



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### OVER-REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN FEDERAL PRISON

*Recent study shows, for the first time, half the female population incarcerated in Federal Prisons are Indigenous*

tkwəɫniwt (Westbank), Okanagan Syilx Territory, BC [May 6, 2022]: A story published in [The Globe and Mail](#) May 5, 2022, brings to light a reality that is at the core of the development of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy – the over-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the Justice System.

Ombudsman, Correctional Investigator Dr. Ivan Zinger stated as of last week, the ratio of Indigenous to Non-Indigenous women incarcerated in Federal prison was equal.

“I find it disturbing that in 2022, the most marginalized and vulnerable group in Canada - Indigenous women - make up 50% of the population in federal prisons,” said BC First Nations Justice Council Director, Annita McPhee. “Adding insult to injury, this news made headlines on a day where murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls are remembered. It provokes the thought that maybe some of these incarcerated women are survivors. Either way, it is clear we need to hold the government accountable to address this ongoing issue and the disproportionate increase of Indigenous women incarcerated.”

Strategy 11 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy is designed to ‘bring to an end the grim reality faced by First Nations women as victims of crime’ in part by developing a First Nations Women Justice Plan.

“We need to consider the human factor of how these Indigenous women, matriarchs of our family systems, are lost in the justice system,” added BCFNJC Director Boyd Peters. “They are mother’s, grandmothers, aunties and cousins. The justice system has failed our people. As Indigenous peoples we need the resources and jurisdiction to help our people and reverse this unacceptable trend.”

The BC First Nations Justice Strategy includes 23 initiatives, 14 of which guide transformation of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the justice system. For example, ensuring increased and more effective access to legal counsel, Gladue implementation, joint review of existing legislation to align with the principles of the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and more.

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#### ABOUT THE BCFNJC

#### BC First Nations Justice Council

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The BC First Nations Justice Council has been entrusted with the mandate to transform the justice system and create better outcomes for Indigenous people through implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy.

The strategy, signed March 06, 2020, was jointly developed by the BC First Nations Justice Council, BC First Nations communities and the Province of British Columbia. It includes 43 actions along two paths which involve the reformation of the current system as well as the restoration of First Nations' legal traditions and structures.

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