

**Letter to the Editor**  
**June 18, 2020**

**No More Reports, No More Commissions: We Want Immediate Action**

Indigenous people are being killed by police. We are being incarcerated at rates far beyond the rest of the Canadian population. Our children are caught in a vicious cycle and continue to be apprehended and placed in foster care, where too many end up incarcerated and in jail or worse: dead!

We could see another commission, another report on the current wave of murder and assault, but again, no action on recommendations and sadly nothing will be done to end the violence, discrimination, racism, and abuse against Indigenous peoples that are entrenched in the Canadian justice system.

Between 1967 and 2019, there have been thirteen such reports. We do not need further study, we know the problems, we need action now.

The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and international human rights instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are failing to protect our Peoples, because Canada does not honour its Constitution, let alone the Nation-to-Nation relationship. The thirteen reports with hundreds of equally repetitive recommendations are not saving lives.

We only need to look at the video of the excessive police force directed at Chief Allan Adam; it is a perfect example of the systemic racism raging across the country - it is plain and simple – our people are enraged. Just last Friday an RCMP officer shot and killed Rodney Levi, the second Indigenous person to be killed in New Brunswick in as many weeks. Two weeks ago, Chantel Moore, a 26-year-old Indigenous woman from BC was shot by Edmondston Police. The mass graves are overflowing.

Canadian news is documenting trauma upon trauma. We must end racism and discrimination and the excessive force practiced by Canada's police forces. We must also end the impunity among police officers. Discrimination based on race is illegal and violating a person's fundamental rights is an act that deserves police intervention, not more police violence.

Another commission of inquiry will not add to what we already know. The continuing violent assault on our communities by the police is a cruel reminder of this. The negative relationship between Indigenous peoples and the police has already been documented extensively. We know we are ten times more likely to be killed by police as other Canadians. We know Indigenous women are the fastest growing prison population. Another justice inquiry will not change these facts.

Anger is growing again. We are light years away from the justice, fairness, and security that most Canadian citizens enjoy. The injustice and violence will continue unless Canadians find the courage and determination to make serious changes to our “justice” system. For Indigenous Peoples in Canada this is a matter of life and death. There are more lethal forces that have been killing Indigenous Peoples in Canada, for far too long and, far worse than COVID 19 virus: it is discrimination and racism.

To date, Canadian leadership has not found the courage to face down the RCMP, Correction Canada, and the Ministry of Justice. They have blood on their hands.

We are demanding a National First Nations Justice Strategy and Action Plan. We are demanding a restructuring of policing in this country. We will not accept sensitivity training, or apologies, or tokenistic hiring practices. None of those approaches actually make a difference when you look at the numbers. We want evidence-based solutions to a problem for which we have too much evidence to ignore. That means considering bold solutions, including removing funding from police departments and using it to hire social workers and other non-violent professionals to intervene when someone is having a mental health emergency. That means taking lethal weapons away from police. That means devolving policing from the RCMP to First Nations governments.

That also means no more feet dragging from the Federal Government on First Nations Justice. We keep dying, and you keep talking. We are done with talking. Now is the time to act.

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