

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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News Release

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UBCIC Supports Call for ABC Network to Acknowledge and Address MMIWG Crisis

((Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – November 24, 2020) The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) joins Indigenous organizations and Tribal Leaders who are calling on the ABC Network to address and rectify its incomplete depiction of violence against women and girls in its primetime thriller *Big Sky*. Despite being set in Montana, the show fails to acknowledge that the disproportionate majority of missing and murdered women and girls there are Indigenous.

The Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council, which represents Montana's eight federally recognized Indian Tribes, is among the [Indigenous organizations](#) who are raising concerns about the show, including ABC's cultural insensitivity, lack of compassion, and its decision to film *Big Sky* not in Montana, but in unceded Indigenous territory in British Columbia.

"Institutions from law enforcement to the entertainment media must engage and consult with First Nations when they are addressing violence against women and girls, and understand the importance of not ignoring the murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) tragedy," stated Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of UBCIC. "UBCIC is based in Vancouver, *Big Sky*'s central filming location and one of the areas in Canada hit hardest by systemic violence against Indigenous women and girls. As the federal governments in both Canada and the US have failed to address the multi-generational epidemic that is the MMIWG crisis, it is imperative that an influential corporation like ABC demonstrate some awareness and cultural competency regarding it. We add our voices to and fully support the request already made by Tribal Nations and organizations for ABC to add 'an information frame at the end of future *Big Sky* show credits that directs viewers to the [Somebody's Daughter](#) documentary and factual information on the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls crisis.'"

"The systemic failures of law enforcement in Canada and the US to address the MMIWG tragedy are well known and documented," added Melissa Moses, UBCIC Women's Representative. "Violence against Indigenous women is particularly endemic in British Columbia, where one of the most infamous highways in Canada, 'the Highway of Tears,' is located. This highway is a painful and haunting symbol of the violence destroying Indigenous lives and bears resemblance to the one depicted in The Highway, the novel *Big Sky* is adapted from. Unfortunately, the violence and gender-based genocide represented by the Highway of Tears is horrifically prevalent in Montana where 26% of missing persons have been identified as Native American, despite tribal members only making up 7% of the population. ABC now has the invaluable opportunity to be our ally, to show respect and compassion to victims and impacted family members and loved ones, and to help inform the public in both Canada and the United States of this international and national crisis and dark truth."

Both Melissa Moses and Chief Wilson are leaders in the recently launched House of the Moon Indigenous women and girls empowerment and self-defense program that pro-actively addresses the MMIWG crisis on the frontlines of Indigenous communities. On behalf of the UBCIC, Chief Wilson attended the first-ever MMIWG Tribunal held in the United States which was hosted by the Blackfeet Nation in October 2019. Chief Wilson participated in presentations alongside Ambassador Catherine M. Russell, former US Ambassador for Global Women's Issues. Ambassador Russell represented President-elect Joe Biden at the MMIWG Tribunal. Melissa Moses, UBCIC's Women's Representative, carries out self-defense training and support to women and communities grappling with the crisis.

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UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information, please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca