

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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Statement

November 20, 2020

UBCIC Observes the Transgender Day of Remembrance

((X̱w̱məθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – November 20, 2020) Today the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) observes the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR) and remembers the transgender lives lost to and deeply damaged by transphobia, violence, hate, and prejudice. UBCIC stands in solidarity with Indigenous and non-Indigenous transgender and gender-diverse communities whose immense strength and resilience continues to inspire Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island in their fight for dignity and equality.

In 1999, Gwendolyn Ann Smith founded the TDoR to memorialize Rita Hester, a Black transgender woman, who was murdered in 1998 just 2 days before her 35th birthday. Since then, Rita's death has mobilized an international movement to humanize and protect transgender lives in the face of the systemic intolerance and ignorance entrenched within media, police, institutions and the wider public. Each November the transgender community gathers.; For many TDoR represents the only opportunity to grieve publicly, and the only visible gathering they can participate in.

UBCIC is a staunch advocate for putting an end to the violence and discrimination that intersects the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) crisis and the hate crimes committed against the gender-diverse and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Given the new challenges introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the significant lack of transgender history taught in education systems, UBCIC recognizes how crucial it is this year to continue the spirit of TDoR online, and to increase the awareness and visibility of the trans community. Transgender people are disproportionately impacted by the economic and health hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic and, unlike their cisgender counterparts, must confront pre-existing transphobia and inequality, as well as additional layers of racial discrimination if they are Indigenous or people of colour. UBCIC is committed to working together to dismantle the powers that authorize hate and intolerance against transgender people everywhere.

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UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca