



Amnesty International Lethbridge Action Circle

PRESS RELEASE
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Large Turnout Expected for Sisters in Spirit Vigil For the first time, Lethbridge joins cities across Canada on October 4

LETHBRIDGE – On October 4th, 2007, the Amnesty International Lethbridge Action Circle will join with the Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge in holding the **Sisters in Spirit Vigil**. The purpose of this vigil is to remember and raise awareness about our missing and murdered aboriginal women with the goal of one day, ending the violence against all women.

Maxine Wapass, Helen Betty Osborne, Shirley Lonethunder, Pamela Jean George, Janet Henry, Sarah de Vries, Cynthia Louise Sanderson, Felicia Velvet Solomon and Moira Louise Erb are nine aboriginal women whose stories are documented in Amnesty International's *Stolen Sisters* report.

"There are many, many more women and girls whose families have suffered because they were stolen from them," according to Amnesty International Lethbridge Action Circle spokesperson Mary Kosta. No one should have to grieve the sudden loss or disappearance of a mother, sister or daughter or live in fear that they will be the next to disappear. Canadian officials must ensure the safety of aboriginal women, bring those responsible for these attacks to justice, and address the deep problems of marginalization and poverty that have put so many aboriginal women at risk.

Among the many recommendations in the *Stolen Sisters* report, Amnesty International is asking for the seriousness of this problem to be recognized by all levels of government. It is calling for funding for research into patterns of violence against aboriginal women and for long term, sustained funding for the provision of culturally appropriate services for aboriginal women. It is recommending that police work with aboriginal women's organizations to implement effective protocols and standards for response in missing persons cases and for training on issues of cultural sensitivity and gender-based violence. It calls for the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to be fully implemented to address the poverty and marginalization of aboriginal women.

The vigil in Lethbridge begins at 7:00 p.m. at Galt Gardens on October 4th, 2007.

The Stolen Sisters Report is available at:
<http://www.amnesty.ca/campaigns/resources/amr2000304.pdf>

For more information, or to schedule an interview, contact Mary Kosta at 403-327-8196.

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