

# Submission to the Special Rapporteur on summary, extrajudicial or arbitrary executions for the investigation and prevention of unlawful killings by law enforcement officials

## Introduction

1. This submission was developed in collaboration with families of people who have had a loved one killed by police, or who were killed because of conditions of police custody, or due to an interaction with police in Canada,<sup>1</sup> along with researchers, from the following groups:
2. **Mothers Coming Together** is a collective space co-organized by the Regis 4Ever Foundation, Justice for Anthony Aust Collective, Justice for Tyrell Beals, Incarcerated Voters Ontario, and the Ottawa Transformative Justice Collective.
3. **The People's Tribunal** is a burgeoning project, whose initial events have been spearheaded by Laura Holland and family, as well as the groups #JusticeForJared, Defund604, P.O.W.E.R., Pivot Legal Society, UBC Social Justice Centre, Care Not Cops, and the BC Civil Liberties Association. The Tribunal is organizing to fill a community need created by the settler colonial and racist abandonment from both the provincial and federal governments with the aim to seek justice by bringing the truth to light and creating networks for care and solidarity among impacted people in the shorter term.
4. **Affected Families of Police Homicide Ontario** is a group of families calling for changes in policing due to losing a loved one to a police homicide. The group has been working to stop police use force to address mental health crises.
5. **Tracking (In)Justice** is a law enforcement and criminal legal data, and transparency project organized out of Carleton University which maintains a public civil society database on police killings and deaths due to use of force and custody.
6. **This report outlines the steep increase in police homicides across Canada, primarily by firearm, disproportionately facing Indigenous and racialized people, people with mental health and substance use issues, and those living in poverty who are under-housed, along with lack of transparent and accountable police oversight, and a gap in supports for surviving families, who instead of being provided support, face intimidation and a lack of access to justice.**

## Background

7. Policing is central in the ongoing settler colonial project of Canada where police forces were founded to displace and contain Indigenous peoples in the West to open the land for settlement and Canadian expansion.<sup>2</sup> Canada's ongoing colonization has a direct impact on contemporary policing. Numerous public commissions and inquiries have recognized the systemic injustice experienced by Indigenous peoples from police, including the Royal

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<sup>1</sup> Collectively noted as *police homicides* throughout the submission.

<sup>2</sup> Monaghan, J. (2013). "Mounties in the Frontier: Circulations, Anxieties, and Myths of Settler Colonial Policing in Canada." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 47, no. 1: 122–48.

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Commission on Aboriginal Peoples<sup>3</sup> and Truth and Reconciliation Commission.<sup>4</sup> The Canadian Justice department has acknowledged that Indigenous peoples are both over-policed and under-policed, in that they are often targeted by police but also often neglected when assistance is needed.<sup>5</sup>

8. Despite Canada having both signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), there is a widely understood failure by Canadian police to protect Indigenous women and girls from violence, who thus have faced the burden of police abuses and neglect, and who regularly report negative experiences of interactions with police, particularly in northern communities.<sup>6</sup> These harmful dynamics are evidenced in various reports, including the Canadian Human Rights Commission<sup>7</sup>, Human Rights Watch<sup>8</sup>, and in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.<sup>9</sup>
9. The history of enslavement in Canada has a direct impact on contemporary policing, which is characterized by extensive racial profiling, over-policing, unwarranted surveillance, and disproportionate levels of violence directed at Black and other racialized communities.<sup>10</sup>
10. Despite rising levels of police homicides,<sup>11</sup> there are massive gaps in knowledge on the issue, as officials do not systematically collect or release data on the issue to the public. A major study on Canadian police oversight bodies found an inconsistent and limited understanding

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<sup>3</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). 1996. Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Ottawa: Canada Communications Group. <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 2015. Canada's residential schools: the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Published for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by McGill-Queen's University Press. <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.807830/publication.html>

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada. 2019. Overrepresentation of Indigenous People in the Canadian Criminal Justice System: Causes and Responses. Department of Justice, Research and Statistics Division. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/oip-cjs/e.html>

<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Watch. 2013. Those Who Take Us Away: Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/02/13/those-who-take-us-away/abusive-policing-and-failures-protection-indigenous-women>

<sup>7</sup> Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2016. Honouring the Strength of Our Sisters: Increasing Access to Human Rights Justice For Indigenous Women and Girls. Summary Report of the 2013 and 2014 Aboriginal Women's Roundtable Process. <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.823568/publication.html>

<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Watch. 2013.

