



## BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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Website: [www.bcafn.ca](http://www.bcafn.ca)

**BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY**  
**February 26 & 27, 2025**  
**Online via Zoom**

**Resolution 07/2025**

**SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR A NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO SYSTEMIC RACISM IN POLICING  
AND FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES DEATHS**

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**Moved BY: CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION**

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**SECONDED BY: SEMPULYAN STEWART GONZALES, PROXY, SQUAMISH FIRST NATION**

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**DECISION: CARRIED**

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**WHEREAS:**

- A. The historic relationship between First Nations peoples and Canada's law enforcement agencies is rooted in conflict, with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) established in the 19th century as a paramilitary police organization responsible for facilitating the removal and dispossession of First Nations people from their lands, territories and resources, and to enforce Indian Act policies.
- B. Systematic racism has plagued all levels of non-First Nations policing agencies in Canada into the 21st century, as evidenced through the Senate Report on Systematic Racism in Policing in Canada (2021), which states, "given the pervasive nature of systemic racism in policing in Canada, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (the Committee) has concluded that a transformative national effort is required to ensure that all Indigenous, Black and other racialized people in Canada are not subject to the discrimination and injustice that is inherent in the system as it exists today."

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- C. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (“UN Declaration”), which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification and has, alongside the government of British Columbia, passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

**Article 1:** Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law.

**Article 2:** Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.

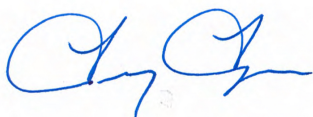
**Article 7 (1):** Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.

**Article 40:** Indigenous peoples have the right to access to and prompt decisions through just and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States or other parties, as well as to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights. Such a decision shall give due consideration to the customs, traditions, rules and legal systems of the indigenous peoples concerned and international human rights.

- D. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls final report *Reclaiming Power and Place* (2019) highlights the pervasive discriminatory treatment by non-First Nations police services when a First Nations woman experiences violence or is reported missing and included eleven recommendations specific for police reform within the 231 Calls for Justice.
- E. Despite over 20 individual inquiries and commissions into the police and justice system since 1989, the Government of Canada fails to make substantive changes to address systematic racism in the RCMP and other agencies within Canada.
- F. In 2020, BC First Nations endorsed the BC First Nations Justice Strategy which calls for the BC First Nations Justice Council to implement the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. The Justice Strategy calls for an Indigenous-led oversight body for the justice system (Strategy 7) and for police specifically (Strategy 3). The Justice Strategy also calls for new structured relations between First Nations and police, including protocols (Strategy 22).
- G. On December 3, 2024, the Assembly of First Nations passed Resolution 63/2024, *Call for a National Inquiry into Systemic Racism in Policing and First Nations People Deaths*, calling for

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immediate action to address the killing of First Nations people by police, and to implement several police reform measures to better serve First Nations.

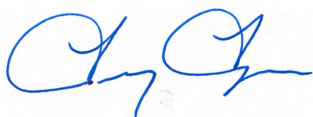
- H. BCAFN Resolution 31/2024, "Support for an Independent Inquiry into the Death of Dale Culver," called on the BC provincial government to hold an independent inquiry into the Death of Dale Culver, similar to the Davies Commission Inquiry into the Death of Frank Paul. This independent inquiry was to include a non-partisan review of the Prince George RCMP, the BC Coroner's Service, the BC Independent Investigations Office and the BC Prosecution Service.
- I. From 2017-2020, twenty-five (25) First Nations people lost their lives after interactions with the RCMP, provincial or municipal police. From August-November 2024, 10 First Nations people died as a result of interactions with either the RCMP, provincial or municipal police, including: Jack Piché (31-years old), Hoss Lightening Saddleback (15-years old), Tammy Bateman (39-years old), Jason West (57-years old), Daniel Knife (31-years old), Steve Dedam (34-years old), Ronald Skunk (59-years old), Jon Wells (42-years old), Joseph Desjarlais (34-years old), and Elgyn Muskego (17-years old).
- J. Investigations into the recent deaths of First Nations people after interacting with police are being conducted in isolation of each other, which is hindering the understanding that they inter-related cases in an ongoing national epidemic. Furthermore, oftentimes the individual conducting an investigation is a current or former police officer. This frequently leads to investigator bias, whether the investigator recognizes it or not, that leads them to side with the officers and maintain a cultural attitude that toes the blue line.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Government of Canada to convene a National Inquiry into Systemic Racism in Policing, whose mandate would include the investigation of police-related deaths of First Nations peoples, serious injury and allegations of sexual assault, and other serious incidents between police and First Nations peoples, with the objective to make concrete and specific recommendations to end discrimination and racism in policing.
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Government of Canada to ensure that the National Inquiry into Systemic Racism in Policing includes a First Nations Chief Commissioner and Commissioner(s) to ensure First Nations perspectives are guiding the work of the inquiry and that the approach be a culturally sensitive and trauma-informed process respectful of First Nations.
3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations to immediately establish a National Task Force to end police-related deaths and other serious incidents between police and First Nations, such a Task Force must include representation from First Nations in the BC region.

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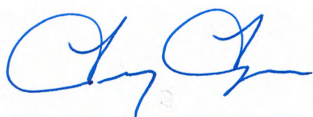
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4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the BCAFN to advocate for a National Inquiry into Systemic Racism in Policing and call for the implementation of police reform measures, including:
- a. Data collection consistent with Indigenous data sovereignty principles that will inform policies to address systemic racism;
  - b. Demilitarization of police forces and a cap on tactical deployments and use of lethal force;
  - c. Establishment of a national Crisis Intervention Team across Canada to provide a specialized and trained response to people in crisis 24-hours per day; and
  - d. That the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, provincial police, and municipal police to immediately implement the remaining five of the *8 Can't Wait* policies:
    - i. Mandatory training for officers on de-escalation and harm reduction techniques;
    - ii. A ban on the use of choke holds and extreme restraint techniques, including “knee on neck” restraint;
    - iii. A ban on shooting at vehicles;
    - iv. Requirements for police officers to give verbal warnings; and
    - v. Requirements for a “use of force continuum”, requiring that the use of force match the circumstance;
  - e. Immediately after a serious incident has occurred involving a First Nations person, that the incident investigation includes a First Nations person who has been trained to assist in the investigation.
  - f. Requirements for Federal, Provincial/Territorial, and municipal police forces to institute operational policy that requires an independent First Nations police investigator to assist with cases involving the deaths of First Nations people by police.
5. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the BCAFN to advocate that the National Inquiry into Systematic Racism in Policing be provided a clear mandate to provide tangible recommendations that will be immediately implemented by the federal, provincial and territorial governments in collaboration with First Nations.

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