
Alberta's Response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Introduction from Hon. Rick Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations

Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in Alberta demonstrate resilience, strength and courage in their ongoing efforts to advance the safety and security of their families and communities. Alberta is committed to working together to address the high rates of violence that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people continue to experience.

As the minister of Indigenous Relations, I attended the release of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Final Report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, in 2019. It was life altering. I listened to and met with families and survivors whose lives changed forever due to violence and murder.

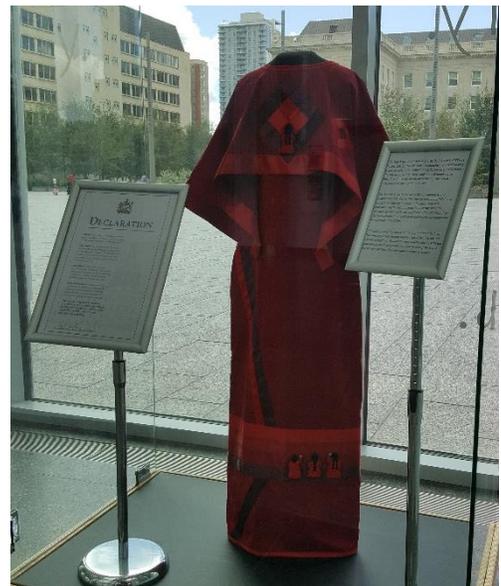
I vowed then that Alberta's government would be tireless in its commitment to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

To achieve this goal, Alberta placed Indigenous Peoples at the heart of our efforts. We are working with survivors, family members, Indigenous communities and partners to identify and support Indigenous-led and community-centered solutions. Together, we will develop community-informed policy and programs that will result in real solutions focused on the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Alberta continues to learn from our provincial and territorial partners about Indigenous-developed and delivered best and emerging practices to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Alberta is committed to a path of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and in the spirit and intent of the Treaties. As part of this path, Alberta supports the principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the 2021 National Action Plan: Ending Violence against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People within the boundaries of our Treaties, the Constitution, federal and provincial jurisdiction and the constitutional common law.

As we move forward on this critical issue, we will keep our focus on community, while reaching out to our many partners, including local, provincial/territorial, and federal governments on our shared path to reconciliation that includes an end to violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.



In 2019, Minister of Indigenous Relations, Rick Wilson, declared October 4, Sisters in Spirit Day and accepted a Red Dress, commissioned and gifted by Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society. The Red Dress is on display in the Federal Building in Edmonton.

Artist Emily Taylor.

Learn more about [Alberta's response to the National Inquiry](#).

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Indigenous-led community focus

A future where Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience equality and respect in a violence-free province will take long-term commitment, policy, program and societal shifts as well as multiple actions spanning many years. Our government is addressing this national tragedy with Indigenous women guiding our way.

In March 2020, Alberta established the [Alberta Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) (Joint Working Group) made up of four Indigenous women and three members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). The Indigenous members have personal and professional knowledge about the realities that leave Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people vulnerable to violence in Alberta. The MLAs are strongly committed to creating a safer society for Indigenous Peoples. The Joint Working Group will recommend and advise our government on actions that Alberta should take to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in response to the National Inquiry.

Accomplishments and initiatives:

Alberta immediately acted in response to the National Inquiry's report, particularly on critical matters, including violence prevention, raising awareness about violence prevention, and standing against violence toward Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Actions include the following:

- Declared October 4, 2019 and 2020 as Sisters in Spirit Day to honour the memory of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, their families and loved ones, and to raise awareness about the importance of standing up against violence as individuals and communities.
- Entered into a five-year contribution agreement with the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW), an Indigenous women's non-profit organization that promotes the rights of Indigenous women. This funding ensures Indigenous women have an organization to go to for advocacy, programs and services.
- Established the Human Trafficking Task Force to recommend ways to implement Alberta's action plan against human trafficking.
- Enacted legislation to help protect individuals from domestic violence - [Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence Act](#) (Clare's Law), and Human Trafficking - [Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act](#).
- Established the Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women with a dedicated unit to lead initiatives that address and prevent violence against women and girls.
- Funded public awareness strategies identified by Indigenous partners to tackle the barriers to eliminating discrimination against Indigenous peoples through the Multiculturalism, Indigenous and Inclusion Grant Program in Alberta.
- Continued to support the [First Nations and the Métis Women's Councils on Economic Security](#) which provide recommendations on government policies, programs and services that can improve the lives of Indigenous women, their families and communities.

Priorities and Next Steps

Alberta will act on the advice and recommendations from the Joint Working Group expected in December 2021. Their report will ensure the voices and experiences of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are at the heart of Alberta's efforts to end violence. In this way, our government honours and reflects the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice. Indigenous voices and experiences must be, and in Alberta will be, the key to preventing and eliminating violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.