

AFN issues call to action

Ottawa, ON – Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo offered condolences to the family and friends of Loretta Saunders whose body was found in New Brunswick, noting the focus this tragedy brings to the ongoing issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls and the need for a National Public Commission of Inquiry to address missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada.

“First and foremost, I offer condolences to the family and friends of Loretta Saunders – a bright young Inuk woman who was dedicating her time and energy to researching violence against Indigenous women,” said Chief Shawn Atleo. “This is a call to action that this must end now. We cannot add one more name to the list of murdered or missing women. We need to see action by all parties to end violence, to respect and honour women and families, to ensure our communities are safe and secure for all. We repeat our call for a national public commission of inquiry supported by immediate action to prevent these senseless tragedies.”

National Chief Atleo and the AFN have been pressing for an inquiry and immediate action with the federal government, with provincial and territorial leaders through the Council of the Federation – who support these efforts – and through strong public advocacy. The AFN stands with the Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association, the Native Women’s Association of Canada and other Indigenous and women’s organizations across the country in demanding movement on these urgent issues.

“The loss of Loretta Saunders is tragic and has clearly sparked a growing awareness and concern among the broader Canadian public,” said National Chief Atleo. “The response, support and public awareness must be acknowledged and the local, regional and national efforts to quickly draw attention to this situation should apply to every incident. This is the kind of attention we require whenever this happens and the kind of attention and support we require to prevent these situations from occurring in the first place. We call on Canadian citizens to continue to stand with our families and communities in our call to action.”

