

FOR RELEASE
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Minister McPhee attends Vancouver meeting of federal-provincial-territorial Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety

Justice Minister Tracy-Anne McPhee is pleased to report that Yukon priorities were considered in discussions last week with federal, territorial and provincial Ministers of Justice and Public Safety. The Ministers agreed on substantive reforms to the criminal justice system that support Yukon priorities and have the potential to improve the lives of Indigenous and marginalized people who come into contact with the Canadian criminal justice system.

During the meetings, which included discussions on addressing delays in the criminal justice system, the over-representation of Indigenous peoples, violence against Indigenous women and girls, and several federal legislative initiatives, Minister McPhee gave profile to the following top issues for Yukon:

- Minister McPhee highlighted the importance of continuing to work together with Yukon First Nations and partners health, education and housing to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous people in our justice system and build safer, healthier, stronger communities.
- Minister McPhee outlined Yukon's priority to work with Yukon First Nations to develop more culturally relevant programming and alternative correctional therapeutic environments for individuals with disabilities, mental health and addiction issues, and to collaborate in order to reduce delays and improve outcomes.
- Minister McPhee spoke to Yukon's experience with the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. She encouraged her counterparts to support the Inquiry and keep the Commission's mandate to examine the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls in mind. Minister McPhee also highlighted the need to take immediate action to address the high rates of violence faced by Indigenous women and girls and not wait for the report of the Commission.
- Minister McPhee spoke to the need to improve the way the Canadian criminal justice system responds to and supports victims of sexualized violence at every level. Minister McPhee emphasized that it is essential that victims have a safe, accessible and trauma-informed response.

Quotes

"It was very rewarding to be part of a process that will result in meaningful reforms to the Canadian criminal justice system. In particular, Yukon supported positive and substantial changes to benefit Indigenous and marginalized people who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

During our discussions, I emphasized our commitment to work with Yukon First Nations to develop culturally relevant correctional programming and alternative environments for those with addiction or mental health issues. I also reiterated our commitment to support the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Finally, I strongly stated that our entire justice system needs to improve its response to victims of sexualized violence – significantly and soon."

–Minister of Justice Tracy-Anne McPhee

Quick facts

- Ministers of Justice from the three territories underscored the importance of sustainable funding for the federal First Nations Policing Program and the need for it to be fully applied to the North.
- Yukon is working on a Gladue Report pilot project for producing culturally sensitive pre-sentencing reports. It is also exploring using restorative justice more as an alternative to the traditional criminal justice system.
- While rates of sexual assault have remained relatively stable since 1999, Yukon's rates continue to be three times higher than those in the rest of Canada.

Learn more: Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat

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