



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE December 14, 2018

## **MMIWG Inquiry will fail women and families if it does not address Human Trafficking**

**Thunder Bay, Dec-14-18** – The MMIWG Inquiry is hearing closing submissions in Ottawa today before moving on to drafting the Inquiry's final recommendations. The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) is voicing deep concern that you can't talk about MMIWG without addressing the crisis of Human Trafficking.

We know that Indigenous women and girls are over-represented in Human Trafficking and they continue to be societies most vulnerable and targeted group due to systemic racism and gender discrimination.

In 2017, ONWA was selected to deliver the Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking Liaisons (IAHTL) project under Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking.

ONWA listened to and engaged with the brave survivors, who shared their lived experiences to ensure that that other women and girls could be protected.

Based on extensive engagement with over 3,360 community members and the ongoing relationship with 250 self-identified human trafficking survivors who have shared their stories, ONWA has developed 14 recommendations, which we propose to implement through a six part strategy rooted in relationship and collaboration.

- **Survivor- centred and survivor informed services that are culture and gender based and delivered in a trauma-informed approach.**
- **Prevention through education, training and public awareness campaigns, both in print and in person, targeting those who are most at risk and those who can respond first to the signs, namely peers, parents and educators.**
- **Access to safe and respectful spaces at service delivery agencies that offer women only programming so women can speak openly and without fear about their experiences.**
- **Core supports for transitioning to a new life, including emergency funding for immediate relocation, which is delivered in an expedient and efficient manner to ensure women and girls have no wait times to safety.**
- **Evidence-based policy and system reform informed by survivor expertise and the successful extraction of Indigenous women by ONWAs multi-partner collaborative network that works across government, disciplines and professions.**
- **Streamlined supports offered through a barrier free simplified process.**

It is key that when a victim is identified, all barriers are removed to ensure they are survivors.

**#safeSPACES.**

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