

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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News Release

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Vigil for MMIWG2S: Holding Space on National Day of Action to Empower and Support Families Seeking Justice

(Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – October 4, 2021) To mark the National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirited people (MMIWG2S), the Indigenous Women's Council will be holding a safe, socially distanced vigil on October 4, 2021, at Vancouver City Hall. The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is honored to support the vigil, which will provide healing space for Indigenous women, girls, two-spirited individuals, and allies to come together in solidarity and strengthen their unwavering resolve to hold Canada accountable for the epidemic of violence founded in centuries of cultural genocide and institutionalized racism. UBCIC is proud to have Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, speaking and supporting family members at the vigil, and UBCIC continues to be thankful for the immense work and resilience of all participants and organizers of the event.

"In recent months media coverage and public awareness of the realities of colonial violence impacting Indigenous peoples have peaked and waned in the news cycle. On this Day of Action for MMIWG2S, I wish for Canadians to understand that the ongoing experience of genocide, and the loss of a loved one cannot be captured in a day or a media story alone. For too many families, these are life-altering realities that are felt deeply for generations," stated Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer. "Advocates around the world are speaking out against the vast disparities in the way media and police frame and respond to missing person cases of white vs. BIPOC women, a painful reality that adds to the trauma Indigenous communities and families face in the wake of searching for their loved one and advocating for an end to the crisis of MMIWG2S. No family should lose a daughter, sister, relative, or friend to gender-based violence, much less face barriers of racism and apathy in the aftermath. On this Day of Action UBCIC calls for the fulsome implementation of Article 22 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, calling for the protection of Indigenous women and children. We also seek advancement of Call for Justice 5.6, to support Indigenous victims and the families and friends of Indigenous

murdered and missing persons so that that they can heal and see the governments of Canada and British Columbia fulfill their commitments to carry out substantive and systemic change to end the MMIWG2S crisis.”

“UBCIC raises our hearts and hands to the organizers and participants of this very important vigil, especially to the courageous family members who, despite the repeated injustices, violence, and trauma inflicted upon them by Canada’s longstanding colonial systems and practices, continue to seek accountability, closure, and justice for their murdered and disappeared loved ones,” stated Melissa Moses, UBCIC Women’s Representative. “The vigil is a reminder that Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited individuals not only continue to go missing and be murdered, but the justice they and their families are owed continues to be undermined by Canada’s justice system. We look at the number of cases in which the courts have granted unjust leniency to murderers and offenders, entertaining their appeals – such as [the one filed by Bradley Barton](#), a convicted killer who murdered Cindy Gadue in cold blood with no sign of remorse – and handing out plea deals, like the one [struck with Robert Riley Saunders](#), a man who committed truly evil, despicable crimes against vulnerable Indigenous youth. Although the vigil today, reminds us of the ongoing tragedies we must mourn, it also empowers us to proudly assert our identities, cultures, and traditions as we continue the fight for justice. We call upon Canada and British Columbia to take immediate, meaningful action to implement the MMIWG Calls for Justice that are focused on replacing a justice model that perpetuates trauma with one that is aligned with Indigenous values, cultures, and traditions.”

Please remember to stay safe, wear a mask, and practice social distancing at the vigil. If you are unable to attend the vigil in person, you can watch the livestream of the event [here](#).

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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