



UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

News Release

September 24, 2026

UBCIC Women's Declaration: Protecting Our Women and Our Lands against Violence of Major Projects

Shxwhá:y Village (Stó:lō Territory)/ Chilliwack, B.C. – September 24, 2026) Women delegates of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) gathered yesterday during the 58th UBCIC Annual General Assembly for a Women's Gathering, "Honouring Our Matriarchs, Protecting Future Generations." Women leaders sounded the alarm over the swift advancement of provincial and federal major projects without First Nations' free, prior, and informed consent, the erosion of environmental protections and First Nations women's rights and safety, and heightened risks of gender-based violence and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit+ Peoples (MMIWG2S+) crisis in relation to resource extraction.

"UBCIC women leaders are clear that we do not consent to a flawed development and consultation process or to projects that will inflict violence onto our waterways, our lands and our relatives," stated Katisha Paul, UBCIC Women's Representative. "Together we have issued a Declaration calling on the Governments of B.C. and Canada, as well as industry proponents and foreign investors, to recognize the dire and irreversible human rights and environmental consequences of extractive development and to uphold First Nations women, girls and two-spirit+ peoples' rights."

The UBCIC Women's Declaration is attached.

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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

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UBCIC Women's Declaration: Protecting Our Women and Our Lands against Violence of Major Projects



We, women delegates of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, stand in solidarity against major industrial and extractive projects being rapidly advanced under a suite of laws by the Governments of B.C. and Canada, founded in the degradation of our territories and the erosion of our rights. We come together to make this solemn Declaration out of our common desire to uphold the health, safety and prosperity of First Nations women, children and two-spirit+ peoples, our future generations and our sacred relationship to the planet that sustains us.

As First Nations women and protectors of our Nations, our children, and our territories, we recognize:

- The sacred teachings and work of our ancestors to protect and steward our lands, waterways, the air, the fire (our minerals, metals and precious and semi-precious gems), and our animal relatives.
- Economic urgency does not override our inherent and constitutionally protected First Nations title and rights, nor does it diminish the Crown's obligation to consult and cooperate in good faith with First Nations in order to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent before approving or advancing projects affecting our lands, territories or resources.
- Free, prior and informed consent is a minimum standard for the survival, dignity and well-being of First Nations, and it is not interchangeable with consultation, engagement or accommodation. It must be sought through our own Indigenous laws, protocols and decision-making processes before decisions are made.
- Disproportionate gender-based violence against First Nations women, girls and two-spirit+ peoples and the MMIWG2S+ crisis are human rights issues that are directly linked to extractive industries through cultures that uphold oppression and violence, misogyny and white supremacy, and militarization of state forces against Indigenous land defenders in service of Crown and industry interests.
- The National Inquiry into MMIWG2S+'s finding of the MMIWG2S+ crisis as genocide.
- We have the right to safety. We deserve lives that are free of emotional, verbal, physical and sexual abuse. This is a principle of respect.
- Canada and B.C. have incorporated the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) into positive law, with courts throughout the country confirming that the UN Declaration now applies as a binding international instrument on Canada.
- Our rights are inherent and constitutionally protected under S. 35, and upheld by international human rights bodies and treaties including the UN Committee on the



Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Human Rights Committee.

We call in the strongest possible terms on the Governments of B.C. and Canada, as well as all industry proponents and foreign and domestic investors, to:

- Uphold First Nations' rights to free, prior and informed consent according to our Indigenous laws and protocols prior to any project designation, permitting, approval, financing or construction, with particular respect to the rights, leadership and decision-making authority of First Nations women, girls and two-spirit+ peoples.
- Respect that consent must be maintained throughout the project lifecycle and that material changes in project design, impacts or conditions require renewed consent.
- Provide affected First Nations title and rights holders and Treaty Nations with sufficient time, funding, and accessible information to assess cumulative, climate, environmental, health, cultural, gender and human rights impacts, including project alternatives and the option not to proceed.
- Immediately implement the UN Declaration, 2024 CEDAW Concluding Observations and the National Inquiry's 231 Calls for Justice, in particular Calls for Justice 13.1-13.5, to ensure the rights, safety and security of First Nations women, girls, and two-spirit+ peoples and land defenders, to prevent all forms of violence in the context of extractive industries and development projects, to uphold the conservation and protection of our territories, and to obtain free, prior and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting our territories.
- Per UBCIC Resolution 2025-51, promote safety and accountability surrounding temporary work "man" camps including the creation of strong regulatory frameworks for oversight, enforcement, and compliance in the project approval process which stipulate that all employers must work with First Nations, provide workers with ongoing education and awareness training, administer safety checks, create accountability mechanisms, and ensure the safety of First Nations women, girls, and two-spirit+ peoples. Further, the Governments of B.C. and Canada must take a gender-based analysis+ and human rights impact assessment approach which upholds the title and rights and free, prior, and informed consent of First Nations, and First Nations women, girls and two-spirit+ peoples in the development of any and all extractive development and new projects.

As women of this land, we have a duty and an obligation to protect our rights and our future generations to the fullest extent of the law, and we have every intention of doing so.

September 24, 2026

