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**Indigenous Women's Movements to End Violence Against American Indian, Alaska Native, and Aboriginal Women**

Press Statement of Terri Henry

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Violence against our indigenous women and girls is a violation of our human rights. It is an endemic and crisis, and it must be stopped now. Today, we are calling on the Commission on the Status of Women, the Human Rights Council, and other relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms to respond to this global human rights crisis.

In the United States, American Indian and Alaska Native women are subjected to violence at 2.5 times the rate of other women. The reality in our communities is that 1 in 3 Native women will be raped and 3 in 5 will be physically assaulted. The disproportionate rates of violence are largely due to an unworkable, discriminatory legal system that severely limits the authority of tribal nations to protect our people from violence. As a result, we are denied justice and redress because we are indigenous and assaulted on our homelands.

In response to our grassroots indigenous women movement, joined by our indigenous nations and allies, the United States has taken first steps to improve its laws by enacting legislation to enhance tribal sentencing authority and restore limited tribal criminal jurisdiction over certain non-Indians, known as "special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction." The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is implementing both laws and we have now made 3 arrests with 2 convictions using our restored special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction.

These new laws are a positive step toward justice, but they are not enough. Only 8 tribes have been able to exercise this authority because of strict legal, technical, and due process requirements and because of a lack of financial and technical assistance. The 8 implementing tribes represent just 1.4 percent of the 567 federally-recognized tribes in the United States. There must be parity for indigenous legal and juridical systems, as promised in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Tribal justice must be assured for 100 percent of our nations, and we will not stop until we get there.

We call on the Commission on the Status of Women to join us, and to address the empowerment of indigenous women as an emerging theme at its 61<sup>st</sup> session in 2017. We call on the Human Rights Council to request a Secretary-General's report and recommendations for action to prevent and eliminate violence against indigenous women and girls, and to ensure usable outcomes from its panel on violence against indigenous women and girls during its session in September 2016. We ask for support from all other relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms to address this global human rights crisis.

We must work together to stop the assault on our indigenous women and children, and on all of our nations.