



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Statement on allegations of racism within the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Services

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues the following statement on the reported investigation outcome into the allegations of racism in the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service (WFPS). Said investigation has vindicated a paramedic who accused two firefighters of refusing to provide medical treatment to an Indigenous woman who had been stabbed in the throat in October 2020.

Reports advised that a third-party probe commissioned by the City of Winnipeg concluded that the WFPS firefighters ignored the paramedic's repeated requests for assistance to aid the 23 year old Indigenous woman and thus failed to provide proper care and further delayed transportation of the patient to the hospital. It further found that the WFPS firefighters conspired to lie to the investigator who reviewed the paramedic's complaint.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, "It would be an understatement to say that I am beyond upset by the state of blatant and overt racism in Manitoba towards First Nations people. Having read the media reports on this matter, I, in the strongest words, condemn the actions and more importantly inactions of the WFPS firefighters involved in this situation. Coming close on the heels of the IIU report released last week on death of Eishia Hudson, it seems that nearly every day, every week and every month, we see more and more overt examples of systemic and overt racism being displayed from those we hope and expect to trust the most."

"It goes without saying, that anyone in the fields of care, be in medical field, law enforcement or otherwise, should begin every act by remembering that they are dealing with fellow human beings. Paramedics and Firefighters are first responders. Their actions determine life or death. To deny care or life saving measures is inhumane. What is even more concerning is that they tried to lie about what they did and cover up their racially motivated actions."

"Last summer we had learned there was already an internal investigation taking place within the WFPS into complaints of a pattern of racist behaviour involving members of the WFPS that included racist comments and posts on social media. Nothing ever came of this said Dumas.

"Amidst this troubling situation, I want to express my acknowledgment of the paramedic, who was left on his own to save this woman's life and then went to great lengths to ensure that this situation was not only brought to the attention of his direct superiors, but went further to ensure that the public was notified and that an investigation into the incident was had. Calling out racism, overt or discreet is not an easy thing to do. The City of Winnipeg needs to set an example and terminate these individuals and terminate this culture of racism that the Fire Chief acknowledges exists but has yet to be dealt with," concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

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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 / Inineu (Cree), Anishinineu (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.