



CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

MUSÉE CANADIEN POUR LES
DROITS DE LA PERSONNE

August 9, 2023

Grand Chief Merrick
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
Suite 200-275 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B3

Dear Grand Chief Merrick,

I'm writing to express the Canadian Museum for Human Rights' unequivocal support of the calls to recover the remains of Mercedes Myran, Morgan Harris and Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe (Buffalo Woman).

Our role at the Museum is to encourage people to understand our world through the lens of human rights. In this situation, the human rights implications are clear. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that all human beings are born free and equal, in dignity and rights. Article 12 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that Indigenous peoples have a right to access the remains of their family and community members. Other human rights law specifically addresses the recovery and return of human remains. It is a universal human value that the remains of the dead should be treated with dignity and their families accorded respect.

Much has been said about the financial and safety implications of a search, issues on which we defer to others. However, given our role, we must affirm the human rights imperative to act.

The Museum is honoured to share caretaking responsibility for the sacred bundle of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It includes hundreds of artistic expressions created by family members, friends, survivors, artists and others during the National Inquiry. In addition, we are one of Canada's national museums, charged with fostering dialogue and reflection on human rights issues.

As such, we carry the responsibility to honour those who have been murdered or gone missing. But also, to highlight how Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples often offends the ideas of universal dignity that underpin our national commitment to human rights.

We are grateful for the advocacy of MMIWG2S+ families and their supporters that has focused attention on this ongoing epidemic of violence. Canada and Canadians have been reminded yet again that we must end the injustices created by colonization, racism and misogyny. We must

revisit and recommit to the relationships that were established through treaty. And we must confront the devastating impacts when we fail to act.

The Museum will continue to share stories that inspire action, until everyone values human rights and takes responsibility to promote respect and dignity for all. We are honoured to join you in that work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isha Khan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Isha Khan
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Museum for Human Rights