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SCO LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO HONOUR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

*“Our very existence depends on uplifting and empowering First Nation women, girls, two spirited people and their families.” –
Grand Chief Daniels*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 4, 2022

ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB – Today, on the National Day of Action for MMIWG2S+, the Southern Chiefs’ Organization (SCO) is launching an awareness campaign to draw attention to the ongoing tragedy of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirited Peoples, in what is now known as Canada.

“It’s tragic that we are still at the point where I have to offer my heartfelt sympathies to an increasing number of grieving MMIWG2S+ families,” stated SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. “I offer my steadfast and ongoing support from SCO as we continue to advocate for impactful change and justice.”

As part of this latest campaign, SCO is taking a multi-media approach with signage on billboards throughout southern Manitoba as well as bus boards in Winnipeg. The MMIWG2S+ campaign will be reflected on SCO’s social media streams and web site. In response to community requests, *Calls for Justice* booklets, posters, vigil candles and other items will be distributed throughout the month of October.

SCO recently launched the Survivors’ Healing Support Program (SHSP) to focus on healing for those dealing with ongoing traumas. The SHSP has developed a MMIWG2S+ Liaison role to assist with providing resources to families of MMIWG2S+, as well as advocating, and navigating systems on their behalf. The MMIWG2S+ Liaison connects families to cultural supports to ensure they are supported in a good way. Please visit the MMIWG2S+ Liaison at Rainbow Butterfly Park (Kildonan Park) today from 9am - noon or at Oodena Circle at The Forks from 4pm - 8pm to connect on how we can best support our community.

SCO’s MMIWG2S+ campaign and new liaison position are in response to both the National Inquiry into MMIWG2S+ and its’ 231 *Calls for Justice*, along with the results of the SCO 2021 survey report on this issue. The survey was open to all citizens of SCO member Nations. An overwhelming majority of those who took the survey, more than 79 per cent, responded that they were related to, or a friend of, a missing or murdered Indigenous woman, girl, or person.

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“That answer on its’ own demonstrates how close this issue is to all of our people across Turtle Island,” said Canupawakpa Dakota First Nation Chief Lola Thunderchild. “We cannot rest for a moment on this file. We need to do all we can to support our families and communities to keep all of our children and youth in their homes and communities.”

The MMIWG2S+ campaign is also part of a larger focus on strengthening advocacy on behalf of First Nation women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. This includes holding all governments, health systems, police and correctional services, lawyers and law societies, educators, social workers, extractive and hospitality industries, the media and influencers, and all Canadians accountable to act on the *Calls for Justice*, and to implement them according to the important culturally relevant principles set out.

“We’ve seen such little progress on any of the actions to be taken since the release of the *Calls for Justice* three years ago,” added Grand Chief Daniels. “First Nation women and Two-Spirit people have traditionally been revered as life-givers and caregivers. We need to honour them and those we have lost by making changes to the systems and structures in our society that marginalize and disadvantage our mothers, daughters, sisters, aunties, and all of our relatives. We need to end this national tragedy as lives are at risk every day.”

For more on SCO’s MMIWG2S+ campaign, or to learn more about the 2021 survey report, be sure to visit [SCO’s website](http://SCO's website).

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The Southern Chiefs’ Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 81,500 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.

For Media Inquiries:

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