



Press Release

Growing Chorus of Voices Speaking Out for Chantel Moore and Supports for Off-Reserve Indigenous Peoples

June 10, 2020 (Ottawa, ON) – The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), its Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTOs), and its National Youth leadership is continuing to speak out and join the growing chorus of voices highlighting the institutional biases and circumstances that led to the tragic death of Chantel Moore as well as the lack of supports impacting all off-reserve Indigenous peoples in Canada.

"Chantel Moore was tragically killed last week during a wellness check that highlights how the federal and provincial governments, as well as the colonialist legacy engrained in Canadian government institutions continues to fail off-reserve Indigenous peoples", said National Chief Robert Bertrand of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. "Off-reserve Indigenous peoples like Chantel face systemic inequitable access to programs and services that the federal government has a fiduciary responsibility to provide. The off-reserve organizations mandated to support people like Chantel have woefully inadequate resources to meet the needs of those living in their communities."

PTOs across Canada exist to provide comprehensive services to any and all off-reserve Indigenous peoples who live in those regions. This includes individuals who may have moved to the region recently and those living there since birth. Services include healthcare, housing, educational supports, employment and skills development, and other essential programming. Unfortunately, the federal government continues to flow Indigenous funding to organizations that are mandated primarily or solely in support of those living on-reserve.

"The lack of a national funding strategy for essential programs and services offered by off-reserve organizations like the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council (NBAPC) directly relates to how Indigenous peoples who move off-reserve are not given proper supports," added Richard Cooper, National Youth Representative. "With proper recognition, resources, and funding for organizations like the NBAPC to deliver services comprehensively, they would have the ability to deliver these essential supports for off-reserve Indigenous peoples."

A national funding strategy for off-reserve Indigenous peoples should reflect the fact that the majority of Indigenous peoples live off reserve, and current funding streams are overwhelmingly skewed towards organizations serving those living on-reserve. While PTOs have the programs and services in place and offer these supports to all off-reserve Indigenous peoples living in their regions, the existing funding in place provides for these organizations to offer adequate services to only a fraction of all those in need. The federal government must abide by its fiduciary responsibility in providing equitable funding.

Christy Mellor-Gorham, Provincial Youth Representative for the NBAPC added "As a young Indigenous woman living off-reserve, this tragic death hits close to home for me. Many young, off-reserve Indigenous people are concerned with the lack of access to healthcare and mental health

services in a timely manner, coupled with a longstanding fear of law enforcement stemming from a legacy of colonial institutions and a history of mistreatment, as well as a lack of understanding and empathy. Supporting those provincial organizations mandated to delivering services for Indigenous peoples living off-reserve is crucial for our well-being moving forward."

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Background

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) is the second-oldest national aboriginal organization in Canada. It was founded in 1971, one year after the AFN. CAP represents the interests of off reserve status and non-status Indians, Métis and Southern Inuit Aboriginal Peoples throughout Canada. CAP is one of five national Indigenous organizations recognized by the federal government, and holds consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

For media interviews please contact:

Jessica Dawson, Executive Assistant

613-747-6022

j.dawson@abo-peoples.org

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, Status and non-Status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 80% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.