



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 4, 2022

**Tsilhqot'in National Government Calls for Change and Answers in the Wake of Young Man's Death in RCMP Custody**

**Williams Lake, B.C.:** The Tsilhqot'in National Government is calling for changes and answers from the Williams Lake RCMP in the wake of the tragic passing of a young Tsilhqot'in man while in RCMP custody. As of the morning of October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the immediate family have received no information as to what happened to their son.

The Tsilhqot'in Nation's thoughts are with the family, communities, and all that knew this man. Grief and tragedy are something that the Tsilhqot'in Nation knows too well. The RCMP must ensure the safety of our members while in their custody.

The TNG has long-called for the RCMP, specifically in Williams Lake, to overhaul their training to include cultural sensitivity training in order to be better equipped to handle the diverse needs of Indigenous peoples. The Williams Lake RCMP detachment also needs First Nation Liaisons to ensure Indigenous people's safety while in custody.

The TNG needs confirmation that an independent investigation into this tragedy will happen. The TNG has advocated for a relationship protocol with the RCMP for years. Incidents like this one show that there is a dire need for changes within the RCMP. The TNG has still not been informed with what occurred while the young man was in their custody.

**Quote:**

**Nits'il?in (Chief) Otis Guichon, Vice-Chair, Tsilhqot'in National Government**

"I am appalled that this young man could die in police custody. There are still many questions that have been left unanswered. On Friday, we honoured all those that died at residential schools while in care of the Church – and now we have our members dying while in the care of the RCMP. This needs to change. The Williams Lake RCMP must do better. We will continue to advocate for answers while the families grieve over this heavy loss."

**Nits'il?in Lennon Solomon, Yunešit'in Government**

"My heart remains with the family of the young man that I knew well. No family should have to endure this loss. It is extremely troubling that while in a supposedly safe environment,

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someone can pass away. My community and the family have lots of questions and they need to be answered. Grief has taken over our community lately. The mental health and wellbeing of Yunešit'in is my main focus. This young man was on a good path – he was proud of where he was headed. We need better lines of communication with the RCMP.”

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