

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Statement

August 13, 2021

Justice for Christin West: First Nations Leadership Council Calls for RCMP Accountability and an End to their Role in the MMIWG2S Crisis

(Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is calling for justice for Christin West, a beloved community and family member with ties to Saik'uz and Lake Babine Nation. Found murdered in her apartment on August 7, 2021, Christin's death is a direct result of the Prince George RCMP's inaction, negligence, and discrimination – biased, racialized policing that continues to be a contributing factor in the endemic of gendered violence and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S) crisis in Canada.

“On several occasions prior to her murder, Christin reported to RCMP she was being harassed and stalked by someone in the community. Despite numerous pleas for help that the RCMP failed to meaningfully respond to, she posted to Facebook on July 3, 2021, that after her tires had been slashed, “two male cops came and sided with the stalker who is harassing me.” Christin further wrote that she “experienced biased racial opinions” from the attending officers and was told she wasn't believed”, stated Melissa Moses, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Women's Representative. “As is the all too common and normalized response to Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited people seeking support from the police, Christin was dismissed, insulted, and made to feel like her experiences of violence and stalking held no validity. Her unnecessary and tragic death is a direct result of the gendered and systemic racism that is ever-present in the RCMP, and we are demanding justice for Christin.”

“Our hearts go out to Christin West's community, family, and friends. Ultimately, due to the systemic racism entrenched in our policing systems, the police have exacerbated the MMIWG2S crisis and inflicted harm and trauma upon Indigenous peoples who can no longer trust in the police to do their jobs. Through the apathy, negligence, and racial bias of the police, Indigenous women like Christin will continue to go disbelieved and discounted. For decades Indigenous communities, families, survivors, experts, and allies have demanded accountability for the murders and disappearances that governments and institutions have contributed to and condoned. We urge the RCMP to acknowledge and accept responsibility for their practices that perpetuate the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples,” stated Cheryl Casimer, Political Executive Member of the First Nations Summit.

“The First Nations Leadership Council condemns the lack of action from the RCMP and call for their accountability in their role in Christin's murder, and for their role more broadly in the unchecked violence and abuse that has fueled the ongoing genocide against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Christin's death is the latest in which the police have had a direct role in the murder of an Indigenous women through their inaction. For decades they have refused to listen or investigate while Indigenous women and girls are disappeared and murdered throughout the north and across BC. We demand justice and accountability not only for the sake of Christin, but for her loved ones who need healing, peace, and closure,” stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee of the BC Assembly of First Nations.



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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).

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