



# Ontario Native Women's Association

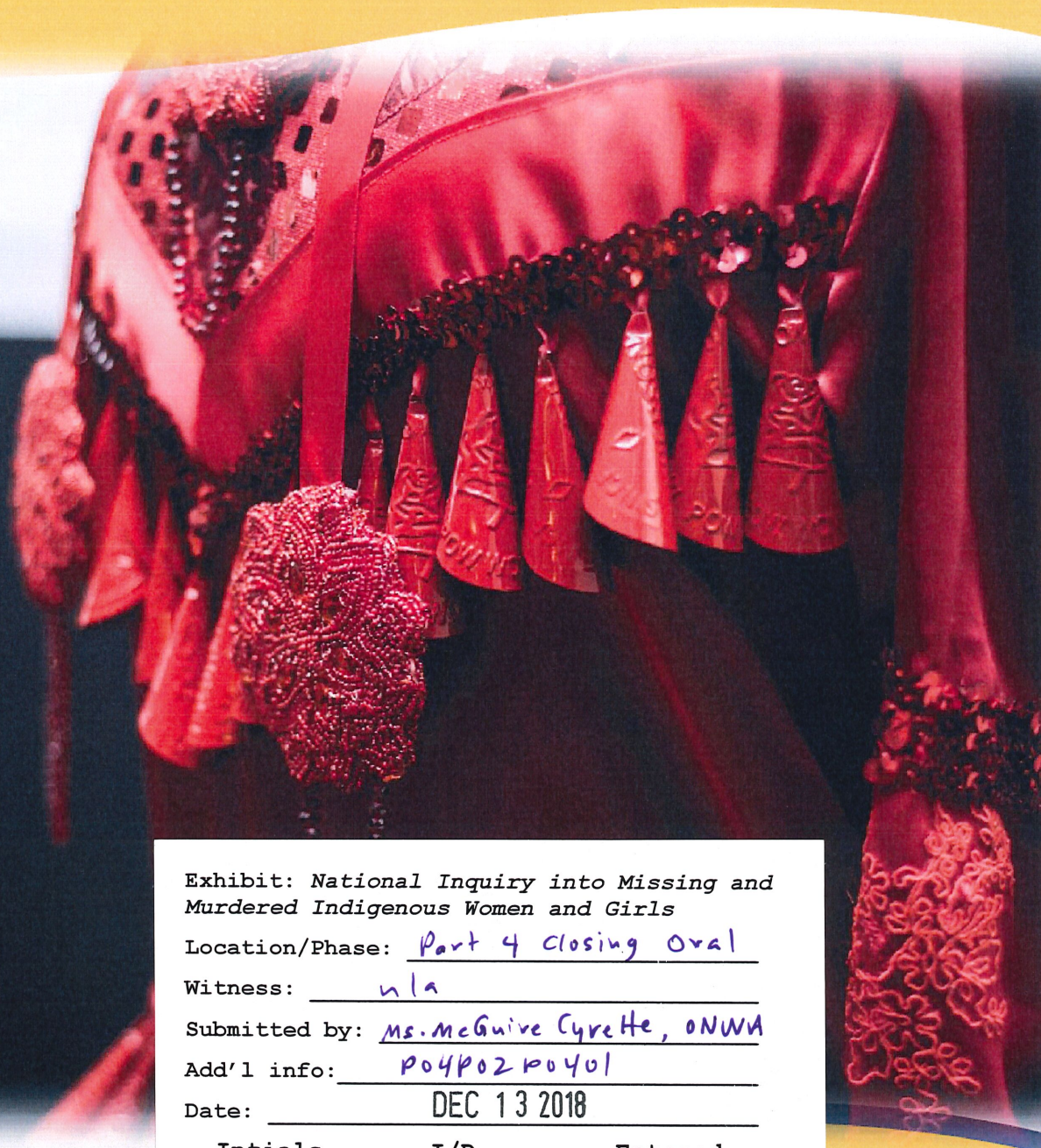


Exhibit: *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*

Location/Phase: Part 4 Closing Oval

Witness: ula

Submitted by: Ms. McGuire Cyrette, ONWA

Add'l info: P04P02 P0401

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Initials

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## Recommendations to the MMIWG National Inquiry





