

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

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FNLN Calls for Action on Red Dress Day, National MMIWG2S+ Awareness Day

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLN) remembers and honours missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples (MMIWG2S+) today on Red Dress Day.

FNLN calls on Canada to take action by implementing the 231 Calls for Justice released with the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* four years ago. Essential components of the National Action Plan call for oversight bodies, such as an Indigenous Ombudsperson, Human Rights Tribunal, and civilian police oversight bodies to represent the interests of Indigenous families, survivors and communities.

Currently, Indigenous women make up 16 percent of all femicide victims and 11 percent of all missing women. Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples are also 6 times more likely to be murdered than their non-Indigenous counterparts.

“It is shameful that the violence and fatalities of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples continue unabated in Canada and represent a tragic ongoing crisis that highlights the systemic injustices and vulnerabilities of First Nations communities. Canada must address the related issues and establish a clear timeline for implementing the 231 Calls for Justice. In addition, the Indigenous and Human Rights oversight body is necessary in response to this emergency. We look forward to contributing to the next steps for putting the Indigenous Rights Ombudspersons into place,” stated BCFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

“Last year, the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, including its Causes and Consequences, raised the alarm over the prevalence of sexual assault, exploitation and sex trafficking affecting First Nations women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples living and working near temporary resource extraction labour camps associated with the major construction sites, also known as ‘man camps.’ It is essential to prioritize measures to address safety concerns, protect the rights and well-being of First Nations women, and hold accountable those responsible for ensuring a safe environment in and around these sites,” remarked Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer.

“The deeply rooted racism and historical injustices prevalent in the Canadian justice system significantly impact missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples. This is evident in the biased treatment, inadequate investigations, and a lack of accountability for perpetrators. First Nations often face discrimination and mistrust in their interactions with law enforcement and the justice system, leading to cases being neglected or not prioritized. Urgent policing reforms are essential to address these issues,



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF
FIRST NATIONS

1004 Landooz Rd.
Prince George, BC
V2K 5S3

Ph: 778-945-9910
Fx: 778-945-9916



FIRST
NATIONS
SUMMIT

1200-100 Park Royal South
West Vancouver, BC
V7T 1A2

Ph: 604-926-9903
Fx: 604-926-9923
Toll Free: 866-990-9939



UNION OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA
INDIAN CHIEFS

401 – 312 Main Street
Vancouver, BC
V6A 2T2

Ph: 604-684-0231
Fx: 604-684-5726

acknowledge historical injustices and center the voices and experiences of First Nations communities,” emphasized Cheryl Casimer, FNS Political Executive.

Background Information:

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls - <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).

For further information, contact:

Cheryl Casimer, FNS Political Executive:

778-875-2157

Annette Schroeter, BCAFN Communications Officer:

778-281-1655

Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer:

250-957-7721