



National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Oral Submissions of Rebecca Kudloo

On Behalf Of

**Pauktuutit, Anânaukatiget Tuminqit, Saturviit, The Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre and
the Manitoba Inuit Association**

**These Submissions are Made in Memory of the Inuit Women and Girls Who Were
Murdered**

Joy Semmler, Angela Meyer, Betsy Kalaserk, Jessica Michaels, Sula Enuaraq and her two daughters, Alexandra and Aliyah, Edith Angalik, Loretta Saunders, Katie Obed, Deidre Michelin, Della Ootoova, Mary Evans Harlick, Sylvia Lyall, Tracy Uttak, Kimberly Jarause, Alacie Nowrakudluk and Mary Ann Birmingham as told to the Inquiry by their families in public hearings, to the Inuit women and girls whose families told their stories *in camera*, to those whose families gave statements, and to those whose families have not yet been able to tell their stories.

Recommendations

1. Counting Inuit

- a. Canada, the provincial and territorial governments, and their agencies must immediately disaggregate the collection of Indigenous data into Inuit, Metis and First Nations; and
- b. Before the 2021 census, Statistics Canada must implement different methodologies to more accurately count Inuit who live in southern urban areas.

2. Every Inuit Woman and Girl Has the Right to Feel and Be Safe

Canadians must acknowledge the nature and extent of family violence towards Inuit women and girls. No longer should family violence be hidden and not talked about because of embarrassment or shame nor should abuse or violence be normalized as part of Inuit culture. Inuit women and girls should be encouraged to talk about family violence and counselling must be available. Only by openly admitting that Inuit family violence is at crisis levels will governments be forced to take positive action to address the underlying systemic causes of family violence.

- a. Going forward, focus on preventing family violence;
- b. Educating all Inuit children and youth about healthy relationships, including intimate relations and parenting;
- c. Inuit-focused healing programs and services for those who have been sexually abused as children must be available in every community, and available in Inuktitut;
- d. Restoration of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to break away from intergenerational trauma; and
- e. Ending the cycle of family violence depends not only on Inuit women and girls, but also on Inuit men and boys. Healing and empowerment will happen only when all Inuit learn our proud history, culture and traditions. We must build upon our unique identity and self-confidence.

3. The Root Causes of Inuit Family Violence Must be Addressed By

- a. Eliminating poverty;
- b. Providing high quality education in every community, including a university in Inuit Nunangat;
- c. Ensuring meaningful work for all;
- d. Building sufficient new housing units to end the housing crisis in Inuit Nunangat;
- e. Establishing Inuit specific health and addiction services in every community; and
- f. Repatriating birthing to each community using the Inuit maternal health model developed in Nunavik.

4. When Family Violence Happens

- a. Opening shelters or safe houses in every community in Inuit Nunangat, shelters funded by Indigenous Services Canada;
- b. Funding Inuit southern organizations to build capacity in urban settings that can offer Inuit-specific shelters or safe houses for Inuit women and their children;
- c. Focusing on pro-active or preventative policing as opposed to reacting after violence has occurred. This requires that:
 - i. Police develop a trust relationship with the community they service;
 - ii. Police reflect the diversity in the community;
 - iii. Police speak the language of the community;
 - iv. Police understand the culture and traditions of Inuit by taking Inuit cultural training taught by Inuit;
 - v. Police respond to concerns of family violence raised by parents, sisters, friends and neighbours before a woman is killed;
 - vi. Police intervene before family violence escalates; and
 - vii. Police be encouraged with incentives to remain in Inuit Nunangat for a minimum of five years.
- d. Radically changing the criminal justice system by:
 - i. Educating crown attorneys, defence lawyers, court staff, justices of the peace and judges about our culture and traditions in programs designed and given by Inuit;

- ii. Educating crown attorneys, defence lawyers, court staff, justices of the peace and judges about the nature and extent of family violence and its root causes in programs designed and given by Inuit;
- iii. Revising Emergency Protective Orders and their enforcement so that Inuit women and children remain safe in their homes and in their communities pending trial;
- iv. Increasing court dates in each community so that trials are conducted in a timely manner and criminal charges are not dismissed; and
- v. Re-assessing the impact of *Gladue* principles in sentencing on the safety of Inuit women and girls to determine why perpetrators are being released into their communities after short sentences without access to court mandated community-based healing programs, only to reoffend.

