

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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News Release

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UBCIC Outraged with VPD's Quick Dismissal of Chelsea Poorman's Death, Demands Ongoing Investigation

(X̱w̱m̱ə̱θ̱ḵw̱ə̱y̱əm (Musqueam), S̱ḵw̱x̱w̱ú̱7̱mesh (Squamish) and s̱əḻiḻw̱ə̱ṯəḻ (Tsleil Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – May 12, 2022) Last week the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) announced that Chelsea Poorman was found dead on April 22nd, a year and a half after she went missing, stating that "[her death is not suspicious](#)." The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) stands with Chelsea's family and demands a full investigation into her tragic death.

Chelsea Poorman, a member of Kawacatoose First Nation, was reported missing on September 8, 2020 at the age of 24. She had been with her sister two days earlier in downtown Vancouver. Her family has spent the past year and a half relentlessly bringing attention to Chelsea's disappearance and searching for answers. Sadly, her body was found at a vacant home in Vancouver's Shaughnessy neighbourhood, and her family shared that she was missing her cranium as well as some fingers. Chelsea suffered from a brain injury and also had some physical mobility issues. It is unknown why she would have been at the heavily secured house where she was later found deceased.

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, stated, "The VPD claim that Chelsea likely died on the property the night she disappeared or shortly thereafter – how is her death deemed 'not suspicious' since the VPD do not know why she would have been at a locked-up and vacant home in Vancouver's most expensive neighbourhood? We stand with Chelsea's family and friends and the broader Indigenous community in demanding that the VPD publicly apologize for their slow response to Chelsea's missing persons report, the trauma they've inflicted on the family and community by their official statements about the case, and for informing the public at a press conference last week that the case is now closed."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, continued, "We demand that the case continues to be investigated and that the VPD retract their callous, hurtful and inaccurate statements. Chelsea

Poorman's sudden disappearance, the slow, glacial pace of the investigation, and the abrupt halt of the case from the VPD is emblematic of the absolute crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls; a crisis so glaringly extensive that the Canadian government held a National Inquiry in 2016 and produced a comprehensive report with 231 individual [Calls for Justice](#). The VPD must include a review of the Calls for Justice as part of their investigation into Chelsea Poorman's disappearance and death, which must be understood against the broader context of the complex and intersecting impacts of colonialism on Indigenous peoples, and specifically on Indigenous women and girls."

"Chelsea Poorman's disappearance and death, without any trace ever turned up by the officials in charge, is a profound and absolute heartbreak that too many Indigenous families have endured. We offer our full support to her family, loved ones, and community at this time and going forward," concluded Chief Don Tom, UBCIC Vice-President. "They have our love and our prayers as they search for answers and justice. She will not be forgotten, and we will march in her name."

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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