

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' Statement

Agenda Item 6: Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues

April 28, 2022

Mr. Chair,

For over 50 years, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) has advocated as the national voice of off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Metis and Southern Labrador Inuit – Indigenous peoples across Canada who are often the most disenfranchised and marginalized populations. In 1971, CAP arose as a representative of the “forgotten peoples” in response to the structural and systemic exclusion of Indigenous peoples in federal government policy. We know too well the struggle for recognition that many Indigenous peoples face every day in Canada.

Throughout its history, CAP has been committed to addressing inequities and exclusion under the Indian Act and other colonial processes that have led to the marginalization of our people. This marginalization has resulted in terrible consequences with too many off-reserve and non-status Indigenous peoples suffering chronic and mental health issues, living below the poverty line, food insecure, in unsafe housing and experiencing homelessness to name just a few.

As we talk about emerging issues today, I want to raise an urgent concern about one of the most pressing issues facing the Indigenous community throughout Canada and likely the world, and that is of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Men and Boys (MMIMB). It has verified our concerns and cemented our conviction that our Men and Boys are facing a crisis and there must be action now to ensure their safety and well-being.

Approximately 3,886 Indigenous men and boys are believed to have been victims of homicide between 1980 and 2020. In 2020, Indigenous men were 11.6 times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous people. Indigenous men also made-up 28.7 percent of all male homicide victims and 21.9 percent of all homicide victims in Canada. Even though they account for less than 5% of the population. While statistics and numbers do not adequately portray present or historical circumstances and, in significant ways, they discount the depth of trauma that lies within each number, they do highlight the issue of MMIMB in Canada. The stories also emphasize the recurring themes of systemic racism and racialized policing. Our work reviewed the gutting stories of Indigenous Men and their families in Canada. Within the stories of MMIMB, it is evident that not enough attention is being paid to them and that, as a result, this tragedy is being ignored and preventable trauma and death are being left to continue unabated.

MMIMB and the grassroots efforts by their families highlight a critical gap in national reporting which continues to decrease visibility, advocacy and knowledge on the issue of MMIMB. National reporting on MMIMB is insufficient and the reporting that does exist is problematic. When the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) began in 2015, the inclusion of men as subjects to violence was excluded. The NIMMIWG reporting on Indigenous men focused on individuals who were caught in cycles of violence, and individuals in need of healing. Other reporting from policing agencies such as the RCMP is racialized and does not consider how approaches to law enforcement contribute to violence against Indigenous Peoples or perpetuate discrimination against MMIMB.

Significant space needs to be made for Indigenous men and boys, because without effective reporting, data collection, or analysis of victimization, we are unable to effectively understand and address the issue. Highlighting and addressing MMIMB is not about discounting or hindering the objectives and stories of the National Inquiry on MMIWG, but about honoring a holistic

understanding of Indigenous families, it is about making sure that everyone in that family comes home.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples believes a clear path forward must be developed to ensure we are taking the necessary steps to protect everyone in our Indigenous families. This includes accurate and inclusive reporting both nationally and internally, engaging men and boys and families to tell their stories, further research on the victimization of Indigenous men and boys nationally and internationally, sound data and tracking and most importantly a comprehensive strategy to address MMIMB and a pathway to ensure recommendations from this strategy are implemented.

We call on Canada and all the member states to begin dealing with this crisis today. Lets ensure missing and murdered Indigenous boys find a way home.

Meegwetch for hearing me today and thank you for your time.