<sup>9</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. 2019. Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

<sup>10</sup> Tulloch, Michael H. 2018. Report of the Independent Street Checks Review. Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/report-independent-street-checks-review>; Maynard, R. 2017. Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing; Ontario Human Rights Commission. 2017. Under Suspicion: Research and consultation report on racial profiling in Ontario. [https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Under%20suspicion\\_research%20and%20consultation%20report%20on%20racial%20profiling%20in%20Ontario\\_2017.pdf](https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Under%20suspicion_research%20and%20consultation%20report%20on%20racial%20profiling%20in%20Ontario_2017.pdf); Ontario Human Rights Commission. 2018. A Collective Impact: Interim report on the inquiry into racial profiling and racial discrimination of Black persons by the Toronto Police Service. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/public-interest-inquiry-racial-profiling-and-discrimination-toronto-police-service/collective-impact-interim-report-inquiry-racial-profiling-and-racial-discrimination-black#IV.%20Findings>

<sup>11</sup> Freeze, C. Feb. 23, 2023. "Police-involved fatal incidents on the rise in Canada despite promises to curb violence", *Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-police-involved-fatal-incidents-on-the-rise-in-canada-despite-promises/>

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from officials, with some oversight representatives thinking that the use of force had decreased, while others felt that their numbers were going up.<sup>12</sup> The lack of available data has resulted in calls for a national standardized civilian led data-collection system requiring policing agencies to report on police homicides.<sup>13</sup>

11. Due to a rise in homicides hands of police, Canada is currently reckoning with unprecedented racial justice and decolonial movements, as well as intensified scrutiny of police conduct. In the Fall of 2024, 9 Indigenous people died in less than a month from direct police interactions. Their deaths have further ignited calls for action, accountability, and justice.<sup>14</sup>

### **Police use of force killings and deaths are on the rise:**

12. Despite data gaps, recent research from the Tracking (In)Justice project outlines that from 2000 to 2024, there were a minimum of 798 recorded homicides involving police use of force across Canada, including police shootings, deaths after being subjected to other types of police weapons (e.g. Tasers, batons) or physical interventions (e.g. punches, holds or restraints), or through environmental force (e.g. deaths resulting from no-knock raids, car chases, or falls).<sup>15</sup>
13. The number of police homicides has been on a steady increase over time. experienced an average of 24 deaths per year while 2013-2024 saw an average 41 deaths per year. While no more than 40 deaths per year were recorded from 2000-2019, with an average of 26 deaths per year during that time frame, 2020 saw an increase of 53 deaths, followed by 55 in 2021, and then 62 in 2022, more than any year in the last two decades. Over 100 deaths were documented in 2023-2024, 51 in each year. In certain jurisdictions, the increase in deaths is intensified, as in British Columbia (BC), police homicides have risen 700% in the last decade<sup>16</sup>
14. Over time, there has also been an increase in police firearm-related homicides. Overall, shooting deaths represent 594 out of cases documented up-to 2024, or 74.4% of all police homicides.
15. This increase in homicides at the hands of police has outpaced rates relative to population growth and have occurred despite limited changes in crime. The average annual deadly use-of-force rate has risen by 46%, from 0.071 per 100,000 people between 2000 and 2011 to

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<sup>12</sup> Wortley, S., et. al. 2021. "Police Use of Force in Canada: A Review of Data, Expert Opinion, and International Research Literature." Canadian Criminal Justice Association. <https://www.ccja-acjp.ca/pub/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/08/Full-Report-PUF.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Simpson, R., & Nix, J. 2024. Police Shootings in Canada: An Empirical Analysis and Call for Data. *Crime & Delinquency*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00111287231226182>; Bennell, C., et al. 2021. *Advancing police use of force research and practice: Urgent issues and prospects*. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 26(2), 121–144. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lcrp.12191>

