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CHIEFS OF ONTARIO

SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
November 23-24-25, 2010
Toronto, Ontario

RESOLUTION 10/31

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO RE-ESTABLISH ITS SUPPORT FOR SISTERS IN SPIRIT

MOVER: Grand Chief Mike Mitchell, Mohawks of Akwesasne

SECONDER: Chief Chris Plain, Aamjiwnaang First Nation

DECISION: Consensus

WHEREAS:

1. In 2005, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) started the initiative *Sisters in Spirit (SIS)* to bring awareness and to address the large number of cases of murdered and missing Aboriginal women in Canada.
2. The SIS initiative is mandated to conduct research and raise public awareness of the high rates of violence against First Nation women and girls.
3. NWAC has gathered information that proves there are more than 582 missing and murdered First Nation (Aboriginal) women and girls in Canada. Seventy (70) cases of missing and murdered First Nation (Aboriginal) women and girls are in Ontario. This accounts for 12% of cases in NWAC's database.
4. The large number of cases in Ontario illustrates that the issue of missing and murdered First Nation (Aboriginal) women and girls is not just a "western problem," but rather a national concern, impacting central Canada in particular.
5. On October 29, 2010, the government of Canada denied the renewal of funding for the NWAC Sisters in Spirit initiative.
6. Instead, on October 29, 2010, the government of Canada announced \$10 million over two years "to improve community safety and to ensure that the justice system and law enforcement agencies can better respond to cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women."

7. Funding is not specific to First Nation (Aboriginal) women and girls, or for programs and services in Canada, but for law enforcement agencies that do not have the knowledge or capacity to address the issues and victims in a culturally-sensitive manner.
8. The new federal program excludes Ontario First Nations from accessing funding.
9. As the Federal Government has endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Canada must fulfill its obligations by ensuring that the issue of murdered and missing Aboriginal women is not pushed aside, but is a top priority, in order to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination, while promoting tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous people, as stated in Article 15 of the Declaration.
10. The Chiefs in Assembly have passed Resolution 10/62 to establish a Justice & Corrections Leadership roundtable, which will report back to the Chiefs in Assembly with a discussion paper addressing the violence against women, among other issues.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, THE CHIEFS IN ASSEMBLY:

1. Demand that the Government of Canada re-establish its support for the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) in their efforts to ensure that missing and murdered Aboriginal women are a national priority.
2. Demand that the Government of Canada ensure that proper facilities within communities, such as women's shelters and services, are available for those people who are victims or have lost their loved ones through acts of violence.
3. Demand that the Government of Canada establish an independent public commission of inquiry into the missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada.

Certified Copy of a Resolution dated November 25, 2010.



Angus Toulouse, Ontario Regional Chief

