



Amnesty International Lethbridge Action Circle

NEWS
For Immediate Release

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How Many More Sisters and Daughters Do We Have To Lose?

LETHBRIDGE –Mary Jane Serloin was murdered in Lethbridge in 1981, a victim of racist violence. Aboriginal women's organizations estimate there have been over 500 aboriginal women who have gone missing or been murdered in western Canada alone. Many women have disappeared on the "highway of tears" in British Columbia. Government statistics show that aboriginal women with treaty status between the ages of 25 to 44, are five times more likely to die from violence than other women.

Canadian police and public officials are aware of the pattern of racist violence against aboriginal women in cities but training, protocols and accountability mechanisms are lacking in many police forces, so that the safety of aboriginal women and girls cannot be ensured.

Racist stereotypes encourage some men to feel they can get away with acts of hatred, while decades of government policy have led to family and community break down leaving women vulnerable to attack.

Amnesty International demands that measures are put in place to ensure that police thoroughly investigate all reports of missing aboriginal women and girls.

Amnesty International emphasizes that adequate and long term funding is necessary for shelters, and for support and counselling to help aboriginal women and girls.

Dr. Jo-Anne Fiske of the University of Lethbridge will speak about the "highway of tears" and violence against First Nations women on September 6, 2007 at the Lethbridge Mennonite Church at 7:00 pm. This will be followed by an Amnesty International appeal for our stolen sisters.

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

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