<sup>14</sup> SpearChief-Morris, J. December 16, 2024. Deaths of 9 Indigenous People at hands of Police in One Month Fuel Renewed Calls for Justice. Toronto Star. [https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/deaths-of-9-indigenous-people-at-hands-of-police-in-one-month-fuel-renewed-calls/article\\_8df027aa-a12c-11ef-9197-cb6f211ca98e.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/deaths-of-9-indigenous-people-at-hands-of-police-in-one-month-fuel-renewed-calls/article_8df027aa-a12c-11ef-9197-cb6f211ca98e.html)

<sup>15</sup> Crosby, A., et al. 2025. Tracking (In)Justice: Documenting Fatal Encounters with Police in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 1–25.

<sup>16</sup> Hosgood, A. February 15 2023. BC, police-involved deaths have risen 700% in the last decade, The Tyee, <https://thetyee.ca/News/2023/02/15/Rising-Police-Involved-Deaths/>

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0.104 per 100,000 people between 2012 and 2023. Furthermore, this increase takes place while rates of violent crime have remained relatively consistent. The Violent Crime Severity Index notes the rate of 97.79 incidents per 100,000 people in 2000, which is almost identical to the 97.4 incidents per 100,000 people in 2022.

### **Intensified impact on Indigenous and Black people, and those experiencing mental health and substance use issues**

- 16.** Data on police homicides underline ongoing and systemic racial and colonial patterns of state violence. As of 2021, while Black people made up 4.3% and Indigenous people comprised 6.1% of the Canadian population, data show that people identified as Black represent 7.6% and people identified as Indigenous represent 16.9% of police homicides across the country. Systemic racial disparities are further reflected in the numbers specific to police homicides involving firearms. Of the total number of the homicides by police firearm, people identified as Black represent 8.4%, and people identified as Indigenous represent 19.0%.
- 17.** Other research indicates that racialized men in Canada experience intensified levels of deadly force when other less violent strategies are available, where shootings by police can occur at increased speed and include increased volume of firearm bullets than similar incidents facing white people.<sup>17</sup>
- 18.** People experiencing mental health issues and/or people using substances, in public due to being under-housed, are more likely to experience violent encounters with police.<sup>18</sup> Across Canada there has been a crisis of police routinely killing people during mental health wellness checks.<sup>19</sup> This crisis has been exacerbated by mental health stigma held by police who use force to resolve social problems. From, 2000 to 2017, 70% of police killings and deaths in Canada involved people who struggled with mental health and/or substance use issues.<sup>20</sup>
- 19.** Forced displacement of people living outside involving police has seen a recent increase across Canada.<sup>21</sup> For example, in 2023, the Federal Housing Advocate noted in their observational report that a “disproportionate number of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are unhoused and living in precarious housing” in BC.<sup>22</sup> Forced displacement has been linked

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<sup>17</sup> Wortley, S., et al. 2021. “Police Use of Force in Canada: A Review of Data, Expert Opinion, and International Research Literature.” Canadian Criminal Justice Association. <https://www.ccja-acjp.ca/pub/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/08/Full-Report-PUF.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Parent, R. 2011. The police use of deadly force in British Columbia: Mental illness and crisis intervention. *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, 11(1), 57-71. Government of Ontario. 2017. Office of the Chief Coroner, Verdict of Coroner's Jury: Andrew Loku. Toronto, ON: Office of the Chief Coroner.

<sup>19</sup> Toronto Police Service. 2014. Police Encounters with People in Crisis. An Independent Review Conducted by The Honourable Frank Iacobucci for Chief of Police William Blair, Toronto Police Service.