### Recommendations

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The Ontario Native Women's Association respectfully submits the following recommendations to the National Inquiry on Missing and Murder Indigenous Women and Girls as follow:

**1. Restoration of Indigenous Women's Identity - Sex Discrimination in the *Indian Act***

- (a) To the Government of Canada: ONWA calls for the immediate removal of the discriminatory 1951 amendment "cut-off" and for the full section 6(1)(a) status extend to all First Nations women and their children who have been discriminated against by exclusionary provisions of the *Indian Act* since 1869.
- (b) To the Government of Canada and Provincial and Territorial governments: ONWA recommends that adequate funding be provided to First Nations to accommodate the return of their community members who had been discriminatorily displaced from their First Nation community due to the sex discrimination in the *Indian Act* and/or child welfare apprehension.
- (c) To all First Nations and their Band Council governments: ONWA recommends that you openly welcome and accept community members who have lost their Indian status due to the sex based discrimination within the *Indian Act*. As part of this welcoming, ONWA further recommends that all First Nations review their own membership policies and governance structures to ensure that there is no sex discrimination perpetuated against women and their descendants who have left home due to the sex discrimination within the *Indian Act* or child welfare apprehension.
- (d) To the Government of Canada and the Provincial Territorial governments: In recognition of the historic and current constructs that Indigeneity are rooted in colonial and patriarchal constructs that have consistently excluded women's voice, ONWA recommends that any

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discussions, consultation, engagement and/or amendments to law and policy as relate to Indigenous identity and/or citizenship/membership of any of the three Constitutionally recognized Indigenous peoples in Canada (First Nation, Inuit and Métis), must formally include Indigenous women, including those women who have been displaced because of historical discrimination and racism.

### 2. Restoration and Recognition of Indigenous Women's Leadership

- (a) To the Government of Canada, First Nation Governments, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal governments: ONWA recommends that all levels of government recognize and negotiate with Traditional Indigenous Governance Structures that recognize Indigenous women's leadership roles as they are restored throughout the Nations.
- (b) To the Government of Canada, First Nation Governments, Provincial and Territorial governments: ONWA recommends that on any decisions that will impact Indigenous women and girls, Indigenous women and girls, and autonomous Indigenous women's organizations, be formally and meaningfully engaged in the consultations beyond the three nationally recognized Indigenous organizations.

### 3. Language

- (a) To the Government of Canada, Provincial and Territorial governments: ONWA recommends that Indigenous language programs be permanently and adequately invested in, as an act of reconciliation and recognition, that language restores identity, place and belonging. Such action would also be an acknowledgement of the significant role Indigenous language has in healing, since language also embodies Indigenous worldview and knowledge. The use of Indigenous language reminds community members of their roles and responsibilities, including the specific roles of Indigenous women and girls and in relation to Indigenous women and girls.

#### 4. Addressing Sexual Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls

- (a) To the Government of Canada and all Provincial and Territorial governments: ONWA recommends that, working with Indigenous women and girls and autonomous Indigenous women organizations, that a comprehensive National Sexual Violence Action Plan be developed and adequately funded. The Action Plan will address the root causes of sexual violence against Indigenous Women and Girls and provides ongoing healing, trauma informed, culturally grounded justice supports for women and girls who are victims of sexual violence.

#### 5. Victim Services and Safety

- (a) To all Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal governments: ONWA recommends that immediate permanent core funding of shelters and safe spaces for Indigenous women and children experiencing violence be implemented for all communities, including remote and rural communities. This funding must account for regional discrepancies in cost, notably the higher cost of transportation, materials and food in remote northern communities.
- (b) To all Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal governments: ONWA recommends that all emergency health services, medical services, sexual assault prevention and sexual assault response services be funded adequately to provide appropriate holistic health services, in a respectfully and culturally appropriate manner to Indigenous women and girls.
6. To the Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal governments: ONWA recommends that all nursing stations located on First Nations communities be equipped to safely



perform sexual assault evidence kits in a respectful, trauma informed and culturally appropriate manner.

