

Promise, MMIW inquiry to start this week

TRT Staff

OTTAWA - The long awaited national inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women promised by Justin Trudeau throughout his election campaign is about to become a reality.

The Trudeau government announced Tuesday that Phase #1 of the inquiry will begin with Ministers meeting with families of missing and murdered Indigenous women this week in Ottawa.

"As a first step, we will meet with the families in the National Capital Region with the goal of hearing their views on the design of the inquiry and what it needs to achieve," says Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould. "And over the next two months, we will hear from more families, other indigenous peoples, national aboriginal organizations and a range of front-line services workers and

others."

She was critical of the silence of the previous government on the issue stating that the families of these women deserve better.

AFN Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde was pleased with the news saying in a written statement, "After years of denial and deflection, it is my hope we can make real strides in achieving justice for families and achieving safety and security for all our people."

According to Bennett, phase #1 of the inquiry would determine its objectives, focus and parameters.

"It will also help identify potential terms of reference for the inquiry, outline possible activities and participants, and potentially help identify the commissioners."

"Phase #2 will be the actual inquiry itself, and we hope to be able to announce that next year, in the spring," Bennett continued.

NDP leader Tom Mulcair was pleased with the announcement however, wanted a specific launch date for the full inquiry.

"Given the urgency of this national crisis," said Mulcair during question period, "can we expect a report by the end of 2016?"

Although not willing at this time to put a specific target date out, Prime Minister Trudeau stated, "The victims deserve justice, their families an opportunity to be heard and to heal. We must work together to put an end to this ongoing tragedy."

In 2014, the RCMP found nearly 1,200 documented cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls between 1980 and 2012, a number they said exceeded previous public estimates.