



MEDIA RELEASE

BC First Nations Justice Council Stands in Solidarity with Sheila Poorman and Supports Full Investigation into the Death and Disappearance of Daughter, Chelsea Poorman

(Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaɫ (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. [June 6, 2022] - The BC First Nations Justice Council stands in solidarity with Sheila Poorman, mother of Chelsea Poorman, after an opportunity to sit down and hear her story last week at the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) Meeting.

Poorman addressed the delegation of Chiefs, their proxies, and observers about her on-going struggle to get answers from the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) on what happened to her daughter, Chelsea.

A member of the Kwacatoose First Nation, Chelsea was 24-years old when she went missing on Sept. 6, 2020, last seen in downtown Vancouver. Chelsea's remains were found in the upscale Vancouver neighbourhood of Shaughnessy mid-April, 2022. It would be several weeks before the Vancouver Police Department notified the family.

Following Poorman's emotional speech at the UBCIC, BCFNJC Chair Doug White, Q.C., and Director, Boyd Peters, spoke about the B.C First Nations Justice Strategy 22, which calls for new models of policing Indigenous communities wrapping the day with UBCIC resolution 2022-26, calling for swift implementation of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act (SCORPA).

"It's alarming to see that in 2022, the Vancouver Police Department rushed to judgement," said White. "We need to be as loud as possible to show them that we won't accept these kinds of failures."

The SCOPRA report, released April 28, 2022, shared eleven recommendations for the Provincial government including revisiting the role of RCMP and recommending a provincial police force.

Over the weekend, the VPD confirmed the ongoing investigation into the death of Poorman as an extensive search of Van Dusen Gardens was conducted in search of further evidence.

ABOUT THE BCFNJC

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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