

# FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Ministry of Children and Families misguided in decision to appeal BC Supreme Court decision**

**Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, BC** – The First Nations Summit (FNS) is deeply disappointed in the recent decision by the Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD) to appeal a BC Supreme Court (BCSC) decision that found Ministry staff disregarded the safety of children from a Vancouver family, resulting in exposing the children to an abusive situation with at least one child being sexually abused by their father.

“This appeal clearly reflects continued bad decision-making by the Minister and senior MCFD bureaucrats”, said Cheryl Casimer of the FNS political executive. “MCFD should not be hiding from the findings contained in the BCSC decision, rather they should be looking at immediate ways to ensure a similar situation is not repeated in the future.”

The FNS has supported the work of Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, BC Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) as an independent oversight on Children and Family issues in BC as well as her many reports and recommendations. The FNS is of the view that, as a non-partisan, independent officer of the Legislature, the RCY should further investigate and make recommendations regarding this case.

“First Nations children and youth are disproportionately represented within all aspects of the MCFD system and therefore we have extreme concerns with how the government has chosen to deal with this case rather than taking immediate steps to look at real on the ground solutions to mitigate any similar occurrences in the future. We have every confidence that an investigation and report by the RCY would assist in achieving this outcome. We also expect that MCFD should involve First Nations in decisions and government policy designed to lower the numbers of Aboriginal children in care in BC”, concluded Casimer.

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*The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at [www.fns.bc.ca](http://www.fns.bc.ca).*

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