

Royal Canadian Mounted Police  
Commissioner



Gendarmerie royale du Canada  
Commissaire

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Les valeurs de la GRC reposent sur l'intégrité, l'honnêteté,  
le professionnalisme, la compassion, le respect et la responsabilisation

**APR 07 2015**

Grand Chief Bernice Martial  
Grand Chief of Treaty No. 6  
Chief of Cold Lake First Nation  
204-13227 146 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5L 4S8

Dear Grand Chief Martial:

Thank you for your letter of March 26, 2015, in which you request the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) report on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women, as well as access to the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR) database.

The full report, entitled *Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview*, has been published online and can be found at **[www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/mmaw-faapd-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/mmaw-faapd-eng.htm)**.

I applaud your commitment to the First Nations communities within Treaty Six and your pursuit of justice and closure for families affected by tragedy. I share your concerns regarding the overrepresentation of Aboriginal women in occurrences of missing persons and homicide. It is out of this concern, and a desire to inform ongoing prevention efforts, that I initiated an RCMP-led study of reported incidents of missing and murdered Aboriginal women across all police jurisdictions in Canada. The above-noted report, published in May 2014, revealed a number of vulnerability factors that place Aboriginal women at risk of violence, which led to a collective focus on vulnerable communities by the RCMP, partner agencies and other stakeholders in a continuing effort to mitigate violence against Aboriginal women.

In considering the offender characteristics, a commonality unrelated to the ethnicity of the victim was the strong nexus to familial and spousal violence.

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Aboriginal females were killed by a spouse, family member or intimate relation in 62% of cases; similarly, non-aboriginal females were killed by a spouse, family member or intimate relation in 74% of occurrences. Female homicide across all ethnicities is inextricably linked to familial and spousal violence; it is for this reason that RCMP analysis and prevention efforts have focussed on the relationship between the victim and offender.

Public discourse on the ethnicity of the offender has the potential to stigmatize and marginalize vulnerable populations. While we do not consider this information to be subject to exemption from disclosure under the *Access to Information Act*, it is in the spirit of our bias-free policing policy that the RCMP has not thus far disclosed statistics on the ethnicity of the perpetrators of solved Aboriginal female homicides. As you note, the Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, has stated that 70% percent of the offenders in these cases are Aboriginal. The consolidated data from the nearly 300 contributing police agencies has confirmed that 70% of the offenders were of Aboriginal origin, 25% were non-aboriginal, and 5% were of unknown ethnicity. However, it is not the ethnicity of the offender that is relevant, but rather the relationship between victim and offender that guides our focus with respect to prevention.

Although I appreciate your interest in accessing the data that contributed to the RCMP's report on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women, given that many police agencies contributed to the data set, the RCMP is not the sole proprietor of this information. Furthermore, in advance of the Overview, the RCMP signed a confidentiality agreement with Statistics Canada that prohibited the release of sensitive statistical information. In that document, the RCMP agreed to use the information for statistical and research purposes only and committed to ensuring that the information would be available only to RCMP employees who required access for research purposes. The agreement further specified that the RCMP was not to disclose this information to any party not involved in the project without prior approval from Statistics Canada.

Subsequent to the release of the Overview, the RCMP undertook a review of all files on missing and murdered Aboriginal women that contributed to the statistics in the report. Our goal was to ensure that all investigative avenues had been pursued and confirm that open lines of communication were being maintained with each victim's loved ones. The RCMP remains committed to fully investigating all occurrences of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and to working in partnership with Aboriginal communities on responsive prevention initiatives.



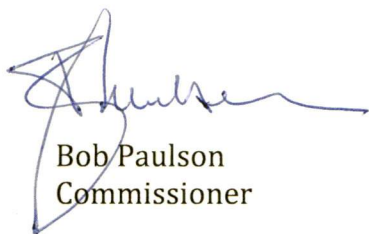
With respect to your request for access to the NCMPUR database, the NCMPUR supports Canadian police, medical examiners and chief coroners on a national level. This includes managing the national Missing Children/Missing Person and Unidentified Remains (MC/PUR) database and the national Canada's Missing website. The identification of human remains is the responsibility of provincial and territorial chief coroners and medical examiners. Unidentified remains information is added to the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database by the police of jurisdiction at the request of coroners or medical examiners. CPIC continuously populates and updates the MC/PUR database accordingly. Since the information contributed to CPIC is added, maintained, modified and removed by each contributing police agency, the NCMPUR does not own this information. In addition, these are ongoing investigations. Therefore, we cannot release the requested information or provide access to the database.

In cases where the NCMPUR has been asked to publish information by primary investigators, the information is readily accessible to the public via **[www.canadasmissing.ca](http://www.canadasmissing.ca)**. This website features profiles of specific missing children, missing adults and unidentified remains that can be searched using various parameters. The Biological Group field on the Advanced Search page includes "Aboriginal" as an option. A search using this option would return profiles of missing persons whose information has been chosen for publication and provided to NCMPUR by the primary investigator.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Superintendent Tyler Bates, Director, National Aboriginal and Crime Prevention Services, at 613-843-3813.

Thank you for your inquiry and your continued partnership as we collectively seek closure for families affected by tragedy.

Yours sincerely,



Bob Paulson  
Commissioner

c.c.: The Honourable Bernard Valcourt  
Minister of Indian and Northern Development

The Honourable Jim Prentice  
Premier of Alberta

Ms. Michelle Moody-Itwaru  
The Assembly of First Nations

Ms. Lorna Martin  
Native Women's Association of Canada