today. But for years, I've neglected to
7 speak French as it charred us with the French instructor,
8 and I realize this after the fact. I've been abused
9 sexually for -- by women and by men for so many years, so
10 she recounted how many times she's been abused by women and
11 men: 22 men and women have abused her.

12 I am grateful to be alive. You are living a
13 life that one should not experience. You've persevered
14 despite your experience. Some people take their own lives.
15 So, I gave some thought about becoming a board member and
16 how I can channel my voice so this abuse can be prevented.
17 This has to stop because it chars peoples' minds and
18 thoughts, and brings people to suicide. It has been my
19 biggest challenge as a board member with Saturviit. Inuit
20 have to be respected -- Inuit women with prevention of
21 violence -- the rights of Inuit women have been taken away.
22 We need to revive those.

23 Thank you for the opportunity. I am proud
24 to be an Inuk, to assist and honour others, children, men,
25 or young people. I do not have any hatred towards them. I

1 was a social worker for 10 years and I've been supported
2 through the education, therefore I stand firmer on my feet.
3 I do not direct or put empathy on others.

4 The last thing I'll say, traumatic
5 experiences, an elderly person who passed away from food
6 that was contaminated, she went to the health centre
7 several times and was sent home. And if she had gone to a
8 hospital, she would have been alive today. Up in Inuit
9 Nunangat, the employees are not hasty enough to service
10 Inuit with the best care and quality. How could this be
11 improved? How could the services improve and expand in
12 Inuit Nunangat?

13 My older sister who passed away in July last
14 year, I saw her for the last time here. She lived in
15 Inukjuak and I lived in Quaqtaq. She has lived in Inukjuak
16 for 30 years with children. It was as if her life journey
17 was cut short. Thank you for the opportunity, thank you
18 for listening to me. I have eight children and have
19 grandchildren. I am well. Thank you.

20 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:**

21 Annie, You are now in charge of the Saturviit Inuit Women's
22 Association, so we're very proud of you and we're so happy
23 to hear from you. Did you wish to speak about an
24 investigation that was done in your community about women
25 there, before I hand it over to Mary? Okay. Go ahead.

1 Yes. Or are you done for now? Yes, thank you.

2 Mary Thomassie, it's your turn next, you
3 have the microphone. Thank you.

4 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. MARY THOMASSIE:** Thank
5 you for accommodating my presence here in Montreal. My
6 father even said one time when he wished to be heard in the
7 house to his children -- by his children -- he did not want
8 me to marry, but to be a rebel.

9 Men were interested in me, but the
10 philosophy is that a woman needs a husband and I have not
11 listened to my father when he suggested I not marry, for I
12 had. And I stayed with my man whom I had children with.
13 We have two daughters and we have sons.

14 I got a job at an office and it was a job I
15 enjoyed. Jobs were very rare in those days. And, I used
16 to carry my child in my *amauti* when I went to work. In
17 comes a man who was sober, and this made him even more
18 dangerous, and he grabbed me. Out of the blue, it was
19 nothing I had expected. I was not raised in any violence
20 at home. I had never been around confusion.

21 I was raised without a mother, yes, but by
22 the age of five, my mother got sick and it turned out she
23 had passed away then. Her grave is in Quebec City. It was
24 only in the year 2001 that I learned where her grave was,
25 and it's in Quebec City. This is how it was for us. Who

1 will now be the leader in the home? Usually the mother is
2 the matriarch and her body has not been returned. We
3 waited and waited for the answers.

4 I live in Montréal and I found out where to
5 go and what to do, and so I found my own way to her grave.
6 I expected to see a decent grave with perhaps some floral
7 remembrance items, but it was straight rocks. There was no
8 name on it even. In this day of computation and digital
9 resources -- I asked my brother, "Where is my mother's
10 grave?" Because we were very curious to find out.

11 We were given that information, but I always
12 expected that she died here. And so, I became an old-timer
13 for waiting for a hint of information to say, your mother
14 was -- your mother died, or even a declaration of death.
15 Nothing. There was no form.

16 When I was kidnapped in my office, I was
17 grabbed in the front here, and he took me to a man's room.
18 I got dragged -- and I had my child in my back -- in my
19 baby carrying coat, and he dragged me. I had no strength.
20 I'm a woman. I knew no violence or self defence. I had
21 been so angry about this for so long. I'm not trying to
22 shock you or put you through trauma here.

23 My father tried to protect me and my sister.
24 What about my three older sisters who married? Nothing bad
25 happened to them. But, he said that, "Mary will not marry

1 a man." I'm not afraid now. It's just I need to release
2 this, and this is my opportunity and I thank you for this.

