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## **SCO STATEMENT ON NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 6, 2021**

**ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB** — As we observe the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and remember the tragic murder of 14 young women at Polytechnique Montréal on Dec. 6, 1989, we must recommit ourselves to ending all forms of violence against women, girls, and gender-diverse peoples, Grand Chief Jerry Daniels said today.

“In traditional Anishinaabe and Dakota cultures, women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people were valued in our communities,” said Grand Chief Daniels. “As we once again observe this solemn anniversary, I urge our federal and provincial Treaty partners and all Canadians to challenge themselves to find solutions to end the epidemic of violence in this colonial culture.”

Today we remember and say the names of Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz.

“As we mourn the 14 young women who tragically lost their lives to misogyny on that fateful day, we ask that Canadians also remember our First Nation women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people, who still face disproportionate levels of violence due to colonization, racism and discrimination,” said Grand Chief Daniels. “No attempt to address the issue of violence against women in Canada can be made without a comprehensive reckoning with the ongoing injustice of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.”

Grand Chief Daniels noted SCO has been a Manitoba MMIWG2S+ Coalition partner since its inception and was a Party with Standing before the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We call on governments and Canadian institutions to fully implement the 231 Calls for Justice stemming from the National Inquiry’s final report.

In October, SCO released a new Survey Report on the Calls for Justice, and less than half of respondents reported seeing any progress on any of the actions since the release of the Calls for Justice more than two years ago.

“Indigenous women matter,” said one respondent from Pinaymootang First Nation. “That we need to be seen, heard, and equally treated as non-Indigenous women. That we need protection from

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predators, killers and rapists. That our lives matter. That our existence depends on uplifting and empowering Indigenous women and their families.”

One of the top priorities identified in the survey report was the need for more First Nation-led shelters, safe spaces, transition houses, second-stage housing and services.

“Canada is obligated under international and domestic human rights law to implement the 231 Calls for Justice stemming from the National Inquiry’s final report,” said Grand Chief Daniels. “There is clearly much more work to be done and on this national day of mourning we remind our Treaty partners of their responsibilities – to listen to the voices of First Nation women, girls and gender-diverse people and create a Manitoba and a Canada where everyone is safe.”

Read the full report here: <https://scoinc.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SCO-MMIWG-Report-Final.pdf>.

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*The Southern Chiefs’ Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 80,500 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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