

**Head Office**

Swan Lake First Nation 200-200 Alpine Way, Headingley, Manitoba R4H 0B7

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**Winnipeg Sub-Office**

1572 Dublin Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 0L4

Phone: 204.946.1869 Fax: 204.946.1871 Toll Free: 1.866.876.9701

[www.scoinc.mb.ca](http://www.scoinc.mb.ca) Facebook: @SCOIncMB

## **PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM SCO CALLS FOR JUSTICE SURVEY RELEASED IN HONOUR OF SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MMIWG'S FINAL REPORT**

### **Exclusion of SCO on National Action Plan Development Disappointing – Grand Chief Daniels**

**June 03, 2021**

**ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB** — Today, the Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) is marking the second anniversary of the release of National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' (MMIWG) final report and 231 Calls for Justice.

"I want to send my heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost loved ones to this national epidemic of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples," stated SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. "Families and Survivors have been waiting for two years, and they have told me how difficult today will be, because instead of celebrating our collective progress we continue to wait for Canada to move beyond words to action. Families deserve so much more."

Despite repeated requests, Canada has not involved SCO in the process of developing a long overdue National Action Plan. SCO is a founding member of the Manitoba MMIWG Coalition, and represents more than 80,000 citizens and approximately 10 percent of all First Nation people in Canada. Instead, SCO moved forward on its own, launching a survey last month on May 5, the National Day of Awareness of MMIWG, to identify southern First Nations' priorities around the Calls for Justice.

When asked about their relationship to the issue of MMIWG2S, an overwhelming majority of survey respondents, over 79 per cent, answered that they were related to, or a friend of, a missing or murdered Indigenous woman, girl, or person.

Respondents shared why the issue of MMIWG2S is important to them, and their personal experiences came through in the comments:

*"I have two daughters and now two granddaughters that I constantly worry about, I have a friend whose daughter has been missing for a little over a year now [...], another friend who's sister was murdered by her partner, I could go on and on. Society needs to start shifting their views of women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people, and stop treating us like we are disposable, we are equal and need to be treated as such! MMIWG is so common no one is shocked to hear about another murdered or missing woman, girl or 2SLGBTQ+ person, and I don't think it registers as a crime to most people, and they don't give any thought to it."*

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The next section of the survey asked respondents to identify priorities for implementing the 231 Calls for Justice. Interim results show that top priorities include:

- Programs and services that restore, reclaim, and revitalize culture
- Funding for First Nation-led health and wellness services including mental health, addictions, and trauma services
- Mental health, addictions, and trauma services for incarcerated people
- Support for First Nation families and communities to keep children in their homes and communities as opposed to the child welfare system
- First Nation-led shelters, safe spaces, transition houses, second-stage housing, and services
- Education on the historical and current laws, policies, practices and genocide against First Nation peoples

Lastly, respondents were asked to focus on the Calls for Justice aimed at actions all Canadians can take to end the violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Notably, less than half of respondents have seen progress on any of the actions to be taken by Canadians since the release of the Calls for Justice two years ago.

“This is systemic and we can’t do this on our own, Canadians we need to come together,” stated long time advocate and former co-chair of the MMIWG Manitoba Coalition, Sandra Delaronde. “It’s unfortunate that the painstaking, heartbreaking work of the National Inquiry to give voice to thousands of family members and Survivors has not yet led to real progress. While I still believe wholeheartedly that the Calls for Justice will lead to positive and lasting change, there can’t be any more delay, this is a genocide. Indigenous organizations need the resources to do the work that governments and institutions have so far failed to do, to end persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations.”

Most powerfully, at the end, survey respondents were able to provide additional comments and reflections. Most of their comments highlighted the importance of the Calls for Justice and the need for Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples to be heard and respected:

*“Indigenous women matter. That we need to be seen, heard, and equally treated as non-Indigenous women. That we need protection from predators, killers, and rapists. That our lives matter. That our existence depends on uplifting and empowering Indigenous women and their families.”*

Others questioned why if “(the National Inquiry) *concluded Canada is committing genocide [...], why are no [...] leaders or organizations making application to hold Canada legally responsible for genocide?*”

“Hearts are still being broken, families continue to search for, and grieve for, loved ones, and despite some of the highest rates of missing and murdered First Nation women and girls in Canada, we and the 34 Anishinaabe and Dakota Nations and 80,000 citizens we represent are denied inclusion in this

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process,” concluded Grand Chief Daniels. “I am heartened by the great leadership shown by our people and our communities, and SCO will continue to move forward, to end persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations with or without the support of our federal Treaty partner.”

First Nation citizens can still complete [the survey](#), which will soon close, and then SCO will publish the full survey results. SCO is deeply grateful to everyone that has filled out our survey and their feedback and comments are very important to us as they will be used to guide SCO’s work and help to hold governments, institutions and stakeholders accountable.

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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.*

**For Media Inquiries:**

**Vic Savino**, Communications Officer, Southern Chiefs’ Organization

Office: 204-946-1869 Ext. 104 | Cell: 204-881-4512 | Email: [Media@scoinc.mb.ca](mailto:Media@scoinc.mb.ca)

[www.scoinc.mb.ca](http://www.scoinc.mb.ca)