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For Immediate Release

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak - Women of the Métis Nation

pleased Supreme Court of Canada has ordered a new trial of man accused of murdering Cindy Gladue but issues remain

May 24, 2019, Ottawa, ON – As an official intervenor in the recent case of Bradley Barton vs Canada, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak - Women of the Métis Nation is pleased that the Supreme Court of Canada has ordered a new trial for the man accused of killing Cindy Gladue.

The Supreme Court of Canada today was unanimous in ordering a new trial for Bradley Barton, but justices were split 4-3 on whether he should face trial for manslaughter or first-degree murder. The court found that the justice system failed to protect Gladue and that so-called "rape shield" laws were not followed during Barton's trial, when the jury heard evidence of Gladue's past sexual life before holding a separate hearing.

Cindy Gladue, 36, a mother of three children, was found dead on June 22, 2011, in an Edmonton hotel room. She had bled to death from an 11-centimetre wound to her vagina. On March 18, 2015 a jury found Bradley Barton not guilty of first-degree murder. In June 2017, the Alberta Court of Appeal has overturned Barton's acquittal and ordered a new trial. The appeal court decision said there were flaws in the way the jury was instructed to consider sexual assault offences and the laws relating to consent. Barton's lawyer appealed, saying the appeal court's ruling is flawed. In March 2018, it was announced that the Supreme Court will review the order for a new trial.

Indigenous rights lawyer Jean Teillet, who acted on behalf of the Gladue family and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak – Women of the Métis Nation, says we are grateful that Barton will be retried but for Cindy's family we recognize the trauma in having to sit through another trial. Ms. Teillet is calling on the Prime Minister to change the justice system to prevent body parts from being brought into court as evidence which is one of the most mortifying parts of the first trial.

‘All the ideas Canada has signed onto, such as UNDRIP and the MMIW Inquiry, and all the laws Canada has tried to implement, were violated in this trial’, says Teillet. ‘The most shocking was the use of Ms. Gladue's body parts which not one of the judges addressed in this decision. This is disturbing as it allows the justice systems to use Indigenous women's body parts as evidence.’

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak will be asking the Prime Minister to review the issue of how Indigenous women are treated with dignity and how the justice systems excluded Indigenous cultures in a case such as this which took Gladue's body, cut it up and used it in court as evidence.

The family of Cindy Gladue is thankful for today's decision and hopeful that there may be justice for Cindy in the trial to come. Donna McLeod, Cindy's mother stated: "The Gladue/McLeod family are extremely grateful for the outcomes of today's Supreme Court decision and that the accused will be retried. It has been a very long journey. Our Criminal Justice system holds a promise to all Canadians/Indigenous peoples to be treated with dignity and most of all, respect. Cindy was no different and deserves the same treatment. Her life mattered. She will forever be remembered and valued as a mother, a daughter, and a friend."

She continued "We would like to thank all the people who have fought hard alongside us in seeking justice. We offer many thanks to those who have supported us throughout this process, your kindness and compassion will not be forgotten. It has been an extremely long and emotional journey and there is still a considerable distance to go. At this time the family wishes to have privacy to deal with the emotional impact of this decision."

Melanie Omeniho, President of Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak – Women of the Métis Nation, stated "Métis women need to be honoured. We don't need to be profiled, we don't need to be objectified and we certainly don't need to be treated like we are not important. Métis women deserve to be respected and valued. It's time that our criminal justice system starts treating our women with the respect that they deserve. Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak vows to continue to provide supports to the Gladue family as they seek justice for Cindy Gladue, a mother, daughter, sister and friend to many."

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