



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 28, 2021

**Joint statement expresses profound disappointment at the findings of the Independent Investigation Unit report into the WPS shooting of Eishia Hudson**

**Treaty One Territory, Manitoba** – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC), the family of the late Eishia Hudson, along with other First Nation leadership in Manitoba, including Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO), Member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre Leah Gazan and Nahanni Fontaine, NDP Critic for MMIWG and Justice issue the following joint statement.

We are profoundly disappointed with the news that the Independent Investigations Unit (IIU) has recommended that no charges will be laid against the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) officer who shot and killed Eishia Hudson of the Berens River First Nations in April of 2020. Based on the “non-binding” opinion and advice of an “expert witness,” the IIU in its report has determined that there is no culpability and the WPS officer who shot and killed 16 year-old Eishia was acting within the provisions of the Police Act for the use of deadly force.

“What began as a tragedy, is now an even dimmer situation, given the recently released IIU report. The report unfortunately fails to bring any hope of remedying this tragic incident. First Nations continue to find no safety, security or confidence in the Winnipeg Police Service, Manitoba Justice, and the so-called Independent Investigations Unit,” continued Grand Chief Arlen Dumas. “This report affirms that so-called watchdog agencies protect the WPS from prosecution and accountability for acts of police brutality, and that’s really what this egregious act of violence is all about the shooting and killing of Eishia Hudson: police brutality against a First Nations child.”

“The police officers involved, unlike regular people, can’t be interrogated by the police in the IIU’s investigation. Anyone who shoots someone dead is interrogated by the police. The police would do anything they could to interrogate a shooter suspect and get a confession. This is just one example of the bias in favour of police authority,” said the family of the late Eishia Hudson.

Member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre Leah Gazan stated, “I have gotten to know this family since the tragic death of the late Eishia Hudson. This is a good family. We must ensure that we always stand up for justice. This also includes justice for Eishia Hudson. There needs to be a public inquiry looking into systemic racism between Indigenous peoples and the police. I anticipate an inquest to be called due to the number of deaths by police, including the three deaths that occurred within a 10-day span, which included young Eishia Hudson. We need to address the closeness of the IIU with the Winnipeg Police Service and Manitoba Crown Prosecution. I have concerns about that potential bias.”

Grand Chief Garrison Settee, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. stated, “We continue to be saddened by the loss of 16-year-old Eishia Hudson. It is my hope that today’s report from the Independent Investigation Unit provides some answers for Eishia’s family. Let’s work to ensure that no other family has to go through the nightmare that Eishia’s family has been living through and that another Indigenous teenager does not lose their life at the hands of the police. MKO stands in solidarity with the Hudson family.”

Nahanni Fontaine, NDP Critic for MMIWG and Justice stated, “Eishia Hudson’s murder should be an inflection point in our society. A moment where all of us--police, lawmakers, leaders and everyday families--come together to say ‘no more’. A teenage girl’s death at the hands of police cannot be forgotten and repeated. Indigenous women are standing together to demand accountability for Eishia’s death and to continue our

centuries' long fight for an end to violence. We are the keepers of her legacy and we will push for a safer society for all people.”

Grand Chief Dumas went on to state, “The IIU finding that the use of deadly force against a 16-year-old First Nations girl was justified. This is concerning for First Nations in Manitoba and across the country. It is frustrating for First Nations that since the 1990s, with Helen Betty Osborne and J.J. Harper's deaths that led to the AJI, there remains little to no justice for First Nations in Manitoba. Other reports have also identified the need for a fundamental change to First Nations' relationship, including the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. There has been no substantive improvement in the relationship between First Nations, the police of this province and Manitoba Justice, evident by last summer's protests of George Floyd's death that highlighted ongoing system racism against First Nations. Sadly, it is worse for First Nations women and girls as the police who are supposed to protect them are now responsible for their killings continue to contribute to the national tragedy of MMIWG.”

“Winnipeg police cannot continue to cause harm to the First Nations citizens of Winnipeg. I am calling for further investigation into this killing, which may include a legal strategy and amendments to the Police Services Act to ensure that police are not investigating themselves. There must also be some form of defunding for police so that more resources are re-directed to community-based supports, including mental health supports. These services are being defunded while the WPS budget increases. At the same time, First Nations children and youth who are most in need are being pushed out of the education system and through a pipeline from school into the justice system, which continues to disproportionately jail and lock up First Nations youth at an astonishing rate of 75%. Eishia loved school; this tragedy may never have happened if the systemic racism that ensures First Nations children in this province are more likely to go to jail than graduate from high school was addressed. Eishia might have been supported to graduate as her family wanted,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

-30-

**For more information, please contact:**

Stacia Franz  
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
**Email:** [sfranz@manitobachiefs.com](mailto:sfranz@manitobachiefs.com)  
**Phone:** 204-292-1504

**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 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), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.