3 I've also worked at helping people come out
4 of jail because they too need so much help. Our men need
5 help. There was a man who was in jail for 14 years; there
6 is a place of accommodation where we provide counselling.
7 I was a counsellor for 14 years. They are the ones that
8 need the most help out of our population. They turn to
9 alcohol. They bootleg alcohol. Is it a form of healing to
10 be a bootlegger? What can we do? We must help our men
11 too. They will not ask for help first, either. We women
12 are more open to receiving help. We have men come home
13 back to their community, and they have nothing to say or to
14 share while their hearts hurt.

15 My nephew was killed in 2005. My little
16 nephew was killed and we know who did it. I heard people
17 testifying, they still don't know who murdered their loved
18 ones. So, I want to show my support to those who go
19 through trauma as I was a counsellor and I helped others at
20 CRC as a counsellor.

21 So, I even had to retire because I thought I
22 was getting too old -- just recently, last February. But I
23 still want to help and I have compassion for those who are
24 in pain. Thank you.

25 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank

1 you so much, Mary, for speaking your mind and your
2 experience. Can I have a question for you? You brought
3 some materials from Saturviit with Annie and you showed
4 some of these at the Inukjuak meeting regarding the
5 publication of these materials. Could you tell us a bit
6 more about it? Yes. Thank you.

7 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. MARY THOMASSIE:** It's
8 very important that investigations are carried out properly
9 for the murder of both adults and children, and so there is
10 a lot of information that is being hidden. There is
11 evidence that is not shown. And, we heard a lot about this
12 in Inukjuak in 2015.

13 There were 18 families who came to speak at
14 that board meeting. There was a lot of crying, there was a
15 lot of pain. They were looking for counsellors and
16 helpers, due to the lack of respect from the police; people
17 being arrested have been beaten up by the police because
18 they're second-class citizens, they're not good enough to
19 deserve any respect. This is what I see. They're -- we
20 watch a lot of television in my community, we see a mockery
21 of murdered people and that is where I do not want our
22 people to go.

23 It was an excellent meeting we had in
24 Inukjuak with Saturviit as we collected information. We
25 held our meeting in a beautiful building like this -- I'm

1 sorry, it was the opposite of beautiful buildings like
2 this. We were out on the land where there was traditional
3 food, there was fish to be caught; the speakers who wish to
4 speak were given the time in Inukjuak. And it was not too
5 far from the community itself, so it was a perfect setting
6 for us and I thank Alice for that.

7 I'm sure I'm forgetting another item I
8 wanted to remember. So, I just say thank you again, Lisa.

9 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank
10 you, Mary. I think there may be some questions for you, so
11 let's be open to the questions. Do you have questions for
12 us?

13 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** I will also be giving
14 you this report, also prepared by Saturviit which is
15 entitled, "Bring Hope and Restore Peace", a study report on
16 the life and concerns of Inuit women of Nunavik. So, I'll
17 bring it to you while you go ahead and ask your questions.

18 [Speaking in Inuktitut]. Can we give that
19 too, Rebecca? You have one only? Then, we'll ask to have
20 copies of the prototype of the toolkit for Inuit women in
21 Ottawa at a later date. And Annie and Saturviit would like
22 to present the DVD that they had prepared called "Breaking
23 the Silence", which is the story of Inuit women in Nunavik,
24 including Lizzie, Annie and Ghenalina Nellie Annieho
25 (phon), who was not able to make it today, and Pasa Angup

1 (phon) of Nunavik.

2 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I thank you
3 and we pass on these and we are grateful for the gifts you
4 have given us. They will be reviewed and we have them
5 digitally. During our Inquiry, this is a time of
6 listening. Yes, people are watching us and people are
7 hearing us, however even when our work is concluded, the
8 information we are collecting will lead to creating more
9 useful policies after the analyses are done.

10 Everything that we've heard across Canada,
11 for instance this blanket before us has different patterns;
12 but put together, it becomes a whole blanket. It's the
13 same idea, it's how our work continues. We collect
14 information from different regions, and then we put it all
15 together. So, what you gave to us is something we will
16 read, Lisa, and your fellow board members will be reading
17 them too, I'm sure.

18 We listened today and they will help make
19 others understand it more. Sarah's comments, Liz's
20 comments, we will learn about your experiences and we will
21 be able to digest and analyze your experiences that are
22 stemmed from your truth as people who experienced these
23 things in their lives.

24 I want to say thank you. When we were
25 preparing for the Hearings in Montreal, we weren't able to

1 go to Ottawa, we won't be able to go to Nunavik, and we are
2 closing -- getting closer to the end of our mandate. And
3 we had asked if the Inuit of Nunavik and the Inuit who live
4 in urban areas in the South, we wanted to learn and we need
5 to learn from them what their issues are, what their
6 concerns are; how can we show what your issues are. And
7 so, I'm very grateful that you are here to tell us so, what
8 your issues are.

