



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 24, 2021

## **Joint Statement of the AMC and RCMP**

**Treaty One Territory, Manitoba** – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues the following joint statement in collaboration with Sagkeeng First Nation and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) regarding yesterday's meeting about the recent investigation of the incident at Headingly Correctional Facility and the death of Mr. William Walter Ahmo.

The meeting was called at the request of the RCMP to immediately engage with First Nation leadership in Manitoba regarding their investigation. The following members were present:

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas, The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
Grand Chief Jerry Daniels, Southern Chiefs' Organization  
Chief Derrick Henderson, Sagkeeng First Nation  
Assistant Commissioner Jane MacLatchy, Commanding Officer of the Manitoba RCMP  
Chief Superintendent Rob Hill, Officer in Charge of Criminal Operations, Manitoba RCMP  
Inspector Rob Lasson, Acting Officer in Charge of Major Crime Services, Manitoba RCMP  
Staff Sergeant Jared Hall, Criminal Operations, Manitoba RCMP  
Inspector Jeff Asmundson, Criminal Operations, Manitoba RCMP  
Sergeant Alex Bear, Community and Indigenous Police Services, Manitoba RCMP

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, "Although this meeting came in light of the recent and tragic death Mr. Ahmo, we specifically appreciate that this was not only a positive step forward, but also an innovative change to how we can work together in the future. We were advised that the investigation into Mr. Ahmo's death was specifically paused momentarily to seek input and guidance of First Nation leadership prior to moving forward: not as lip service or a window dressing, but instead, engaging First Nation leadership with open minds and open hearts."

"This in-person, COVID-19 safe meeting, facilitated between RCMP and First Nations leadership was a good step forward in acknowledging the importance of First Nation guidance and knowledge and a better working relationship between the RCMP and First Nations. I appreciate the foresight of the RCMP in calling myself and other First Nations leadership to the table to ensure that measures being taken are done in a respectful, unbiased and authentically transparent way. I appreciate the RCMP's commitment and initiative to seek the truth in this matter and I further encourage the RCMP to take pause and consider their current protocols and steps taken regarding involvement of First Nation perspectives. There are many opportunities to make First Nation engagement a standard practice going forward."

Sagkeeng First Nation Chief Derrick Henderson stated, "I have a responsibility as Chief of my Nation to ensure that they get answers and that the transparency of this process remains paramount. I appreciate this initial meeting with the RCMP as it speaks to their commitment to our Nation to investigate this tragic death as respectfully and transparently as possible and bring us answers expeditiously."

"Our meeting with First Nations leadership regarding the investigation into the death of Mr. Ahmo was precedent setting for our two groups," said Assistant Commissioner Jane MacLatchy, Commanding Officer

of the RCMP in Manitoba. “We cannot always provide all the information that is being sought in regards to an investigation, but to be able to have open and collaborative discussions about investigative standards and protocols, and the effects on community is invaluable. I am so grateful for the willingness of everyone involved to sit down in good faith and have an honest conversation. It is so important to hear firsthand what is needed from us.”

“The RCMP is committed and engaged to conduct a comprehensive, unbiased investigation into the death of Mr. Ahmo,” said Inspector Rob Lasson, Acting Officer in Charge of Major Crime Services for the RCMP. “We will continue to communicate with First Nations leadership and Mr. Ahmo’s family while maintaining the integrity of the investigation. Today’s meeting enhanced positive relationships and understanding between the RCMP and Indigenous leadership.”

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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.