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## Canada rebuked by Amnesty for poor treatment of its natives: Edward Corrigan

Interview with Mr. Edward Corrigan, international lawyer, Ontario.

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**An international lawyer says Canada's failure from its politicians to its police to protect or consider the rights and wellbeing of the native population is deplorable.**

In the background of this, Amnesty International has slammed Canada for serious rights violations concerning the native population and also file in their report that Canada was falling short of protecting the rights of refugees and migrants. One main concern was that police were not taking seriously the disappearance and killing of hundreds of aboriginal women across Canada, which forced organizations to plead for United Nations intervention.

Press TV has interviewed Mr. Edward Corrigan, international lawyer, Ontario about this issue. The following is an approximate transcription of the interview.

**Press TV:** I want to get your reaction to this Amnesty International report - Does it essentially say anything new that many like yourself I'm sure already know about how aboriginals have been treated by Canada?

**Corrigan:** There is actually very little new information for people who closely monitor the situation in Canada. But it is important that the United Nations, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have all sort of critiqued Canada's treatment of aboriginal people.

***There's a recent scandal and report that just came out the other day about, I guess, a serial killer who targeted aboriginal women in Vancouver and killed almost 50 of them. They found 33 parts of women's bodies on his farm. It was considered a societal failure, but also a failure on the part of the police.***

***They just weren't interested in dealing with poor aboriginals, people - many of them were involved in the sex trade, they were drug addicts they were poor, they were sort of outside the concerns of society.***

And there are in fact hundreds of women across Canada who are missing and many of them are presume killed and this is a very serious problem.

Plus there is economic problems, incarceration of aboriginal people, there is alcohol, drugs, there is extreme poverty and the overall situation of aboriginals in Canada is deplorable and Canada can and must do better.

Other issues are there are a number of people held under security certificates without having access to the evidence that they were being held under, which is also a grave concern - it is kind of like secret evidence that nobody has access to, yet you are being held in prison to and how can you answer that?

And then the treatment of migrants - There is a very famous case in Canada where a boatload of Jewish people came here and tried to make an asylum claim during the second world war actually just before the second world war and they were turned back.

Now if all those people came here they would all be classified as irregular arrivals and they would be put in detention, held and put all sorts of draconian rules on them even though they are clearly at risk. And this is a knee jerk reaction to I guess from getting boatloads in.

**Press TV:** I wanted to get your feeling as to the root causes of why Canada has treated the aboriginal people the way it has been?

**Corrigan:** Well, we took over... the European settlers came in and basically destroyed aboriginal society and we haven't replaced it with anything. So the things that gave it cohesion and held it together have been pretty much destroyed and as a result it is a real mess.

They are rounded up, they are put on reservations; their traditional lifestyle their traditional social structures have all been eradicated. We basically have given them welfare and alcohol and drugs as a replacement and this is something that Canada should be ashamed of and the United States has a similar problem.

***Canada is a wealthy country we can do much better and we need to work with the aboriginal communities to bring them up and to help them when the current government of Stephen Harper's Conservatives, they're not really interested in native issues or aboriginals or even helping people.***

They take a very sort of neo-con hard line right wing approach and they don't care about these things they just want to crack down on crime, throw people in jail and think that is the solution, which is a very narrow-minded and I think false way to address the problem.

One of the other concerns is Omar Khadr who was a child soldier who was being held in Guantanamo Bay by the Americans and it took many years before he was finally brought back to Canada, he was arrested when he was 15 years of age and this is again an embarrassment for Canada.

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