



# UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

## News Release

April 24, 2026

### UNPFII 2026: UBCIC Women's Representative Calls for Health Justice and an End to Sex and Race-Based Discrimination

(Lenape Territory/New York, NY – April 24, 2026) This week, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is attending the 25th United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) on the theme of “Ensuring Indigenous Peoples’ health, including in the context of conflict.”

UBCIC Women's Representative Katisha Paul, a W̱JOLELP and Lil'wat youth is bringing her voice to the UNPFII to draw awareness to the ongoing human rights issues of forced and coerced sterilization and sex and race-based discrimination in the *Indian Act* affecting First Nations in Canada. UBCIC is calling on Canada to uphold the rights of First Nations, including women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples, and to ensure health equity and access to justice.

The UBCIC is deeply concerned with Canada's ongoing sex- and race-based discrimination embedded in 150-year-old colonial legislation, the *Indian Act*, which continues to impact access to rights and entitlements including safety, health services, community belonging, and overall well-being. If the [second-generation cut-off](#) and two parent rule upholding sex and race-based discrimination in the *Indian Act* are not removed, First Nations will no longer be entitled to legal recognition under the *Indian Act* in a matter of generations.

Katisha Paul, UBCIC Women's Representative, stated, “As Indigenous peoples, our health and well-being are deeply interwoven with our identities, our lands, and our rights. UBCIC is calling on Canada to act in accordance with international human rights standards and put an end to sex and race-based discrimination in the *Indian Act* by passing Bill S-2, as amended by the Senate of Canada without further delay. Continued delays in advancing this legislation prolong discriminatory impacts on First Nations women and their descendants, including barriers to status, services, and community belonging.”

Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, stated “The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous

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Women and Girls have each issued reports which make it clear that sex and race-based discrimination in the *Indian Act* is a root cause of the crisis of murders and disappearances of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in Canada. Building on UBCIC's advocacy before CEDAW in 2024, these bodies have consistently called on Canada to eliminate this discrimination. UBCIC is urging Canada to act in accordance with international human rights standards."

UBCIC is also raising urgent concerns related to reproductive justice and the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit+ people, including the ongoing impacts of coerced and forced sterilization. Reproductive justice affirms the right of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to have or not have children, and to parent in healthy communities, free from coercion, violence, and state control. Coerced and forced sterilization, where Indigenous women have undergone sterilization procedures without full, prior, and informed consent, represents a serious and ongoing violation of these rights and continues to undermine trust in healthcare systems. Katisha Paul concluded, "UBCIC is deeply concerned by the urgent and dire need for reproductive justice and the full recognition of our rights. We must also name the ongoing violations of reproductive justice, including coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women, practices rooted in the same colonial logic of control over Indigenous bodies and futures."

In addition to her role as UBCIC Women's Representative, Katisha Paul was re-elected as Co-Chair of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, where she works alongside Indigenous youth from around the world to advance shared priorities and strengthen youth participation in international processes.

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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](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca)

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