

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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News Release

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Aspiration Not Enough to End Genocide: UBCIC Demands Government Action and Accountability for Crisis of MMIWG

((X^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk^wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/ Vancouver, B.C. – June 3, 2021) The federal government has released a National Action ‘Plan’ on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) that falls painfully short of addressing the culture of genocide that has been created and upheld through their own colonial policies, laws, and systems that perpetuate this violence. The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is appalled by the lack of a plan within this document and calls for the development of an Indigenous women led Action Plan with clear timelines, commitments and actions that encompass all levels of government across Canada to end genocide now.

Two years ago today, the Final Report of the National Inquiry on MMIWG was released alongside a commitment from Canada to develop a Nation Action Plan in partnership with Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+, family members and survivors, following the first of the 231 Calls for Justice of the Final Report. Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people continue to experience increasing rates of brutal violence, disappearances, and racism.

“Indigenous peoples are reeling from the historical and ongoing violence and genocide that is inflicted upon our people and communities,” stated Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “Our lands and territories are being desecrated, our people are being shot and killed at the hands of police, our children are being discovered in mass unmarked graves, and we are dying in prisons, hospitals and child welfare institutions as a direct result of societal and systemic racism. We will not stand for aspirational statements and broken promises anymore. This so-called action plan is another slap in the face. Canada as a whole must take full accountability for their role in the ongoing genocide of our women and children, and two-spirited people and give the crisis that is MMIWG the urgent attention it deserves. How many more of our people need to die? We demand accountability, immediate action, adequate resources, and the development of an Indigenous women led action and implementation plan now.”

“Indigenous peoples have always known the truth of Canada and its deliberate tools of oppression. From the seizure of our land, the theft of our children, and the murders and disappearances of our women – these have been willful and conscious actions and inactions intended to dispossess us of our lands and territories and assimilate us into colonial society,” stated Melissa Moses, UBCIC Women’s Representative. “The document released today is an offensive performance by the government to skirt responsibility and glaze over the ongoing genocide of women and girls. Despite repeated demands from the Coalition on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, Canada has continued to ignore Indigenous women and has excluded from the National Action Plan the voices and experiences of survivors, family members, grassroots Indigenous women-led organizations, women who are incarcerated, in survival sex economies, those who have been subjected to forced sterilization, those with disabilities, and those that can speak specifically to the murders on the Highway of Tears. Our women are survivors of colonialism with lived experience and expertise and must be at the heart of any plan moving forward. Canada must listen.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President concluded, “I look at this Action Plan and I see more sickness, more loss, and more suffering – I do not see change. I do not see our women and children represented in its pages, nor do I see a government that understands what it is like for our communities to lose a matriarch, or to mourn the loss of a stolen child. This document is the result of a government that has minimized the magnitude of the ongoing genocide of our sisters, aunts, daughters, mothers, and granddaughters. Canada’s negligence and failure to adhere to the UN Declaration is part of an ongoing Canadian tradition of colonial oppression that is on display for all to see, now more than ever. Canada is responsible for this genocide, – and is responsible for changing it – now. Our people are outraged, emotionally exhausted and ready to rise up and push back our colonial oppressors”.

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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