

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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News Release

May 5, 2023

UBCIC Demands End of Targeted Violence by Authorities on National Day of Awareness for MMIWG2S

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – May 5, 2023) The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is calling on all authorities to end discrimination, sexism, and violence enacted by the multilateral justice systems against Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people on the *National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People*.

“The criminal justice system is a perpetual colonial institution that has been weaponized for centuries to extinguish Indigenous women’s existence; today it maintains and sustains violence against them,” stated Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President. “Nowhere is that more apparent than in the Crown’s prosecution of Dawn Walker. How could a celebrated Indigenous woman with a strong political background who experienced prolonged gender-based violence be repeatedly and systematically denied help by authorities? The cycle of violence, forced state-separation of children, discrimination, bias, and targeting by the justice system has done nothing but criminalize and over-incarcerate Indigenous women and girls who are the heart of our communities. Enough is enough.”

Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer stated, “[New data](#) from the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) confirms that Indigenous women were second only to Indigenous girls under 18 to be the victims of violence in Vancouver over the last year. Indigenous people and advocates continue to bear witness as the City of Vancouver and VPD use unspeakable violence, criminalize and fail to protect Indigenous women and girls. Recent sweeping anti-homelessness measures, including forcibly dismantling encampments in the Downtown Eastside, have left no safe and supportive housing alternatives available for those fleeing domestic or City-sponsored violence.”

“Our people, particularly in rural and remote communities, have long endured justice authorities’ racism, mistrust, corruption, and impunity,” stated Melissa Moses, UBCIC Women’s Representative. “Earlier this year, horrific stories [of RCMP officers sexually abusing Indigenous women and girls in Prince George](#) and subsequent cover-up by RCMP exposed once again, the systemic violence by the justice system. The myth that the RCMP are there to help and keep us safe is crumbling, giving way to the truth that it is part of a

colonial justice system which continues to enact violence against Indigenous people. It is only from the full acceptance of these truths that there is hope for reimagining a just system. I look to my community of Merritt for hope, where I have witnessed the efforts by our people to repair harm and rebuild relationships with the RCMP that are grounded in respect and trust.”

“UBCIC stands with the victims as well as family members who have lost loved ones to the crisis of MMIWG2S and continue to face discrimination and bias from the justice system in their quest for answers,” concluded Chief Don Tom, UBCIC Vice-President. “Family members are continually left to conduct and resource missing person searches alone, all while having to navigate a broken justice system, battling police apathy and jurisdictional mismanagement, robbing them of the space to heal from these immense traumas. Our people deserve the same response as any other missing person in this province. The UBCIC calls for full capacity supports, high-tech investigative and First Nations-led search and rescue services, justice system navigator positions, and cooperation from justice authorities, police, and governments across all jurisdictions to bring our loved ones home – and further, healing supports, victim and family services, accountability and justice in cases when they do not.”

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](https://www.victimlinkbc.ca) at 1-800-563-0808 for information about all services that are available throughout the Province.
- [Battered Women’s Support Services](https://www.batteredwomen.ca) 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: https://endingviolence.org/need-help/](https://endingviolence.org/need-help/)
- [National Inquiry’s report on MMIWG: https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/):
- [National Indigenous Women’s Resource Centre https://www.niwrc.org/](https://www.niwrc.org/)

May 5th National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People events are taking place in Vancouver. Details below:

-30-

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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

MAY
5TH

NATIONAL DAY OF
AWARENESS
MISSING & MURDERED
INDIGENOUS WOMEN
GIRLS +

Join Families and Advocates to bring
awareness to this crisis.

Vancouver City Hall

Noon to 2 pm



Organized by the Indigenous Womens Council

HEALING JOURNEY THROUGH DANCE

BUTTERFLIES IN SPIRIT

RED DRESS DAY
IN HONOUR OF MMIWG2S+
LIVE DANCE PERFORMANCE

MAY 5
4-6:30PM

STADIUM-CHINATOWN SKYTRAIN STATION

ART DISPLAY
SIDE PLATFORM
SUMMER 2023

Image: Sarah Ayaq Whalen Lunn

AERIOSA DANCE SOCIETY

TRANS LINK

