



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AMC Supports Family in Call for Systemic Change to Policing

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement in support of the family of Chris Amayotte, who is calling for an independent and public inquiry into his death as a result of the Vancouver Police.

On August 22, 2022, Chris Amayotte, an Anishinaabe man and a father of eight from Rolling River First Nation, was shot six times with a beanbag gun by the Vancouver Police and subsequently died from his injuries. Chris Amayotte was the victim of a bear mace assault, and when police arrived, there was an altercation in which the police used a "safe and effective less-lethal tool." The Independent Investigations Office (IIO), British Columbia's police watchdog department, is currently investigating.

At a press conference on September 1, 2022, the family of Chris Amayotte called for a public inquiry and systemic changes in how police treat people in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver and will push to hold the officers who shot him accountable.

"The AMC supports this call for an inquiry. Here in Manitoba, we have seen how police often use excessive force over de-escalation tactics. It has sadly resulted in avoidable deaths," said Deputy Grand Chief Cornell McLean. "There needs to be intentional systemic change, accountability, and ongoing cultural awareness training for officers to handle these situations effectively so as not to default back to individual biases and prejudiced assumptions of First Nations. Our relatives should not live in fear of those whose job it is to protect us."

The lack of trust between the police and First Nations has existed for centuries. Chapter 12 of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (AJI) recommended that the police department would benefit significantly from more First Nations in the workforce and cultural awareness training. Incidents such as the death of J.J. Harper, Helen Betty Osborne, and even more recently, Eisha Hudson demonstrate that police systems often fail First Nations. The lack of accountability for violence against First Nations disregards our safety and the ability to trust those who are supposed to be emergency first responders and public protectors.

"It is incredibly frustrating that even with the results and recommendations of the AJI, we continue to see a lack of accountability for the police who perpetrate violence on First Nations.," Deputy Grand Chief Cornell McLean said. "AMC advocates for systemic change in policing systems across Canada, and we recommend ongoing police training in de-escalation tactics as well as regular cultural awareness training for all police to prevent more First Nations from losing their lives to police prejudice."



For more information, please contact:

Communications Team

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Email: media@manitobachiefs.com

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