



February 22, 2023

Hon. Premier Eby
Premier of British Columbia
Government of British Columbia
Via Email Only: premier@gov.bc.ca

Hon. Minister Mendicino
Minister of Public Safety
Government of Canada
Via Email Only: marco.mendicino@parl.gc.ca

Hon. Minister Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Government of British Columbia
Via Email Only: PSSG.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Hon. Minister Lametti
Minister of Justice
Government of Canada
Via Email Only: david.lametti@parl.gc.ca

RE: Allegations that RCMP in Prince George Abused Indigenous Women and Girls

Dear Premier Eby, Minister Farnworth, Minister Mendicino, and Minister Lametti,

The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) are appalled and deeply disturbed that there are serious allegations of egregious and violent sexual abuse of Indigenous girls against RCMP officers in Prince George, BC, and that when these allegations were originally made in 2011 they were not investigated, but instead were covered up by authorities. This situation demonstrates failures on countless levels and complete negligence by the RCMP. As families of MMIWG2S+ and survivors marked the February 14th Downtown Eastside Women's Memorial March and gathered for the Assembly of First Nations National Gathering on MMIWG2S+ in BC last week, it remains clear that the Crown's lack of response and prioritization of issues of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people continues to cost lives and leave countless others forever impacted.

The FNLC and BCFNJC are calling for a renewed Indigenous and civilian-led investigation, and pending criminal charges for officers involved. We are also calling for the interim report from the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP (CRCC) – which found a failure by the RCMP to investigate these allegations – to be publicly released. The discredited RCMP organization must be completely transformed so that it stops perpetuating harm against Indigenous peoples, especially women, girls and gender-diverse people. First Nations' jurisdiction over matters of justice, policing and community safety must be affirmed.

According to the first of three stories [published on February 3, 2023](#), former Constable Lisa Mackenzie shared with top homicide investigator Garry Kerr in January 2006 that she found video footage of RCMP officers assaulting Indigenous girls and that the assaults may be connected to the notorious case of judge David Ramsay who was accused of the assault of underage and of age Indigenous women and girls alongside nine RCMP officers and one lawyer. Judge Ramsay was the only one to be sentenced and received [seven years](#) in prison for violently preying on and assaulting Indigenous girls as young as 12 in Prince George, BC.

Mackenzie's allegations were reported to several senior RCMP officials along with recorded statements from Mackenzie and Kerr and video evidence submitted to a lawyer for a presumed renewed RCMP investigation; it took seven months before the evidence was collected. Despite efforts by Mackenzie and Kerr, the matter was ignored by senior RCMP officials and according to Supt. Darren Lench, the matter was investigated and closed. When Kerr asked for the video evidence to be returned, he was told it had been lost.

The findings of the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP report are damning; concluding that no one was ever designated to lead an investigation, upholding what Indigenous women and frontline advocates have long decried – that the RCMP fail to protect Indigenous women and girls, perpetuate violence, and fail to meaningfully support victims' families.

The FNLC and BCFNJC are extremely troubled by the details of these allegations, which point to the deeply rooted corruption, impunity, and lawlessness of the RCMP as a police institution. It is fundamentally unfit, and unable to be accountable. The repeated failed attempts of Mackenzie and Kerr spanning more than a decade attempting to have justice served and have the allegations investigated is indicative of the insidious and systemic racist and misogynistic attitudes that have defined the RCMP since its inception as a colonial tool of violence against Indigenous peoples.

The timing and location of these allegations are particularly salient and offensive as they stem from the heart of the crisis of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit+ People (MMIWG2S+). [The National inquiry](#), [Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside](#), and the [Highway of Tears Symposium Recommendations Report](#) make abundantly clear the disproportionate and widespread experiences of gender-based violence in rural and remote communities like Prince George, BC along the Highway of Tears, which are under-resourced, lack safe Indigenous-run regional transit options, shelters, and victims' services, are rife with violent predators, and face police apathy, violence, and mishandling of processes which should, but do not deliver justice.

Adding insult to injury, the 2011 allegations came to light during a time when communities were reeling with the unspeakable atrocities committed by judge David Ramsay and serial killer Robert Pickton just a few years earlier. These crimes and uninvestigated allegations display the profound and inexcusable lack of accountability and oversight by multiple jurisdictions and police forces. We are deeply disappointed that a decade later on April 13, 2021, Minister Farnworth's office, the minister responsible for public safety, responded to the CCRC report and current allegations by passing the issue onto the federal government. Responsibility for the lives of Indigenous women and girls cannot be reduced to bureaucracy and jurisdiction.

Articles 7, 21, and 22 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, passed legislation committing to implement, affirms the rights of Indigenous

women and girls and must be fully implemented without delay. The federal and provincial governments' responses to the National Inquiry into MMIWG2S+ Calls for Justice are not sufficient, systemic, transparent, or tangible at the community level. In BC, the response to the Special Committee on Reforming the *Police Act*, have fallen short of meaningful transformation, and the federal government's narrow approach to First Nations police services legislation are not aligned with the UN Declaration. Without a complete overhaul of the current system, new investments into policing will not solve the issues experienced by Indigenous peoples. We are both over-policed and under-protected.

On the contrary, recent commitments by Vancouver Mayor Sim including 100 new Vancouver Police Department officers and mental health nurses, as well as Premier David Eby's commitment of [230 million dollars](#) to the RCMP, further empower the RCMP in this province and signal the status quo in policing. The FNLC does not support the intensification of policing as a solution to creating safe communities for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Evidence further shows that stronger police presence does not equal safety for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The RCMP is a failed and archaic institution, which has a long history of warfare against the Indigenous people. The issues cannot simply be fixed with provincial dollars, which could be better directed to Indigenous and grassroots organizations and First Nations to assert our jurisdiction and rights to self-determination to protect our peoples.

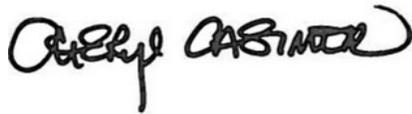
We call on your leadership to work together across jurisdictions to address the harm done: to see that these allegations, and others involving those that are complicit in systemic violence against Indigenous women and girls, are fully investigated; for the RCMP interim investigation report to be released publicly; for an independent Indigenous and civilian-led investigation to be swiftly carried out; for a criminal investigation and appropriate criminal charges for the officers involved; and for profound police reform to put an end to negligence and violence towards our people.

We urgently await your responses to learn how you will take responsibility to address these allegations of gross human rights violations and corruption.

Sincerely,

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT



Cheryl Casimer



Robert Phillips



Hugh Braker

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Don Tom



Chief Marilyn Slett

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:



Regional Chief Terry Teegee

BC FIRST NATIONS JUSTICE COUNCIL



A/Chair Rosalie Yazzie

CC:

Prince George RCMP

RCMP Commissioner

Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act

The Civilian Review and Complaints Commission of the RCMP

BC First Nations