

# OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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## News Release

July 28, 2022

### Crisis in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside; UBCIC Calls on City of Vancouver to Uphold Safety and Human Dignity

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – July 28, 2022) Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) residents, including a disproportionately high number of Indigenous peoples, are facing mounting perils owing to a blatant lack of secure housing, unsafe shelter options during extreme heat events, and unrelenting gender-based violence.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated, "The homelessness crisis and the City's neglect of those most vulnerable in our community including Indigenous peoples, elders, women and children, and those living with disabilities, chronic health conditions and addictions is reaching a boiling point. The disregard for human life in one of the world's wealthiest cities, a supposed leader in reconciliation, is utterly unacceptable. There is no question in my mind that the absolute poverty and daily struggle for survival is intensifying and has the potential to erupt in violence like that seen in the grotesque act of violence against a woman on the street earlier this week or the increase of [shootings throughout the lower mainland](#) endangering the homeless community. The responsibility to prevent further violence and death lays squarely at the feet of the City of Vancouver – and we will be relentless in our demands for justice."

"The UBCIC is outraged by the ongoing actions taken by the Vancouver Parks Board fencing off shaded areas of CRAB park during the latest heat wave," stated Chief Don Tom, UBCIC Vice President. "Intensifying climate events have proven deadly with [619 confirmed deaths](#) during BC's last heatwave in 2021. UBCIC stands with the grassroots community who tirelessly supports residents in CRAB Park and the DTES and demands the Parks Board and City of Vancouver uphold dignity and human rights for those experiencing homelessness."

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, concluded, "Violence against Indigenous women, who are the heartbeat of the DTES community, is escalating like never before. The past

few months alone have uncovered the violent and untimely deaths of [Chelsea Poorman](#), [Noelle O'Soup](#), several deaths from apartment fires, and just yesterday a [woman was deliberately set alight](#) when a man poured a flammable liquid on her head, while another shelter was set ablaze with a resident inside. Apathy and injustice prevail among the authorities while the intersecting crises of MMIWG2S+, the colonial child welfare system, homelessness and the opioid crisis are literally killing our people. UBCIC calls for urgent police and justice reform in full alignment with the [UN Declaration](#), [Calls for Justice](#), [Red Women Rising](#), and in cooperation with all levels of government to end the daily violence that has become normalized in the DTES.”

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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)