## **7. Indigenous Women and the Gladue Principles**

- (a) To the Government of Canada and all Provincial and Territorial governments responsible for justice, corrections and public safety: ONWA recommends that a national standard for Gladue Reports be established. This national standard must be culturally grounded and trauma Informed. Such standard must be Indigenous developed and implemented. An integral part of this standard must include an Indigenous women strength based lens that also acknowledges the intersections of gender and racial discrimination. Therefore, the aforementioned governments must fund Indigenous led, not for profit organizations, on a permanent and equal basis, at minimum, to that of those government institutions responsible for preparing Pre-Sentence Reports.
- (b) To the Government of Canada and all Provincial and Territorial governments responsible for justice, corrections and public safety: ONWA recommends that adequate permanent funding be provided to Indigenous led, not for profit organizations, to provide Gladue support services that work in a manner that is culturally grounded, trauma informed, and fulfills the intended remedial purpose of the Gladue principles. Further, autonomous Indigenous women's organizations should be given priority funding for Gladue Report Writing and Gladue support services programming for Indigenous women.

## **8. Addressing Human Trafficking Against Indigenous Women and Girls**

- (a) To the Government of Canada and all Provinces and Territorial governments: ONWA recommends that all levels of government work collaboratively with Indigenous women, Indigenous women's organizations and anti-human trafficking stakeholders to develop

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and adequately fund a comprehensive National Plan to address and stop the high incidents of Indigenous women and girls being targets of human trafficking.

### 9. Restoring Healthy Families and Addressing the Child Welfare System

(a) To the Government of Canada and all Provincial and Territorial governments: As part of the transformed Child Welfare system proposed by the Federal government, Indigenous women are actively involved in the development and implementation of the plan. The plan:

- Builds on Dr. Cindy Blackstocks' materials where the focus of child welfare is on ensuring that the Indigenous family and all family members are healthy;
- A "do no harm" approach that will not re-victimize Indigenous women but supports them and empowers them in their role as mothers; and
- The role of Indigenous mothers is honoured, recognized and supported.

(b) To each Provincial and Territorial ministry responsible for Child Welfare Services: ONWA recommends the immediate implementation of Indigenous led programs and supports that encourage and empower Indigenous identity reclamation for both Indigenous children in care and for those children who have already aged-out or left care.

### 9. Reinstatement of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation

(a) To the Government of Canada: ONWA recommends the immediate reinstatement of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Such reinstatement must prioritize that the work be trauma informed, culturally grounded with an Indigenous gender-based approach. The work of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation must also directly engage with Indigenous women, autonomous Indigenous women's organizations, and members of the Indigenous community, in the creation and evaluation of the programs and services.

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- (b) To the Government of Canada: ONWA recommends that the healing work of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation be offered and be made accessible to all Indigenous women: including Indigenous women incarcerated in federal prisons, provincial correctional institutions; and women living in remote communities.

### 10. Indigenous Gender Based Analysis

- (a) To the Government of Canada, Indigenous governments and all Provincial and Territorial Governments: An Indigenous Gender Based Analysis be developed, with the full participation of Indigenous women and adopted by all governments within Canada. Such Indigenous Gender Based Analysis be applied to all decision-making that will impact Indigenous women and girls including the drafting/revising of laws and policies; development of government budgets; frameworks; engagement strategies; partnerships with Indigenous community and people; and all forms of government investments.

### 11. Investments in Indigenous Women's Capacity and Leadership

- (a) To the Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal governments: ONWA recommends that autonomous Indigenous women's organizations be provided with permanent core funding to develop, build and sustain capacity and leadership.
- (b) To the Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal governments: ONWA recommends that funding requirements and political interests do not interfere with the vital independence and decision making autonomy of Indigenous women's organizations.