

# First Nations Leadership Council

## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**November 7, 2007**

### **FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL URGES FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SAVANNAH HALL INQUEST**

Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, BC) – The First Nations Leadership Council is encouraged by the findings of the coroner's inquest into the death of Savannah Hall. The coroner's inquest found that Savannah Hall died of suffocation while in foster care, which the 5 member jury concluded as a homicide. The coroners' jury also made 26 recommendations for change, 17 of which directly impact the Ministry of Children and Family Development and how the ministry operates.

"The provincial government must work swiftly and diligently to address the serious systematic gaps within the Ministry identified in the coroner's report which continue to put our children at risk", said Chief Judith Sayers of the First Nations Summit political executive. "For example, it is highly unacceptable for any family to have to wait six years for the truth regarding the circumstances of their loved one's death to be revealed in a coroner's report. The government must work in complete consultation with First Nations in every effort to ensure this does not happen again." said Chief Judith Sayers of the First Nations Summit.

BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief A-in-chut indicated, "Our heart goes out to the family of Savannah Hall and all who loved her through a very trying period. Her tragic death underscores the need to continue to emphasize greater prevention efforts and support for families," said BC Regional Chief A-in-chut (Shawn Atleo) of the Assembly of First Nations, "We need to increase support for birth and foster families so they have the resources to provide a stable environment. It is encouraging the Ministry has promised to implement all the jury's recommendations, but we must remain ever vigilant to the needs of our aboriginal children and families to give them the safe loving environment they deserve."

Grand Chief Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs concluded, "We hope the coroner's inquest will finally provide closure to the family of Savannah Hall by providing them with answers that they have been seeking for six years." Grand Chief Phillip added that, "However the findings contained within Coroners Inquest are clearly indicative that the massive funding cutbacks of the past have jeopardized and compromised the safety and well being of Aboriginal children in care."

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*The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the BC Assembly of First Nations. The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.*

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