

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

October 30, 2024

FNLN Supports the Families of First Nation Victims Killed by Police and Calls for a Nation-Wide State of Emergency

(xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLN) fully supports demands from the families of nine First Nations individuals who were killed by law enforcement agencies across the country in August and September.

On Tuesday, October 22, 2024, a group of individuals including the families of eight of the deceased gathered on Parliament Hill, on Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation Territory. This includes Laura Holland, a Wet'suwet'en woman and the mother of Jared Lowndes, who was shot and killed by Campbell River RCMP in 2021. Holland described police-involved killings as a state of emergency for Indigenous people across this country. The FNLN echoes this statement, as police-involved killings and violence against First Nations continues to occur across this country, while law enforcement officers are seemingly never held accountable for their actions.

Earlier this year, the FNLN demanded that the BC Attorney General reconsider the court rulings regarding the deaths of Jared Lowndes and Dale Culver, who both died during their interactions with B.C. RCMP officers. On October 21, 2024, the Attorney General denied the request to issue any charges to the officers involved in both cases. The FNLN is outraged by this response and will continue to advocate for justice, in support of the families. We, as the FNLN, call on the Attorney General to reconsider this decision, and to appoint an Indigenous special prosecutor to re-evaluate the proceedings in both cases.

"We stand united in our grief and demand justice following the recent tragic deaths of nine Indigenous individuals at the hands of police. These incidents highlight systemic violence in our communities and signal an ongoing state of emergency that requires immediate government action and accountability. We support Indigenous-led solutions that center the voices of families and leaders in the inquiry process. We seek transparency and justice to address the daily realities of police brutality. We urge federal and provincial governments to commit to meaningful change, recognize the lives lost, and implement culturally competent policing practices that protect First Nations' rights and dignity. It is time to confront ingrained violence and foster healing and justice in our communities," shared Regional Chief Terry Teegee of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations.

"Despite continuous calls for justice and policing reform, the continued use of lethal force by Canadian police forces against Indigenous peoples remains a deadly epidemic in Canada. Our citizens continue to be the victims of unnecessary police violence leading to serious injury or death as a result of police violence and shootings. There have been countless inquiries, studies and reports on the issue. The lack of action by governments to implement proposed solutions will only lead to more of our citizens being injured or dying at the hands of police. The time for action, including the fulsome implementation of the National and BC First Nations Justice Strategies, is now. Our communities can't



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wait on the sidelines while our citizens continue to die at the hands of police across this country,” added Hugh Braker, a Political Executive of the First Nations Summit.

“How many more lives will be brutally taken before accountability is met? Justice delayed is justice denied, and once again, Indigenous families are left grieving while the system stands silent. This is more than a tragedy—it’s a scathing indictment of a system that fails First Nations people time and again,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs.

The FNLC will continue to advocate against the discriminatory treatment of First Nations peoples in B.C. by law enforcement agencies, and demand culturally competent and sustainable policing practices for First Nations peoples. We, as the FNLC, call for justice, accountability and a higher level of oversight during the investigations of the incidents, ensuring that First Nations voices are heard, respected and honoured.

-30-

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

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