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Children and Youth Need Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Decision

TORONTO, March 1 /CNW/ - On the 25th of February, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada filed an application with the Federal Court to require the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to set hearing dates so a human rights complaint against the Federal Government can be heard. The complaint alleges the federal government (as represented by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs) racially discriminates against First Nations children by providing less child welfare benefits on reserves. The case was filed in 2007 by the Assembly of First Nations and the First Nation Child and Family Caring Society.

"In 2009 my Office signed on to the First Nations Child and Family Care Society of Canada's "Be a Witness Campaign" and began following the case before the Human Rights Commission.", said Irwin Elman, Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth of Ontario. "Witnessing the case for two years has led us to agree that resolution of the case is too important to children to delay any further."

There are 133 First Nations communities with members living on and off reserve. It is well documented many of these communities face challenges associated with inadequate housing, extreme poverty, social isolation and the lack of a range of services and supports for children and families. In many First Nations communities, children's social services are practically nonexistent.

"Many First Nation children live in very difficult circumstances in Ontario and across the country. Resolution to the Human Rights case one way or another will offer our province and country a way forward in altering these circumstances or in finding alternative strategies for creating change", said Elman.

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