



Backgrounder

Voices of Our Sisters In Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities, 2nd Edition

This second edition of *Voices of Our Sisters In Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities* presents up to date information on the work conducted through the Sisters In Spirit initiative.

This report contains:

- Life stories of nine Aboriginal women and girls, including three new stories of Debbie Sloss, Georgina Papin and Terrie Ann Dauphinais
- Nine alerts for missing sisters and five memorial notices for stolen sisters.

As of March 31, 2009, 520 cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women and girls had been entered into the NWAC database:

- 24% are cases of missing women and girls
- 67% are cases of murder (defined as homicide or negligence causing death)
- The majority of cases occurred in the western provinces of Canada
- 26% of the incidents occurred in British Columbia, 17% occurred in Alberta, 14% in Manitoba, and 12% in Saskatchewan
- 52% of the cases involve women and girls under the age of 30 years
- 43% of the cases of missing women and girls have occurred during or since 2000
- 55% of the cases of murder and 43% of disappearances occurred during or since 2000

Key findings include the following points:

- The number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada is extremely high, with over 500 cases confirmed to date.
- The percentage of cases of missing women and girls found during the initiative has remained constant, suggesting that there is a trend of ongoing disappearances.
- The life circumstances and needs of young Aboriginal women and girls must be taken into account when designing measures to increase their safety.
- Regional differences between provinces must be considered, such as family law provisions, the availability of supports such as legal aid, the provision of victim services and whether police services are provided by national or regional forces.

Measures that will help reduce violence against Aboriginal women and girls include improving access to housing and reducing homelessness, reducing poverty, and improving the access of Aboriginal women, girls and their families to justice systems and processes.