9 You are the experts and you know your work
10 and what is involved and what is required. We have said
11 from day one that there are difficulties and gaps that we
12 will learn about, but we will also learn about
13 recommendations and possible changes people wish to see by
14 the Inuit, the Métis, the First Nations.

15 And so, it will be our job to produce your
16 thoughts and you have given us more information that we
17 have to put out there, being Indigenous people from
18 Nunavut, from urban Inuit in Ottawa, from urban Inuit in
19 Montreal; from the young, from the girls, from the mothers,
20 from the fathers. I recognize the importance of all these
21 relations and I thank you so much.

22 I accept, and we say it over and over, we
23 knew that we were going to hear about very hard experiences
24 and truths, but the solutions are with the people and part
25 of the work of the Inquiry is to highlight, yes, the

1 difficulties, but the resilience and the ability, the
2 rising of Indigenous women and the reclaiming of your place
3 and your power. And you have demonstrated how you have
4 taken your experiences and are putting that and putting
5 yourselves in your place of power. [Speaks in Inuktitut].

6 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you. I
7 think Qajaq has said it so well, I don't know what I could
8 add except to thank you, each and every one of you. I
9 mean, each of you, thank you for sharing some very
10 difficult things. But thank you also for your insight and
11 each of you provided such important insight and
12 recommendations, and together, what an incredible panel
13 this afternoon. So, all I can say is thank you so much for
14 your contribution.

15 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** I want to
16 thank all of you first of all, for coming here today. I
17 know there was some travel that took you away from your
18 families and your friends, so I wish you a safe trip home,
19 all of you.

20 Thank you. I've learned so much from you
21 this afternoon, it's going to take a little while for it
22 all to sink in. You are wonderful teachers, so thank you.
23 I see six beautiful strong women and all of you inspire me.
24 Thank you very much for coming.

25 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank you all of you.

1 Thank you.

2 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Before you all
3 leave, we have some small gifts we'd like to share with
4 each of you as a thank you for coming and sharing with us.
5 And, Grandmother Blu is going to help us here and -- so
6 just don't leave yet and we'll come around with these
7 gifts. Thanks.

8 **MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** And, as we come
9 around, I know you have friends and supporters and
10 colleagues, come give hugs, people.

11 **MS. MOREEN KONWATSITSAWI MELOCHE:** Thank you
12 all. And, you spoke for 16 minutes. Sixteen minutes. She
13 was afraid to talk for three. So, [Speaks in Inuktitut].
14 Thank you everyone. Gifts will be passed. And, we want to
15 thank you, you did such a good job. Pleasure. Yes. So,
16 come on down. Dinner will be served for staff and the
17 panel, the families today. So, for the rest, we will see
18 you tomorrow, but thank you all, drink lots of water, it's
19 hard, difficult information, but this is how sometimes
20 trauma can turn to thriving. So, we've survived and now
21 we're thriving. So, *Migwetch, nakurmiik*. Thank you all.
22 Have a good night.

23 --- Exhibits (code: P01P13P0101)

24 **Exhibit 1:** "Working Together for a Common Purpose: Report
25 of the Inquiry into Missing or Murdered

1 Nunavimmiut" Pascale Laneuville, published 2017
2 (Saturviit) (48 pages). Link:
3 [http://www.saturviit.ca/wp-](http://www.saturviit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Saturviit Missing-Women English Full-Report.pdf)
4 [content/uploads/2016/04/Saturviit Missing-](http://www.saturviit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Saturviit Missing-Women English Full-Report.pdf)
5 [Women English Full-Report.pdf](http://www.saturviit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Saturviit Missing-Women English Full-Report.pdf)

6 **Exhibit 2:** Report "Bring Hope and Restore Peace: A Study
7 Report on the Life and Concerns of Inuit Women of
8 Nunavik," Pascale Laneuville, published June 2015
9 (Saturviit) ISBN: 978-0-9948550-1-5 (163 pages).
10 Link to long version:
11 [http://www.saturviit.ca/women-concerns/bring-](http://www.saturviit.ca/women-concerns/bring-hope-and-restore-peace/)
12 [hope-and-restore-peace/](http://www.saturviit.ca/women-concerns/bring-hope-and-restore-peace/)

13 **Exhibit 3:** DVD "Breaking the Silence" (Saturviit, 2015, 24
14 minutes 40 seconds).

15 --- Upon adjourning at 18:16

16

17 LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

18

19 I, Shirley Chang, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I
20 have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and
21 accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this
22 matter.

23

24

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1 Shirley Chang

2 March 28, 2018

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