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SCO STATEMENT ON INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION UNIT'S REPORT ON POLICE KILLING OF EISHIA HUDSON

Tragedy Must Change Police Culture – Grand Chief

January 28, 2021

ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB - The Southern Chief's Organization is deeply disheartened by the report released today by the Independent Investigation Unit (IIU) on the fatal police shooting of 16 year-old Eishia Hudson. SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels is demanding that the premier of Manitoba call a full inquest into the fatal shooting of Eishia Hudson so there is a full and unbiased investigation into the tragic loss of her young life.

"Today brings up many old wounds for our people, our communities, and most of all for Eishia's family," said SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. "They have been enduring great suffering ever since a Winnipeg police officer shot and killed their precious daughter in April of last year, and now the pain will only continue."

Eishia Hudson was a beloved daughter and an artist who loved sports. She had her whole life ahead of her, and her life mattered.

Eishia was shot and killed by Winnipeg police on April 8, 2020. Police were responding to an alleged armed liquor store robbery. After the police arrived, they pursued five teenagers in a Jeep, driven by Hudson.

The car chase ended with the Jeep stopping near Lagimodiere Boulevard and Fermor Avenue. As the car was backing up, officers had to move out of the way and one opened fire at the driver's side window. When the car did not stop moving, the officer shot again, which was the bullet that killed young Eishia. None of the other teens were injured and no weapons were found in the vehicle.

Through consultation with the Crown's Office and an expert on the use of lethal force in police services, officials say they did not find justification to lay criminal charges against the officer who shot and killed Eishia.

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“We are heartbroken by the IJU’s findings and conclusion,” commented Grand Chief Daniels. “A tragedy such as this, when life is taken at such a young age, needs to create profound systemic change and lead to questions about the use of deadly force. Unfortunately, we know that more fatal police shootings took place shortly after Eishia’s tragic death. Much more is needed from police services in terms of overcoming centuries of systemic racism.”

Only eleven hours after Eishia’s killing, the police shot and killed Jason Collins, a father of three children. Ten days later, Stewart Andrews, a 22 year-old father was shot by police on April 18, 2020, also in Winnipeg. All three shooting victims were First Nation citizens.

This past June, in New Brunswick, the RCMP shot and killed Chantel Moore and Rodney Levi, both First Nation people. Video of the beating of Chief Allan Adam by RCMP in Alberta came to light in June 2020 as well, as did footage of an RCMP officer hitting an Inuk man with the door of his vehicle. This past Tuesday, the RCMP announced that no criminal charges would be laid in the shooting of Rodney Levi.

Since 2017, Indigenous people have been more than ten times likely than a white person to have been killed by a police officer in Canada. Indigenous peoples are also [11 times more likely](#) than non-Indigenous Canadians to be accused of homicide, are 56 per cent more likely to be victimized by crime and are overrepresented in the prison population.

“These overwhelming statistics represent our people, our Relatives, our loved ones, our family,” said Grand Chief Daniels. “For too long, our lives have mattered little to colonial governments and police services. If their system cannot find justification for taking real action to prevent the further loss of our lives, then the police services need to be changed from the ground up. We are not aware of any proper justification for use of lethal force against our people time and time again.”

As the Black Lives Matter and Indigenous Lives Matter movements have gained strength across Turtle Island, it’s clear that Canada is in need of its own reckoning to overcome systemic racism and racialized police shootings.

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) released 231 Calls for Justice, including a call for police institutions to establish an Indigenous independent civilian oversight body that can investigate police misconduct as well as help to improve victim services for Indigenous women and girls. More than a year and a half later, Canada has yet to release their National Action plan in response to the National Inquiry’s final report and Calls for Justice.

“Life did not need to be taken here,” stated Grand Chief Daniels. “We are all too familiar with colonial justice systems protecting their own interests and actions. Eishia Hudson’s life did not need to be taken. Our people know this, and we can’t wait any longer for the police services to know and understand this as well.”

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Two more inquiries will now begin, one by the chief medical examiner and one by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, who can begin their investigation as the criminal investigation and proceedings by the IIU have closed.

The family of Eishia Hudson is also calling for the following:

1. An independent assessment by outside counsel into the findings of the IIU investigation and report that is unbiased, to provide an impartial opinion on the report.
2. The chief medical examiner's inquest to be comprehensive and address systemic problems.
3. A comprehensive public inquiry into the shooting that can address systemic racism of police interactions with Indigenous people.

SCO is calling on the premier of Manitoba call a full inquest into the fatal shooting of Eishia Hudson so there is a full and unbiased investigation into the tragic loss of yet another Indigenous life.

"Pallister now has the power and the responsibility to call an inquest into this fatal shooting. Anything less would be a massive betrayal of Eisha, her family, and First Nation citizens," concluded Grand Chief Daniels.

SCO will continue to update its Chiefs, Councils, and community members of the results of further inquiries.

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The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 80,000 citizens in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

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