



Press Release

CAP: Listen to MMIWG, Defunding Police is a Step Towards Reconciliation

June 10, 2020 (Ottawa, ON) – The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) calls for defunding of the 161 Municipal Police Departments and the RCMP in Canada and reallocating the resources towards community needs and social supports. These actions would be consistent with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Inquiry, which called for reallocating resources to Indigenous-led community safety and programming.

According to the John Howard Society of Canada, in 2018 Canadian taxpayers spent \$20 billion a year on “Justice”. Of this budget according to Statistics Canada for the year 2017-18 total operating expenditures for all Police Services in Canada amounted to \$15.1 billion per annum.

Meanwhile, Canada continues to have among the lowest levels of social spending in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)¹ at 17.3 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compared to an OECD average of 21 per cent. In 2017-2018, the average salary of police officers across Canada was \$99,000 plus benefits a year. By comparison, the maximum salary for personal support workers caring for elderly and vulnerable members of society in Ontario is \$38,000 per year.

“After centuries of discrimination, inequality and oppression, it is time that we defund the police departments across Canada and apply that money towards restorative justice programs and adequately funded supports for our people. The present Police model, of 'Us vs Indigenous communities' is not working” says Kim Beaudin, CAP National Vice Chief.

The recent killing in Edmundston, New Brunswick, of Chantel Moore, of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, was the tenth victim of shootings as a result of a wellness check by the police in Canada since 2013.

“Indigenous people in Canada continue to face an epidemic of under-protection and over-policing.” said CAP National Vice-Chief Kim Beaudin. “Police departments across Canada are ill-equipped to handle people with mental health issues. Shooting first cannot be the number one reaction by police officers.”

CAP is recommending measures that would support addressing the epidemic of violence faced by Indigenous peoples, and fully implementing the MMIWG calls to justice related to policing, which include:

- Immediately require race-based data collection by all police departments in Canada, including stops, arrests, charges, use of force incidents, and numbers of responding officers

- :continued -

¹ <https://data.oecd.org/social-exp/social-spending.htm>

- Stop the criminalization of homelessness
- Stop the criminalization of addictions
- Stop racial profiling
- Hold police to a higher standard through fully independent, community-led investigations of use of force incidents and misconduct, with powers to demand criminal charges and dismiss officers
- Introduce legislation to address issues of racial bias and police brutality

“Governments and police departments have to look inward and admit that there is systemic racism within their departments and organizations” says CAP National Vice-Chief Kim Beaudin. “The federal and provincial courts have to take responsibility for upholding the Charter Rights and Freedoms. For the last decade the police have chipped away at our personal Charter Rights and stomped all over the spirit and intent of Canada’s constitution. ”

-30-

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.