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SCO Releases Calls for Justice Survey Report on National Day of Action for MMIWG2S+

***Cannot wait any longer for colonial governments and institutions to take
action – Grand Chief Daniels***

For Immediate Release: Monday, October 4, 2021

ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — Today, on the National Day of Action for MMIWG2S+, Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) has released the powerful results of the ['Survey Report on the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls'](#). The survey was launched on May 5, 2021, the National Day of Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) to identify southern First Nations' priorities around the National Inquiry's 231 Calls for Justice.

"Firstly, I want to share my deepest sympathies and condolences to all victims of MMIWG2S+ and their loved ones. We are tired of waiting for colonial governments and institutions to take action," said **SCO Grand Chief, Jerry Daniels**. "At SCO, we pressed forward on our own, surveying southern First Nation citizens to better understand what they want and need in terms of action to end the national epidemic of violence against our women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people. The results, while heartbreaking, are illuminating and give us the direction we need to advocate for change and to seek justice for the victims and their families," added Grand Chief Daniels.

The anonymous survey was open to all SCO community members and consisted of 23 questions. The 231 Calls for Justice were summarized into multiple-choice options and survey participants were asked to identify their top three priorities for each Call in the areas of culture, health and wellness, justice, policing, corrections, media and social influences, education, child welfare, human security, and human and Indigenous rights. Toward the end of the survey, respondents were then asked to identify which of these overarching areas was a top priority for action.

One of the first questions was about respondents' 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.** These numbers demonstrate how close this issue is to many survey participants.

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

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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!" (Pine Creek First Nation).

"(It is important) Because it is indicative of systemic racism and a crisis for our women. If these were white and mainstream women, the systemic response would be very different." (Sandy Bay First Nation).

Survey respondents were asked to identify priorities for implementing the 231 Calls for Justice. The 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.
- Cultural safety and anti-racism training for all who participate in the criminal justice system.
- Review of policing policies and practice to ensure culturally appropriate, non-biased, non-racist services.
- Mental health, addictions, and trauma services for incarcerated people.
- Decolonized, trauma-informed, and culturally sensitive media developed and directed by First Nations.
- Support for First Nation families and communities to keep children in their homes and communities as opposed to the child welfare system.
- Increased services for host communities of extractive development projects.
- First Nation-led shelters, safe spaces, transition houses, second-stage housing, and services.
- Funding for First Nation organizations for programs, education, and awareness campaigns to prevent and combat violence.
- Speaking out against violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.
- Education on the historical and current laws, policies, practices, and genocide against First Nation peoples.

Respondents were asked at the end 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. **Less than half of the respondents reported seeing any progress on any of the actions to be taken by Canadians since the release of the Calls for Justice two years ago.**

Lastly, survey respondents were able to provide additional comments and reflections. Their comments powerfully bring to light 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

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existence depends on uplifting and empowering Indigenous women and their families.” (Pinaymootang First Nation)

“I’ve had days where I couldn’t find my sister and had no idea where to start looking. The police were no help, they came and tried to aggravate me and my mom. They made themselves out to be the victims, they started going off about “Defund the police” when nobody brought it up but them.” (Black River First Nation).

Others questioned why more action had not yet been taken given that “(the National Inquiry) *concluded Canada is committing genocide [...], why are no [...] leaders or organizations making application to hold Canada legally responsible for genocide?”*

“We are deeply grateful to everyone who filled out our survey. It cannot have been easy given how deeply personal this issue is for our people. All the feedback and comments shared with us in this survey will be used to guide SCO’s work and help hold governments, institutions, and stakeholders accountable. We have the power to come together and end this national tragedy, and we won’t rest until the victims and families receive true justice,” concluded Grand Chief Daniels.

You can read the full survey results [here](#), and they will be used to strengthen advocacy on behalf of First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people, including as input to Canada’s National Action Plan, so that our federal Treaty partner can make the necessary changes to their policies, programs, and structures. It is important work that community members endorse and support. As one participant expressed: *“Keep pushing and fighting hard for our rights and for the voiceless”* (Pinaymootang First Nation).

Survivors, family members, and those affected by the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people can access free mental health counselling, emotional support, community-based cultural support services, and some assistance with transportation costs. To find out more or to access supports near you, please call the Manitoba number at **1-866-818-3505** or visit <https://scoinc.mb.ca/mmiwg2s-and-violence-prevention/>.

-30-

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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