



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The AMC responds to the latest report on the toxic culture of abuse within the RCMP

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement in response to today’s release of an explosive report into the historic and current toxic culture of abuse within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The Report entitled, *Broken Dreams Broken Lives: The Devastating Effects of Sexual Harassment on Women in the RCMP* (the Report) was authored by former Supreme Court of Canada Justice, Michel Bastarache. According to media outlets, it entails the long history of sexual harassment and assault of female members within the RCMP and details the systemic elements that have supported a toxic culture that has encouraged pervasive racism, homophobia and misogyny within the RCMP amongst its own members. Public Safety Minister Bill Blair has released a statement describing the findings of the report as “repulsive and unacceptable.” The RCMP Commissioner is also holding a press conference today to respond to the Report. The AMC will be reviewing the Report more thoroughly for further comment.

“While we as First Nations have not yet had the opportunity to thoroughly review the Report first hand from a Manitoba First Nations’ perspective, I find the summaries in the various mainstream media outlets very disturbing, but unfortunately, hardly shocking or surprising,” stated AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas. “On behalf of the AMC, I first and foremost want to express empathy and support for those members who have been subjected to this systemic misogyny, racism and anti-LGBTQ2S+ abuse. No one should be subjected to this. I suspect that some First Nations officers and civilian members of the RCMP have been impacted by this systemic abuse, and some may have been forced out due to the prevalence of toxic culture of systemic racism and abuse within the ranks.”

Grand Chief Dumas continued, “we as First Nations in Manitoba are not surprised by these findings of the Report because our citizens are well aware of this type of internal behaviour and toxic culture projected onto First Nations. The RCMP’s continued assaults on our citizens and elected First Nations’ leadership has gone on far too long. On the other hand, there is also the issue RCMP inaction, as First Nations are terrorized during settler-colonial conflicts simply for exercising their rights across the country. The historic inaction on the Helen Betty Osbourne tragedy remains the most glaring example of how the pervasive RCMP culture of racism and misogyny has affected First Nations in Manitoba. The most recent example of how this internal RCMP misogyny and racism has been projected onto First Nations involved the recent assault of Genesta Garson at the RCMP detachment in Thompson.”

“As I have told the Commissioners of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, it is the position of the AMC that these historic incidents, the poor culture that enables this RCMP behavior, as well as this latest incident, are undeniably symptoms of a corrupt and broken federal police force with deeply engrained anti-First Nations racism that has its roots within the culture of RCMP itself. The AMC has been saying this for decades in various forums to the federal government, and now, the Report further validates what First Nations in Manitoba have been saying for years. The AMC supports the main finding of the Report that calls for a further independent study of the RCMP to discuss the need to make fundamental changes to the RCMP and federal policing.”

“As I have done many times this year, I again condemn this systemic misogyny and anti-First Nations racism on the part of the RCMP, after seeing their inaction in face of settler-colonial violence perpetuated against the Mi’kmaw, after seeing them brutalize Chief Adam in Alberta, and after seeing them forcibly removing the Wet’suwet’en from their

traditional territories earlier this year. Again, this is only what we see. There are likely daily occurrences that we do not see of our people being brutalized by the RCMP in Thompson and elsewhere. Rest assured, if Genesta Garson was not First Nations and if the circumstances involved a non-First Nations person, the treatment would have been much different.”

“This cannot go on in Thompson or anywhere else across this country; and I once again call on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to immediately replace the current RCMP Commissioner and act immediately on the recommendations stemming from the Report. The systemic anti-First Nations racism is deeply engrained and very much a reality in the RCMP and it is made worse by the lack of acknowledgement of its existence at the very top of the command structure and with the Commissioner herself. The RCMP are not only emboldened by their guns and badges, they are enabled by the lack of acknowledgement and the willingness of the top commanders to repeatedly let it happen, and to let the systemic racism go unchecked, as we can see quite clearly in all the previous incidents and particularly in the case of Genesta Garson.”

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas concluded, “I am further troubled, in light of the *Moosehide Agreement* the AMC has signed with RCMP “D” Division to work together to protect First Nations women and other proactive and constructive agreements that we have undertaken with other police forces, that the RCMP are obstructing justice and are being sued by the BC Civil Liberties Association for preventing the release of watchdog report into police spying on Indigenous and climate activists in British Columbia. I support the BCCLA in their legal action and call on the RCMP to release this report immediately. There is so much I find troubling about the current state of the federal force; and the delay in the release of the report into the conduct and actions of the RCMP in the murder of Colten Boushie, and with this newest Report have added additional layers of concern and frustration. On behalf of the AMC and its member First Nations, I urge the Prime Minister, Minister Blair and Minister Miller to immediately remove the current RCMP Commissioner and to then immediately convene an emergency meeting with the First Nations leadership in Manitoba to discuss these outstanding reports and a way forward for respectful and culturally safe policing in our Treaty territories in Manitoba.”

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Ininew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.