



# Native Women's Association of Canada

Press Release – For Immediate Release

## *International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women Presents an Opportunity for Positive Change*

Ottawa, ON (November 25, 2009) – Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, President of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), called today for an end to violence against all women in Canada. November 25<sup>th</sup> is the *International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women*.

“Violence against women has the ability to destroy families, communities, and nations. Today is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the United Nations commemorated the observation of the day, reaffirming the importance of eliminating violence once and for all,” stated President Corbiere Lavell.

“The number of missing and murdered First Nations, Métis and Inuit women in Canada is extremely high,” added President Corbiere Lavell. “This reality is documented in NWAC’s report, *Voices of Our Sisters In Spirit: A Research and Policy Report to Families and Communities*, which was released one year ago today. This report highlighted that 497 Aboriginal women and girls had been murdered or disappeared over the last thirty years. An updated report in March 2009 revealed an even higher number at 520.”

“Sisters In Spirit is the only research initiative in Canada on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. Our *Voices* report provides important policy recommendations that present an opportunity for positive change for increased safety in the lives of our mothers, daughters, sisters, and aunts,” remarked President Corbiere Lavell. “As Sisters In Spirit looks to continue improving the situation of Aboriginal women and addressing the violence they face, it is my hope that the Government of Canada will continue to partner with the Native Women’s Association of Canada in this important work.”

November 25 is also the start of *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence*, an international campaign which runs until December 10, International Human Rights Day. These two important dates symbolically link violence against women as a grave abuse of human rights.

“I thank the Center for Women’s Global Leadership, who started this important campaign. I also acknowledge Amnesty International Canada, a long time supporter of NWAC, who is organizing activities across the country as part of their *Wake Up Call to Canada* campaign to work at stopping violence against all women.” President Corbiere Lavell concluded, “Today and every day, I encourage men and women of all ages to reflect on the importance of protecting and honouring Aboriginal women and girls.”

Information about *16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence* can be found at the following website: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>. Information about *Wake Up Call to Canada* can be found at the following website: <http://www.amnesty.ca/wakeupcanada>.

The Native Women’s Association of Canada is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of Aboriginal women within the Aboriginal community and Canadian society. In 2009, as we celebrate our 35<sup>th</sup> year of service, we are proud to continue to speak as a voice for Aboriginal women.

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