<sup>20</sup> CBC Deadly Force Database: <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-custom/deadly-force/>

<sup>21</sup> Barocas, J. A., et al. 2023. Population-Level Health Effects of Involuntary Displacement of People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness Who Inject Drugs in US Cities. *JAMA*, 329(17), 1478–1486. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2023.4800>; Lavalley, J., et al. 2024. “They talk about it like it’s an overdose crisis when in fact it’s basically genocide”: The experiences of Indigenous peoples who use illicit drugs in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 134, 104631. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2024.104631>

<sup>22</sup> Federal Housing Advocate. 2023. Observational Report British Columbia (August 23 to September 2, 2022) His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Canadian Human Rights Commission: <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/publications/federal-housing-advocates-observational-report>

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to compounding health issues that lead to premature death.<sup>23</sup> Despite being led by police, these deaths are not generally attributed to police actions in formal tracking documents, nor through any legal means, and reflect racist colonial patterns in process and by who is targeted.

### Vague use of force guidelines exacerbates deaths

20. Canadian police use of force guidelines are notoriously vague, under-researched, under-evaluated, and lack public reporting or transparency.<sup>24</sup> There is very limited data on use of force due to lack of police cooperation in reporting.<sup>25</sup> In other jurisdictions, research indicates that strict use of force guidelines results in fewer deaths at the hands of police.<sup>26</sup> Canadian police use a subjective and fluid definition of use of force, which enables and exacerbates violence and death. In many jurisdictions, current use of force regulations do not explicitly include de-escalation or crisis intervention, and nor do they require that officers be trained on how to interact with individuals who are or may be labeled as experiencing a crisis.
21. To legally justify the lethal use of force, police often rely on claiming a weapon was present. However, due to the pervasive culture and practice of deception and lawbreaking by police,<sup>27</sup> such justifications have been known to be inaccurate or lack credibility, and in numerous instances such claims have been contested as false by other civilian eyewitnesses.<sup>28</sup>
22. Police often use a disproportionate level of force, which results in death. When examining homicides where there was an alleged weapon present, police officers disproportionately use their firearms in comparison with the type of weapon that the victim was alleged to have. For example, out of the 594 individuals killed by police firearms from 2000 to 2024, 425 (or 71.5%) were not alleged to be in possession of a firearm, and 27.7 percent (or 221 cases) were noted as being completely unarmed.<sup>29</sup>
23. In some instances, the firearms used violate international standards. For example, in inquests where autopsy information is presented it has been revealed that the Ontario Provincial Police

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<sup>23</sup> Qi, D., et al. 2022. Health Impact of Street Sweeps from the Perspective of Healthcare Providers. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 37(14), 3707–3714. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-022-07471-y>; Meehan, A. A., et al. 2024. Involuntary displacement and self-reported health in a cross-sectional survey of people experiencing homelessness in Denver, Colorado, 2018–2019. *BMC Public Health*, 24(1), 1159. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-18681-w>; Westbrook, M., & Robinson, T. 2021. Unhealthy by design: Health & safety consequences of the criminalization of homelessness. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, 30(2), 107–115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10530789.2020.1763573>

<sup>24</sup> Wortley, S, et al. 2021

<sup>25</sup> Wortley, S, et al. 2021

<sup>26</sup> Sinyangwe, S. 2016. *Examining the Role of Use of Force Policies in Ending Police Violence*. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2841872](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2841872)

<sup>27</sup> Puddister, K., and Danielle McNabb. 2021. “When the Police Break the Law: The Investigation, Prosecution and Sentencing of Ontario Police Officers.” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 36(3), 381–404.

<sup>28</sup> Marin, A. 2008. Oversight Unseen: Ombudsman Report - Investigation into the Special Investigations Unit's operational effectiveness and credibility. Ombudsman Ontario. [https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/Files/sitemedia/Documents/Investigations/SORT%20Investigations/siureporteng\\_1.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/Files/sitemedia/Documents/Investigations/SORT%20Investigations/siureporteng_1.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Crosby, A et al. 2025.

