



Native Women's Association of Canada

SISTERS IN SPIRIT

BACKGROUNDER: NATIONAL STATISTICS

1 October 2008

The Sisters in Spirit database, developed by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) currently contains the names of 509 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. One quarter of the women and girls are missing and three quarters have been murdered, or are believed to have been murdered.

Of the women and girls whose age at the time of their disappearance or death is known, two thirds were youth under the age of 30. Overall, 18% of these women were under the age of 19, 48% were between 19 and 30 years of age, and 32% were between the ages of 31-65.

NWAC is aware that the term "Aboriginal" refers to three distinct Indigenous peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – and is working to determine the nation of each woman and girl. To date, 21% are known to be First Nations, 3% are Métis, and 2% are Inuit. The remaining women and girls are known to be Aboriginal, but NWAC has not yet identified whether they are First Nations or Inuit or Métis.

NWAC collects information about whether or not charges have been laid in cases of murder. Of the cases where this information is known, charges have been laid in only 42% of cases. 56% of the cases remain unsolved. Two percent of cases have been cleared by other means, such as instances of murder-suicide.

Of the cases where the province of residence is known, the largest group lived in British Columbia (31%) followed by Alberta (19%), Manitoba (15%), and Saskatchewan and Ontario (each at 13%). In total, 78% of these women resided in the four western provinces immediately prior to their disappearance or murder.

Summary of Sisters in Spirit research to date:

Of the 509 missing or murdered Aboriginal women in Canada...

- 67% were murdered
- 24% are missing
- 9% believed to have been murdered

Of the women whose ages are known...

- 66% (two-thirds) are under 30 years of age
- 18% are less than 19 years old
- 48% are between the ages of 19-30
- 32% are between the ages of 31-65

Of the women whose Aboriginal identity is known...

- 74% are Aboriginal (unknown whether she is First Nations, Inuit or Métis)
- 21% are First Nations
- 3% are Métis
- 2% are Inuit

Of the murder cases where NWAC knows whether or not charges were laid...

- 42% have had charges laid
- 56% have not had charges laid
- 2% have been cleared by murder-suicide

Of the women whose province of residence at the time of their disappearance or murder is known...

- 78% resided in the four western provinces
- 31% lived in British Columbia
- 19% lived in Alberta
- 15% lived in Manitoba
- 13% lived in Saskatchewan
- 13% lived in Ontario