

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

December 11, 2023

FNLC Calls for Preservation of Evidence in the Pickton Case and for Victim, Survivor and Family Rights to be Upheld

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwəta (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.)

The First Nations Leadership Council is deeply disturbed that the RCMP recently applied to dispose of approximately 14,000 exhibits related to the Pickton case, and are calling for the preservation of evidence collected from the Pickton farm and Pickton-related properties and associates. Further, we are calling for the RCMP to implement a rights-based, trauma-informed, culturally-safe and an Indigenous gender-based analysis plus approach to center the rights of victims, survivors and families.

The RCMP's application to dispose of the 14,000 exhibits demonstrates a continued failure by police and Crown governments to prevent and ensure accountability for violence perpetrated against Indigenous women in contravention of the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice 1.5, 1.6, 9.1, and 9.5, and their legal obligations under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Robert Pickton confessed to killing 49 women, the majority of whom were Indigenous, and was charged with the murders of 26 women. However, he was only convicted of second-degree murder in six cases. Over 25 cases remain unsolved and 20 of the charges against him were stayed. The Pickton case has been marked by marginalization of victims and families, discrimination, police mismanagement, apathy, and negligence, and this latest application by the RCMP is another instance of harmful conduct that deeply impacts survivors and family members. Disposal of this evidence may negatively impact the ability for these families to ever know what happened to their loved ones, and removes all remaining hope for their pursuit of some semblance of justice.

Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated, "The will of those most impacted must guide how evidence is managed in this case. We support families' advocacy for a moratorium on the destruction of evidence and assurances that evidence will be preserved. We call for urgent action to ensure the proposed disposal of evidence in the Pickton case does not proceed. The RCMP and other policing bodies must be accountable for adhering to their obligations; conducting thorough and respectful investigations that uphold the human and Indigenous rights of Indigenous peoples."

"Just last week, December 6, 2023 marked the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women as well as 20 years since the Pickton farm was finally searched and we're still echoing the calls of family members for the RCMP and justice authorities to prioritize and dedicate adequate resources to pursuing justice for the murder victims," stated Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President. "These women were and are beloved and their lives matter. Their families have gone through hell and back fighting for justice and deserve to know what happened to them and to have the perpetrators and justice authorities



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF
FIRST NATIONS

1004 Landooz Rd.
Prince George, BC
V2K 5S3

Ph: 778-945-9910
Fx: 778-945-9916



FIRST
NATIONS
SUMMIT

1200-100 Park Royal South
West Vancouver, BC
V7T 1A2

Ph: 604-926-9903
Fx: 604-926-9923
Toll Free: 866-990-9939



UNION OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA
INDIAN CHIEFS

401 - 312 Main Street
Vancouver, BC
V6A 2T2

Ph: 604-684-0231
Fx: 604-684-5726

held to account for the atrocities committed in this case. This evidence, which includes cherished belongings of stolen loved ones, holds a truth, and as far as I'm concerned, the police have no authority over the truth."

Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit Political Executive stated, "We call for systemic change that upholds the rights of all Indigenous women. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls for Justice, outstanding recommendations from the Oppal Inquiry, Highway of Tears Symposium Report, and the Red Woman Rising Report, among many others, provide direction on the urgent actions required to uphold the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women and gender diverse people, including the rights of sex workers. For too long well-researched and widely known priorities and insights into ending systemic gender-based violence and its brutal impacts on our communities have been ignored, and this cannot continue any longer."

-30-

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

For further comment please contact:

For further information, contact:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Cheryl Casimer, FNS Political Executive, Phone: | 778-875-2157 |
| Annette Schroeter, BCAFN Communications Officer: | 778-281-1655 |
| Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC, Phone: | 250-490-5314 |