



FIRST VOICE
Urban Indigenous Coalition

STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Voice Welcomes the RNC's Commitment to MMIWG Calls for Justice

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

St. John's, NL — First Voice welcomes [today's statement by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary](#) recognizing the colonial history of Newfoundland and Labrador, acknowledging the role that the force has played in the ongoing harms that it has caused, and committing to work in partnership with the urban Indigenous community to advance truth and reconciliation.

In its Call for Justice 9.1, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) called on all police forces across Canada to recognize the ways in which they serve to reproduce colonial relationships. It is therefore a significant step for the RNC to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism within the force. To acknowledge past wrongs, and to take responsibility for ongoing harm in the present, is a difficult but necessary first step in beginning to repair relationships with Indigenous Peoples. It is a journey that will take years.

At a private meeting held yesterday at RNC headquarters, and again in its public statement today, the senior leadership of the RNC made a commitment to First Voice to work toward the full implementation of all MMIWG Calls for Justice that fall within the scope of its powers under the *RNC Act*. For this reason, First Voice has agreed to provide the RNC with any support and advice that they may need to achieve that goal. In doing so, we will continue to hold the RNC accountable for following through on its commitments.

Welcome as they are, these commitments do not alter the [urgent need for systemic change](#) in the way that policing is carried out in Newfoundland and Labrador. We therefore renew our calls for Minister of Justice and Public Safety John Hogan to make a similar commitment to implement all MMIWG Calls for Justice that fall within his department's areas of responsibility. This includes the creation of a police oversight board that is civilian-led, independent of police, politically neutral, and representative of the province's diverse communities.

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