



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

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First Nations Leaders from BC Attend AFN Special Chiefs Assembly in Ottawa

(Algonquin (Anishinaabe)/Ottawa, ON)— First Nations from British Columbia gathered on the unceded lands of the Algonquin Nation (Anishinaabe), united in their commitment to advocating for their rights and well-being. Throughout the three-day gathering, Chiefs and leaders expressed their strong commitment to empowering families and communities while steadfastly pursuing sovereignty and self-determination.

“This week I stood with National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak, Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige, Martha Martin, mother of Chantel Moore and Edith Wells mother of Jon Wells, to urgently call for immediate action against the tragic realities of systemic racism in policing and the justice system,” stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “The loss of lives due to these injustices cannot and must not be ignored. It is imperative that the Government of Canada launch a National Inquiry into systemic racism in policing -- one that is grounded in our cultural practices and led by First Nations. It is time for actionable change that significantly improves the safety and respect our people rightfully deserve.”

Discussions on reforming First Nations Children and Families Services continued during the assembly, resulting in resolutions to begin new negotiations with Canada. At the Calgary Special Chiefs Assembly in October, leaders rejected the initial draft agreement on children and family reform and passed vital resolutions advocating for establishing a national Children’s Chiefs Commission to prioritize regional needs.

On the final day of the event, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and federal ministers – including Arif Virani, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada; Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services of Canada; Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada; and Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs -- delivered remarks. Additionally, Jagmeet Singh, leader of the federal NDP, addressed the gathering, reinforcing the importance of these discussions.

As the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly closed, over 20 resolutions were passed. The resolutions dealt with multiple issues, including the environment, climate change, health and healing, justice, and more.

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