



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2021

AMC statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid "pass laws" in 1960. In 1979, the UN General Assembly decided that a week of solidarity with the peoples struggling against racism and racial discrimination, beginning on 21 March, would be organized annually in all States.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas said, "on International Day for the Elimination for Racial Discrimination in 2021, I call on the Province and the Federal government to respect the spirit and intent of international treaties and human rights mechanisms intended to protect First Nations and Indigenous peoples' human rights. First Nations' inherent and human rights have been and are under unprecedented attack during this current legislative session with numerous bills being introduced which infringe on First Nations rights in Manitoba. At the federal level, Canada continues to willfully and recklessly discriminate against First Nations by fighting against rulings by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in favour of First Nations and by continuing to take First Nations children and residential school survivors to court over reparations for past human rights violations."

In December 2019, the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) responded to urgent reports filed by the Wet'suwet'en, Secwepmec, and Dunne-za and Cree peoples facing immediate threat from resource extraction and development on their lands.

In its harshly worded decision, the Committee upheld the international legal standard of free, prior and informed consent and told Canada: "(the State party) to seek technical advice from the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." Canada now has to respond to this decision when it reports to the Committee in Geneva in November, 2021 on these specific matters. Canada also is scheduled in 2022 for a universal periodic review before the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Grand Chief Dumas added, "Canada continues to ignore CERD's substantive concerns with respect to the 2019 reports of First Nations peoples in Canada, which is a violation of the Convention; because the Convention on racial discrimination is binding on States, this could result in severe international consequences. In its mandate, CERD can launch a dispute resolution mechanism, make recommendations to the UN General Assembly on Canada's non-compliance and even refer the issue to the UN Special Committee on Decolonization: all things unprecedented for Canada, and all things Canada does not want.

"Ahead of Canada's periodic review and its report to CERD in November, I call on Canada's delegation to the UN to collaborate with the First Nations in Manitoba on its report and in preparation for Canada's periodic review. I also call on Canada to seek the advice of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in relation to First Nations title as it is advised to do by the CERD. First Nations in Manitoba are willing and able to reconcile and work with the Canadian State as it seeks to protect and secure its international reputation as a leading defender and promoter of human rights," concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

For more information, please contact:

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