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(OPP) use *hollow point bullets*, which violate international firearms standards,<sup>30</sup> as they are known to increase deaths because of the flesh damage they create compared to solid bullets. In some instances, police unions have advocated for the use of such bullets as they are lighter for the officers to carry on their equipment belts.<sup>31</sup>

### Police custody deaths

24. There has also been an increase in deaths in police custody.<sup>32</sup> From the year 2000 to 2024 there have been a minimum of 279 deaths in police custody across Canada.<sup>33</sup> In BC, the number of deaths in police custody has increased eightfold since 2013. In Saskatchewan, from 2018 to 2021, in the small town of Prince Albert, 6 young Indigenous men died in police custody - making it the city with the 5<sup>th</sup> highest rate of police custody deaths, while it has a population of 37,756, placing it outside the top 100 most populous municipalities in Canada.
25. Many deaths in police custody were preventable and occurred due to lack of appropriate medical and mental health attention, including medical neglect, drug toxicity, suicide, and a reliance on police custody for intoxication in “drunk tanks”, over sending home or to hospital if in need of care.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, there are numerous police custody deaths due to use of force, and restraints, including controversial spit hoods – which are banned in other jurisdictions, yet have resulted in a minimum of 3 deaths since 2014.<sup>35</sup>

### Ineffective police oversight

26. Civilian oversight is critical to the realization of democracy, yet police oversight bodies across Canada are plagued by a lack of transparency, and where in many cases agencies claim to be civilian led, but investigators are primarily former police or seconded from policing roles. For example, as of 2023, at Ontario’s Special Investigations Unit, of the 27 as-required investigators, 17 come to the Unit with a police background, and 9 of the forensic investigators have police backgrounds.<sup>36</sup>
27. Numerous reports have highlighted a lack of true accountability on the outcomes of police oversight in Canada, where a ubiquitous blue wall of silence – of police protecting police,

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<sup>30</sup> Declaration on the Use of Bullets Which Expand or Flatten Easily in the Human Body; July 29, 1899 Article IV, Section 3 of the 1899 Hague Convention, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/dec99-03.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/dec99-03.asp)

<sup>31</sup> Reported during numerous inquests during the presentation of evidence, which are allowed to be recorded.

<sup>32</sup> Ramzy, M. (Aug. 9, 2024). “Canada’s First Database to Track In-Custody Deaths Has Been Released: Here is What it Reveals”, Toronto Star, [https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/canadas-first-database-to-track-in-custody-deaths-has-been-released-heres-what-it-reveals/article\\_9ef8e2f4-55b8-11ef-a462-b37a25c85a46.html](https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/canadas-first-database-to-track-in-custody-deaths-has-been-released-heres-what-it-reveals/article_9ef8e2f4-55b8-11ef-a462-b37a25c85a46.html)

<sup>33</sup> See: <https://trackinginjustice.ca/what-does-the-database-tell-us-about-deaths-in-custody-across-canada-provinces-territories-jurisdictions-institutions/>

<sup>34</sup> See: <https://trackinginjustice.ca/what-does-the-database-tell-us-about-deaths-in-custody-across-canada-causes-manner-of-death-use-of-force/>

<sup>35</sup> Boisvert, E. Nov. 25, 2024. “Le masque anti-crachat, un outil controversé”: <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2122233/police-force-masque-crachat>; Tracking (In)Justice. 2024. Fact Sheets Spit Hoods Deaths in Custody in Canada, <https://trackinginjustice.ca/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet-Spit-Hoods-Deaths-in-Custody-in-Canada-4.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> See: <https://www.siu.on.ca/en/index.php>



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coupled with non-cooperation of police officers in oversight investigations,<sup>37</sup> and a deliberate mishandling of cases.<sup>38</sup> Counter to the transparent missions of oversight bodies, evidence can be restricted leading to lack of due process, or the ability for independent review or interpretation. All components in the *Criminal Code* emphasize the importance of evidence. However, the families who have lost loved ones to police homicide find there is often a lack of evidence during periods leading to an inquest and at the inquest.

