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Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement from the Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc.

RE: Ivan Zinger Annual 2017/18 Report on Corrections Canada

ANISHINAABE TERRITORY, MB - Grand Chief Jerry Daniels agrees with Canada's Correctional Investigator's report regarding Corrections and the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action. The report, released yesterday calls for the Federal Government and Correctional Services to work on handing responsibility, control and resources to Indigenous communities to address the high numbers of Indigenous over representation in jails and prisons.

Currently, those numbers have 28% of Federal prison inmates being Aboriginal with incarcerated women as high as 40% representation. "Their response is discouraging in regards to addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Justice Calls to Action which is key in addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous people incarcerated," said Daniels. "Our fear is that the Calls of Actions will have the same response as the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry."

Prior to colonization, Indigenous people had their own Justice systems based on wellness, balance the restoration of relationships. Punishment was not a concept that was acknowledged nor respected in Indigenous communities.

Grand Chief Daniels says to fully address the high number of Indigenous people incarcerated; a shift in the justice model must occur. "Many people who come in conflict with the law are dealing with the effects of colonialism," he said. "We must be consulted and given adequate resources to address the high number of Indigenous people incarcerated. Community based Healing Centres that are run by the communities and Indigenous organizations would be a starting point in bringing down those numbers."

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