



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 22, 2018

Statement from the Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc.

RE: Justice for Tina Fontaine

TREATY ONE TERRITORY, MB – Grand Chief Jerry Daniels of the Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc. is with disappointment and sadness in the not guilty verdict of Raymond Cormier in the death of Tina Fontaine. This verdict is another contributing factor in the high number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Manitoba. The injustices towards Indigenous people, in particular Indigenous women, must change or these types of crimes and attitudes towards Indigenous women will not change and the number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will continue to rise. Grand Chief Daniels honors, supports, and recognizes the value of Indigenous women and girls whom are valued as the givers of life in the Anishinaabe and Dakota cultures.

The history and relationship between Indigenous people and Manitoba Justice has been ongoing since the deaths and injustices of Helen Betty Osborne and J.J Harper. The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (AJI) was initiated as a response but the failure on part of Manitoba Justice to implement the recommendations has a detrimental effect on Indigenous people in Manitoba. In 2012-2013, Indigenous peoples represented 70% of the Province's incarcerated adults and this number continues to rise. The amount of women incarcerated in Manitoba has been increasing as there has been a 233% growth rate from 2003 to 2012. Grand Chief Daniels states, "This must stop and we must work together to address these injustices."

Grand Chief Daniels will be meeting with Justice Officials to voice concerns regarding the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, as well as the treatment and overrepresentation of indigenous people incarcerated in Manitoba. It is time to honor the work that was done by the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and implement its recommendations.

Grand Chief Daniels stated at a gathering for Justice that, "The Justice System will not change without us standing together." Grand Chief Daniels added, "I stand with anyone who is willing to come together, ready to support one another, and to find solutions on the injustices we are facing in this country".

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