

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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Statement

April 1, 2021

UBCIC Stands with Asian Communities and our Allies Against the Surge in Anti-Asian Hate and Racism

((X^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – April 1, 2021) Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the treatment of Asian people as racial scapegoats for the pandemic has fueled a global rise and intensification in anti-Asian racism and racially motivated hate crimes. The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) continues to stand with Black, Indigenous, and racialized groups against systemic racism and oppression, and condemns the reprehensible, violent hate crimes targeting and afflicting unimaginable pain, loss, and grief upon Asian communities.

“UBCIC sends our thoughts and prayers to all those who have been affected by the horrific rise in Anti-Asian discrimination and hate, and especially to everyone impacted by the deadly shooting in Atlanta that claimed the lives of eight people, including six women of Asian descent,” stated Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “UBCIC knows all too well the utterly devastating effects that racism and discrimination have upon communities, having spent over 50 years standing up to the systemic and institutionalized anti-Indigenous racism that has oppressed First Nations in Canada for centuries. We stand in solidarity with Asian communities around the world and we recognize there is a commonality in our experiences of racism. Knowing and understanding the hurt and frustration that comes from being treated as perpetual outsiders, we must continue to unite and gain strength from one another to achieve equality and justice for all.”

Chief Don Tom, Vice-President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated, “The 700 per cent increase in anti-Asian hate crimes in Vancouver amid the COVID-19 pandemic is shocking, unacceptable, and points to the wider, underlying problem of unchecked prejudice and discrimination running rampant in our society. UBCIC was directly impacted by the hostility and distrust being directed towards the Asian community when on May 17, 2020, an Indigenous UBCIC employee was physically assaulted and subject to racial slurs after being identified as “Asian” by

her assailant. We must remember that as community members we all connected – an act of hate against one affects us all – and the atmosphere of fear and distrust fostered by anti-Asian sentiments is one that racialized minorities and marginalized communities must combat together.”

“During these turbulent times, race should not be used as an instrument of division and antipathy, but rather a rallying point for support, strength, and empathy– we have more to gain when we see the commonalities in our experiences and begin looking out and caring for one another,” stated Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “Just as racist, colonial policies and laws were imposed upon First Nations, the Chinese head tax, Japanese internment camps, and the xenophobic ‘Yellow Peril’ construct targeted Asians in Canada, demonstrating that anti-Asian racism has long been a part of Canadian history. From our historical and current experiences of racism, Indigenous and Asian communities can work together to call upon our governments and the wider Canadian public to take a strong stand against all forms of racism, discrimination, and hate. To the Asian community we send our love, strength and compassion. We see you and we are standing beside you.”

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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