5. Child Welfare System is Failing Inuit Children and their Families

The current system is not working, and Inuit children are being harmed by the child welfare system. Create a new system for Inuit to keep our children healthy and safe by:

- a. Enhancing the unity of the Inuit family and community;
- b. Extending Jordan's Principle to all Inuit children, regardless of where they reside in Canada;
- c. Re-looking at child protection and what Inuit families need to keep their children;
- d. Placing Inuit children coming into care with Inuit families in their communities, retaining contact with their extended family, maintaining their language, their culture and their traditions;
- e. Keeping Inuit children taken into care in Inuit Nunangat and creating the necessary programs and services so that these children may thrive;
- f. Providing the resources to southern Inuit organizations to advocate to ensure that provincial child welfare systems that deal with Inuit families do so in an Inuit-led process and provide services that are Inuit focused;
- g. Minimizing the movement of Inuit children in care to ensure their stability and well-being;
- h. Eliminating Inuit child and youth suicide;

- i. Creating focused programs for Inuit children aging out of care so that they are educated, employed, housed, healthy, and safe with the same options as other children; and
- j. Until all Inuit children in care remain in Inuit Nunangat, building Inuit specific programs in the south which enable these children to maintain their relationships with their extended family, their language, their culture and their traditions.

6. Urban Inuit

Today 27.2% of Inuit live outside Inuit Nunangat and live in southern urban centres. This population grew by 62% from 2006 to 2016. Statistics Canada grossly undercounts the Inuit living in southern centres and, as a result, Inuit are invisible. A more accurate count of Inuit in the Ottawa-Gatineau area is 4 to 6 times the numbers in the 2016 census. Numbers matter. They determine the money that flows to services for Inuit in the south such as education, housing, health care and social services.

Ensure that Inuit women and girls living in southern urban centres have the same rights and opportunities as all Canadians by:

- a. Funding provincial Inuit organizations to be the voice of Inuit living in the south and making space nationally and provincially/territorially for the creation of the nation to crown and nation to provincial/territorial government relationships so that services for Inuit living outside Inuit Nunangat are in place;
- b. Inuit regional organizations and Governments of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories acknowledging the need to partner and support provincial Inuit organizations who continue to advocate for Inuit beneficiaries' healthcare, education, employment, housing and child welfare in the south;
- c. Acknowledging that moving south is a radical transformation in the lives of Inuit and that many times this is a move that is not by choice but by necessity, e.g. to access healthcare they cannot otherwise access in Inuit Nunangat such as dialysis or cancer treatment;

- d. Inuit who move south bring with them the issues they had in Inuit Nunangat: lack of education, lack of meaningful work, poor health and no housing, as well as the responsibilities to support their family back home who live in Inuit Nunangat;
- e. Establishing Inuit services in southern urban centres, including in health care, education (early learning years and post-secondary), employment and training (trades), housing and child and family services. These services must be available to all Inuit living in provinces or territories and accessible in their own language;
- f. Rejecting First Nations services as being ‘good enough’ for Inuit; such services are not in the same language, not the same culture or traditions of Inuit and are not developed through an Inuit-lens that takes into consideration Inuit history of colonization and Inuit healing;

7. Canada and the Provincial and Territorial Governments Must be Held Accountable to Implement These Recommendations

- a. Within 12 months of the release of this Report, Canada and each provincial and territorial government must table population-specific Action Plans which set out for each Recommendation in the Report, how it intends to address the gap, the money and resources that the government will devote and a timetable to complete the work;
- b. Canada and each provincial and territorial government must appoint an Indigenous Ombudsman, who is independent of that government with the authority to receive complaints, to fully investigate and to determine the status of that government in implementing the recommendations of this Inquiry;
- c. Each Indigenous Ombudsman must be given sufficient staff, offices, money and other resources to investigate complaints received and to determine whether the recommendations have been implemented in whole or in part;
- d. Each Indigenous Ombudsman must table reports on their findings, not less than once a year; and
- e. The Offices of Indigenous Ombudsman must continue until all of the recommendations have been implemented.