

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## News Release

October 4, 2024

### FNLC Appalled by Recent Killings of First Nation Individuals Across Canada by Law Enforcement Agencies

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is appalled by the unprovoked violence used against First Nations people by several law enforcement agencies across the country, resulting in the tragic deaths of nine individuals in just the last month.

This shocking and horrific behaviour is a result of the deep and ongoing systemic racism First Nation peoples face in this country, the severe lack of cultural competency among law enforcement officers, and the failure of Canada to provide adequate and effective policing to First Nations peoples.

In 1995, the Supreme Court of Canada ruling of R. v. Gladue acknowledged the systemic over representation of Indigenous peoples within the Canadian justice system. This ruling proves the inherent biases of our existing justice system that continues to harm First Nations people.

As outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action thirty and thirty-nine, the FNLC calls on the federal, provincial and territorial governments to take accountability for the over-policing and criminalization of First Nations peoples in this country. We, as the FNLC, call on all levels of government to track and report on instances of violence resulting in the death of First Nations people at the hands of law enforcement agencies.

The FNLC will continue to advocate against the discriminatory treatment of First Nations peoples in B.C. by law enforcement agencies, and demand culturally competent and sustainable policing practices for First Nations peoples. We, as the FNLC, call for justice, accountability and a higher level of oversight during the investigations of the incidents, ensuring that First Nations voices are heard, respected and honoured.

"On September 30<sup>th</sup>, Canada marked the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, yet First Nations families across the country continue to grieve their loved ones who have been struck down by police," said BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "Indigenous peoples continue to be ten times more likely to be killed by police than the average Canadian. This is totally unacceptable, and Canada needs to stop dragging their heels and support the implementation of a National Indigenous Justice Strategy, including the provision of adequate resourcing for Indigenous police forces," he concluded.

"Joining law enforcement does not grant officers a license to kill, yet recent incidents reveal a harrowing reality that demonstrates the brutal and unjust mistreatment of Indigenous peoples," stated Hugh Braker, First Nations Summit Political Executive. "The loss of these cherished Indigenous lives speaks to a lack of compassion by the police, and the FNLC condemns the broken colonial, state-sponsored systems that allow these deeply racist organisations to operate as they do. We are deeply shocked and outraged by recent events, and we will



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continue to stand firm in our pursuit of transformative systemic changes to eradicate racism in the justice system”.

UBCIC President Grand Chief Stewart Phillip concluded, "We are concerned that the police have grown all too comfortable employing deadly force on Indigenous peoples without facing consequences. The FNLC stands in solidarity with those mourning loved ones who have lost their lives in interactions with police. Canada must take immediate action to outlaw 'wellness' checks by police and invest in restoring justice by and for Indigenous peoples. We extend our most heartfelt condolences to the families, communities, and loved ones affected, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to ending police violence."

Jack Piché, Hoss Lightning-Saddleback, Tammy Bateman, Jason West, Stevan Dedam, Daniel Knife, Ronald Skunk, Jon Wells and Joey Desjarlais, we honour you and will stand together to carry your memory forward.

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

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