



July 23, 2010

OCTEVAW has circulated this petition that asks the Government of Canada fund the Sisters in Spirit Initiative. We hold all levels of government accountable for their speech and actions.

On January 26, 2010, in her second session speech from the throne to open the 2nd session of the 40th Parliament, Governor-General, Michaëlle Jean made the following statement:

“Our Government will take additional action to address the disturbing number of unsolved cases of murdered and missing Aboriginal women. The Sisters in Spirit initiative has drawn particular attention to this pressing criminal justice priority.”

Indeed, these chilling facts are corroborated by the Sisters in Spirit report from the Native Women’s Association of Canada: “There are a **disproportionately high number** of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. Between 2000 and 2008, 153 cases of murder have been identified in NWAC’s Sisters In Spirit database. These women represent approximately ten per cent of the total number of female homicides in Canada despite the fact that Aboriginal women make up only three per cent of the total female population in Canada. The majority of women and girls in NWAC’s database were murdered, while **115 women and girls are still missing.**¹”

We are disappointed that so far, the Governor General’s attention to this issue has been merely verbal. The promised “additional action” has not been taken.

Accordingly, we would like to urge the Government of Canada to ensure that the Native Women’s Association of Canada receives sufficient funding to continue its important work protecting women through its Sisters in Spirit initiatives. We also request that the Government of Canada invest in initiatives recommended by NWAC to help prevent more women from disappearing.

We hope that the words of the Governor General were not a show of expediency, but an honest promise of tangible support. Please consider these signatures, as a reminder of your own words and a reflection of the views of many other concerned Canadians.

Sincerely,

Valérie Bah
Project & Information Officer
On behalf of the Advocacy Standing Committee of OCTEVAW

For more information, please contact:

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¹ Native Women’s Association of Canada, “Sisters In Spirit” Report 2010