
Assembly of First Nations

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Assemblée des Premières Nations

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ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 23, 24 & 25, 2019, FREDERICTON, NB

Resolution no. 49/2019

TITLE: Support for an Inquest into the Death of Devon Freeman

SUBJECT: Justice

MOVED BY: Chief Byron Louis, Okanagan Indian Band, BC

SECONDED BY: Chief R. Donald Maracle, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte First Nation, ON

DECISION: Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 21(2): States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.
 - ii. Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.
- B. In April 2018, Devon Freeman, a member of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation's, body was discovered on the property of the group home he was living at just outside of Hamilton. He was a seventeen-year old Crown ward and his grandmother believed that the Children's Aid Society (CAS) could offer him better supports and services.
- C. In May 2017, an incident of attempted suicide was reported to the group home, but they did nothing more than give Devon a crisis phone number. He was not taken to the hospital and the information was not shared with his grandmother or Georgina Island First Nation.

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 25th day of July 2019 in Fredericton, New Brunswick


PERRY BELLEGARDE, NATIONAL CHIEF

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- D. In October 2017, Devon went missing. No search was undertaken, and CAS did not contact Georgina Island to advise that he was missing. The police did not engage in any earnest searching until close to the end of November 2017.
- E. The CAS did not advise the First Nation or his family of Devon's death. The family learnt of his death when CAS provided them with a death certificate.
- F. Georgina Island and Devon's grandmother are preparing to ask the Coroner to call an inquest into the death of Devon Freeman.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

1. Support the formal request to the Coroner's Office by Georgina Island First Nation and Devon Freeman's family to undertake an inquest into the death of Devon Freeman.

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