



NEWS RELEASE: RCMP shoot First Nations man in Nuu-chah-nulth territory; Indigenous leaders demand answers and change

For Immediate Release
March 1, 2021

Nuu-Chah-Nulth-Nation Tribal Council
Pacheedaht First Nation
BC Assembly of First Nations
First Nations Summit
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs

(Nuu-chah-nulth, X̱w̱məθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), S̱ḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish) and sə̱ilw̱ətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) territories – March 1, 2021) The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Pacheedaht First Nation and the First Nations Leadership Council are calling for a fully independent and transparent investigation into a police shooting that has resulted in the death of a 28-year-old member of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation on Vancouver Island. The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council must be involved in every step of the investigation.

On the night of February 27, a young man located on the Opitsaht reserve, one of three communities of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, was shot dead by a member of the Tofino detachment of the RCMP who was responding to a call for assistance from a female individual. The community of Opitsaht is located on Meares Island, across the inlet from Tofino and is only accessible by boat.

We offer our deepest condolences and prayers to all of the families and communities impacted by this tragic event.

Less than one year ago on June 4, 2020, another member of the Tla-o-qui-aht, Chantel Moore was senselessly killed on a wellness check by the police. The Hawi̱h (hereditary chiefs) and elected Council of Tla-o-qui-aht released a statement (attached) seeking answers on why she was shot during a wellness check and set out a list of demands that were never responded to. The requests put forward including for mandatory police body cameras would leave less doubt about the use of deadly force and hold all accountable for their actions. The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council also issued a [statement](#) calling for immediate answers. We are devastated and angered that the RCMP did not and have not listened.

The use of deadly force by Canadian police forces against Indigenous peoples is an epidemic in this country. There have been numerous inquiries, studies, reports, and a First Nations Justice Strategy in BC created to address the need for justice reform. Despite this, our citizens continue to die as a result of police shootings. The lack of action on implementing these proposed solutions means more senseless shootings.

The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Pacheedaht First Nation and the First Nations Leadership Council are calling for a truly transparent investigation into this incident, and for transparency in the inquest that will follow the investigation by the Independent Investigation Office (IIO). We call for an Indigenous person to be appointed to the IIO process, and we firmly demand that supports be in place for the family as they go through this heartbreak. Ultimately, we seek the necessary justice reforms that will end tragic deaths such as this.

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The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) provides programs and services to over 10,000 registered members. The role of the NTC is to represent 14 First Nations in three regions stretching 300 kilometers of the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island from Brooks Peninsula in the north to Point-no-Point in the south. The NTC represents Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkint, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ayaht, Kyuquot/Checklesah, Mowachaht /Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshah, Uchucklesah and Ucluelet First Nations and provides a variety of programs and services to them. For more information, please visit www.nuuchahnulth.org.

For more information on the Pacheedaht First Nation, please visit <http://pacheedahtfirstnation.com>

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). For more information, please visit www.bcafn.ca, www.fns.bc.ca, and www.ubcic.bc.ca.

For further information, contact:

Judith Sayers, NTC President (250) 415-0387

Moses Martin, Chief Councillor, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation (250) 725-3233

Annette Schroeter, BCAFN Communications Officer, (250) 962-1603.

Colin Braker, FNS Communications Director, Phone: (604) 328-4094

Ellena Neel, UBCIC Communications Manager, Phone: (778-866-0548)

Attachment: Tla-o-qui-aht Statement re. Chantel Moore's Murder (June 2020)



TLA-O-QUI-AHT
FIRST NATION

CHANTEL MOORE WAS PROMISED BUT DID NOT RECEIVE BETTER

TLA-O-QUI-AHT FIRST NATIONS HEREDITARY CHIEFS & ELECTED COUNCIL STATEMENT OF THE SHOOTING DEATH OF 26-YEAR-OLD TLA-O-QUI-AHT MOTHER CHANTEL MOORE (MARTIN)

We, the Hawiih (hereditary chiefs) and elected Council stand with the Martin, Masso and Moore families devastated by the death of our beautiful young mother and granddaughter, Chantel Moore.

We, the Hawiih (hereditary chiefs) and elected Council demand “better” for her 6 year old surviving daughter Gracie and justice for Chantel.

No one needs to give up their life on a wellness check – NO ONE. We demand answers on why the officer used such brutal force that was both uncalled for and unnecessary. We demand answers on why, when questioned about how many shots the officer fired, that the responding police representative laughed – adding more fuel to an already ignited fire.

This killing was completely senseless.

At the MMIWG Inquiry, RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki, committed to do better by First Nations. She said “I’m sorry that for too many of you, the RCMP was not the police service that it needed to be during this terrible time in your life. It is very clear to me that the RCMP could have done better and I promise to you we will do better.”

We are still waiting to for “better” and Chantel certainly deserved “better”.

Further we demand that:

- A) The police officer that killed Chantel be charged with murder under Canada’s Criminal Code.
- B) A full independent investigation into Chantel’s killing be conducted immediately and that the investigating team include experts approved by and/or appointed by the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner of British Columbia and the RCMP.
- C) body cams be mandatory for all police officers working with the public to ensure all police are held accountable for their actions and protected from false testimony or misunderstandings of others.
- D) That a full national inquiry to examine the root causes of, including mental health, and the full extent of police brutality against Indigenous people, Black people and other people of colour, women and those of European descent also.



- E) that when the investigation of Chantel's killing and the National Inquiry into Police Brutality and Mental Health are complete, that full disclosures of findings be made available to all First Nations and to the public with a course of action to address systemic and personal racism within Canadian Institutions that administer justice.
- F) That a full mental health assessment, including impacts of PTSD, be included for all police officers in Canada. That mental health assessments be supportive, rigorous and continuous at regular 5-year intervals knowing that many who commit to "serve and protect" are psychologically wounded in the course of serving all of us.
- G) That officers found to be physically and/or psychologically wounded be paid disability leave during their healing (it's right thing to do, to take care of them if they were wounded taking care of us). Further, that they not be permitted to return to work with the public until they are deemed mentally fit by a mental health professional, their behaviour is consistent with that designation and their physiological markers for stress management return to acceptable levels (i.e. reduction of stress hormones and manageable time to fight/flight response) .
- H) that officers be continuously and at regular intervals screened for racist beliefs, ideals and actions. If there are officers who hold racist beliefs, they must be addressed in a transparent and orderly manner.
- I) That new recruits be screened in for commitment and dedication to equitably serve and protect all who live in Canada in accordance with the Canadian Constitution and Charter of Freedom and Rights. This includes the equal service and protection under the law no matter what race, ethnicity, gender, political view, religion or any other distinguishing characteristic.
- J) that in the training and hiring of all new police officers, all must be required to understand that we are all humans and not animals, that we expect to be treated with honour and not anger.

BACKGROUND TO THE STATEMENT

Chantel Moore (Martin) was fatally shot at her residence in Edmundston, New Brunswick in the early morning hours of June 4, 2020 by a member of the Edmundston, New Brunswick Police Force.

The officer who killed Chantel had been dispatched to perform a wellness check on Chantel because, as the family has been told, she was afraid of someone who was harassing her. The wellness check concluded with the officer's use of deadly force. The officer claimed he acted in self defense after Chantel threatened him with a knife.

There is a significant size difference between Chantel and the officer. It has been reported to the family that the officer was approximately 6'3" and approx. 300 pounds while Chantel was approx. 5'4" and 130 pounds



TLA-O-QUI-AHT FIRST NATION

It has been reported to the family that attempts at de-escalation were not made and non-lethal force was not attempted and that Chantel was shot 5 times at close range, we cannot help but believe the officer's intent was to end Chantel's life.

It has been reported to the family that there was a witness to Chantel's murder however, there is concern about harassment by the Edmundston Police Department.

Since European contact racism has presented a huge barrier to justice for First Nations and other races of colour. This is reflected in the rate at which First Nations and other minorities are killed by police.

The absence of accountability rising from a lack of prosecution and suitable penalties for race-based crimes results with people feeling it is acceptable practice to personally and professionally racially profile, objectify and so brutalize those of heritages different than the profilers. The spectrum of resulting practices leads to anger and now the explosion of protests we are all witnessing today across the US and around the world.

Chantel Moore's death appears senseless on the face of it in part due to lack of credible and convincing answers by the Edmundston Police Force. One officer even laughed in an interview when discussing Chantel's death. Chantel's killing appears to be senseless, avoidable and an act of systemic racism.

We, as First Nations know first-hand the devastating impacts of trauma and PTSD and the resulting secondary lateral violence following centuries of mistreatment by police, residential schools and other racist institutions. We ask you, and all our Canadian police to be accountable to face your trauma and address your healing to prevent passing it onto our families, like the families of Chantel and George Floyd and in the countless videos we've seen these past few weeks.

Where there is pure malicious intent to hurt people our communities on the part of any police officer, we ask you face that in your organization and address like you would with any other criminal.

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P. 250.725.3350 F. 250.725.3352
www.tla-o-qui-aht.org

TLA-O-QUI-AHT FIRST NATION
PO Box 18 #1119 Pacific Rim Hwy . Tofino . BC . V0R 2Z0

