



UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

News Release

May 5, 2026

UBCIC in Ottawa to Demand End to Sex Discrimination and MMIWG2S+ Crisis after 150 Years of *Indian Act* Rule

(xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil Waututh)/ Vancouver, B.C. – May 5, 2026) Chief Marilyn Slett (Káwáził), UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, is in Ottawa today on the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as a witness before the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (the Committee) for its study of Bill S-2: *An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (“Bill S-2”) to urge Canada to end violence against Indigenous women and pass Bill S-2 without further delay.

Bill S-2, as amended by the Senate, proposes to address outstanding sex and race-based discrimination in the *Indian Act*, including by putting an end to the second-generation cut off which limits the transmission of status to children after two generations of parenting with a non-status Indian. [The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) found that this sex discrimination in the *Indian Act* is a root cause of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit+ people (MMIWG2S+) crisis. UBCIC is calling on Prime Minister Carney to leverage his Liberal majority to prioritize ending human rights abuses against First Nations women.

“The *Indian Act* turned 150 years old this year. This piece of racist and sexist colonial legislation continues its objective of eliminating the ‘Indian problem’ by assimilating First Nations people through the second-generation cut-off,” stated Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer. “The *Indian Act* has forcibly dislocated First Nations from our lands, communities, and families and has disrupted our culture, identity, belonging and governance systems. It has stripped First Nations women of their rights and entitlements for marrying non-status partners, caused intergenerational harm and created profound vulnerabilities that increase the risk of gender-based violence and the MMIWG2S+ crisis. In 2026, it is still dictating who we can parent with if we wish to pass status onto our children. I am here today to urge the Committee and Prime Minister Carney to support Bill S-2 as amended to advance the rights and safety of First Nations women and our descendants, to prevent the legal extinction of our people, and to end the discrimination once and for all.”

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“UBCIC stands with survivors, families and all communities who are grieving the loss of their loved ones today and everyday, with those who are still searching, and those who are seeking justice. We see your heartbreak as well as your dedication and unwavering spirit. We remain relentless in our demands for government and all levels of the justice system to include families and survivors at decision-making tables, to create safer systems, and ensure sustainable resourcing to support systemic prevention, frontline services and healing. We stand with you always,” stated Chief Councilor Linda Innes, UBCIC Vice-President.

“I had the honour of advocating alongside many First Nations women at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues where we called on Canada to eliminate sex-based discrimination, grant full access to health services regardless of Indian Status, and provide redress to all impacted women and children,” stated Katisha Paul, UBCIC Women’s Representative. “In response to General Recommendation No.39 (2022) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls, Canada failed to address Bill S-2 and threats to UNDRIP implementation, in blatant disregard for their bearing on First Nations rights. The [UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women](#) was clear in 2024, as was the [UN Human Rights Committee](#) in March 2026 that Canada must remove the second-generation cut off from the Indian Act and eliminate discrimination and violence against Indigenous women. Bill S-2 is a long overdue measurable act of reconciliation that Canada must take after 150 years of human rights abuses and untold loss.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, concluded, “Government action continues to be woefully out of step with the ever-climbing rates of gender-based violence, particularly against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people. UBCIC is deeply concerned by federal funding cuts to critical frontline Indigenous women’s organizations who carry out life-saving work to support victims, survivors, and families of the MMIWG2S+ crisis. Ending this preventable crisis is not only a legal imperative and human rights matter with an immeasurable social cost but also carries a financial burden. According to a recent [report](#), in B.C. alone, gender-based violence costs \$1.12 billion dollars annually. There is no reason to delay ending the MMIWG2S+ crisis any further. UBCIC calls on Prime Minister Carney and the Liberal majority to declare gender-based violence an epidemic and systemic crisis, implement a nation-wide education and prevention campaign, implement the National Inquiry’s Calls for Justice and to introduce MMIWG2S+ specific legislation to enshrine accountability and legal standards for ending the crisis into Canadian law.”

First Nations are invited to send a [letter](#) to Prime Minister Carney to pass Bill S-2 and end the second-generation cut-off!

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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

To Learn More:

- YWCA: [The Cost of Inaction](#): Measuring the Economic Impact of Gender-Based violence
- The [National Inquiry](#) into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- [End Second Gen](#)
- Rise Women Legal Centre: [Access, Safety, and Regional Context](#): A Comprehensive Assessment of BC Court Locations

If you fear for your safety, or are in immediate danger, please call 911. If you are not in immediate danger, please refer to the following supports and resources:

- Call [VictimLink BC](#) at 1-800-563-0808 for information about all services that are available throughout the Province.
- [Battered Women's Support Services](#) can assist with emotional support, safety planning, and legal advocacy o Call at 604.687.1867 or toll free at 1-855-687-1868
- If you're unable to speak safely, please text 604-652-1867 or email intake@bwss.org
- [Ending Violence Association of BC](#)

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