CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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Media Advisory

Deplorable Treatment of Elders and Youth at MMIWG2S+ Ministers Meeting

February 9th, Ottawa ON

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is shocked and saddened by the shameful actions of government officials and security at the MMIWG2S+ FPT meeting at the Shaw Centre in Ottawa February 8th.

“Our elders, women and girls who have all felt the heartache of a missing or murdered loved one, were treated like second-class citizens,” says CAP National Chief Elmer St. Pierre. “Security from the Shaw Centre physically tried to block our elders and youth from drumming and praying outside of the meeting – I guess only certain Indigenous Peoples are a part of the governments’ reconciliation plan.”

Federal, provincial and territorial leaders were in Ottawa to discuss MMIWG2S+ issues. In a divisive political move, the federal government decided not to invite CAP and its women and girls to the meeting, despite years of work and participation on the National Inquiry and National Action Plan. When elders and youth brought their message of drumming and prayers to the meeting, they were met by security who attempted to physically stop them, despite CAP having rented a room in the building.

“Excluding women and girls from the meeting is one thing, but physically stopping sacred prayers for their missing or murdered loved ones is another,” says CAP National Vice-Chief Kim Beaudin. “This government likes to create an illusion of inclusion, but when the time comes, they’re more interested in silencing our voices.”

Since 2015, CAP has participated in the design and scope of the MMIWG National Inquiry, held a National Summit on the issue, had standing at the National Inquiry, was a member of the core working group on the National Action Plan and worked with Victim Services Canada among several other initiatives and actions.

Despite the governments’ disgraceful actions, CAP is committed to working with all Indigenous Peoples to stop the cycle of trauma and put an end to MMIWG2S+.

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 80% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.