28. Unlike civilians, police who kill a civilian do not face charges until after long oversight investigations, and in some cases, police who are under investigation for deadly use of force can remain on duty and have also been promoted. However, it is very rare that such charges are ever laid after an investigation. There is a very low rate of accountability, or findings of wrongdoing from investigations. For example, when police kill or injure someone, they seldom face charges or discipline and they rarely cooperate with independent oversight bodies,<sup>39</sup> and in Ontario, 92% of oversight investigations into the deaths of racialized people resulted in no charges.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, many families have reported that outcomes of investigations can seek to justify the death by blaming or pathologizing the person who was killed.
29. Inquest jury recommendations are never systemically analyzed nor are they mandatory to be implemented to prevent further deaths, despite being the purpose of the inquest. Unreasonable delays - of many years - in conducting inquests, along with a lack of procedural rigour, and massive financial cost, mean that inquests result in limited impact of accountability, leading to no justice being done.

### **Impact on families: trauma, intimidation & lack of support**

30. Provincial governments have acknowledged that there is a widespread lack of support for families when their loved one is killed by police.<sup>41</sup> In some provinces, family members are not eligible for Victim's Services programs and thus are left with no support. Furthermore, trauma-informed, grief-informed and culturally relevant supports are non-existent in the aftermath of a death.
31. Many surviving families have observed and experienced a complete lack of political will to improve conditions for grieving families. Furthermore, lack of access to justice is a challenge for many families, as many are low income, and in many provinces, families must pay for legal

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<sup>37</sup> Puddister, K. 2023. Oversight and Accountability for Serious Incidents in Canada: Who Polices the Police?. Canadian Public Administration 66, no. 3: 390–408.

<sup>38</sup> Marin, A. 2008. Oversight Unseen: Ombudsman Report - Investigation into the Special Investigations Unit's operational effectiveness and credibility. Ombudsman Ontario. [https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/Files/sitemedia/Documents/Investigations/SORT%20Investigations/siureporteng\\_1.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/Files/sitemedia/Documents/Investigations/SORT%20Investigations/siureporteng_1.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> MacDonald, N. February 27, 2017. Police oversight bodies hindered by silence of accused officers, Globe analysis finds, Globe and Mail, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-police-oversight-bodies-hindered-by-silence-of-officers-globe-analysis/>; MacDonald, N. and Hager M. February 3, 2023. Charges in Police-involved deaths a rarity in B.C., data show. Globe and Mail, <https://globe2go.pressreader.com/article/281629604418483>; Pinette, C. 2020. A call to modernize police accountability: An evaluation of the law's response to excess use of force by police in British Columbia [University of Victoria]. [https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/bitstream/1828/11691/1/Pinette\\_Celia\\_LLM\\_2020.pdf](https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/bitstream/1828/11691/1/Pinette_Celia_LLM_2020.pdf) ;

<sup>40</sup> Bhati, G. 2024. Accountability in Ontario Policing: Examining SIU Outcomes for Racialized Police Involved Deaths. Carleton University.

<sup>41</sup> Tulloch, M. H. 2018.

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representation at an inquest. This is further intensified in rural communities, where there are less lawyers available.

- 32.** During death investigations by oversight bodies, family members have faced intimidation, coercion and surveillance from police and investigators. Additionally, vital information on the circumstances of the death, such as coroners' reports or autopsy records can be withheld, leaving families without vital information to which they are entitled.
- 33.** Police oversight-body investigations can be lengthy, opaque and intimidating, and can lack a trauma and grief-informed approach. In B.C., it has been noted that the average timeline for the Independent Investigations Office to provide a report to crown counsel, or to provide a public report has been between 569 to 573 days.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, a loved one's clothing and belongings can also be withheld during an investigation, which can deny Indigenous families their traditional rights to hold culturally relevant ceremony to acknowledge their loss, which is a further violation of Canada's UNDRIP commitments, specifically, Article 11, the right of Indigenous people to practice and revitalize their culture, and Article 15 acknowledging Indigenous people's right to dignity in the practice of culture and tradition.

### **Canadian Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments must:**

- **Reallocate federal and provincial police agency funds to support community needs, including housing, mental health supports, harm reduction and rehabilitation, and education.**
- **Initiate a national and public civilian-led inquiry into the police killing of Indigenous people across Canada.**
- **Establish strict use of force standards across the country which require only disengagement and de-escalation techniques, and which ban the police use of firearms entirely.**
- **Ensure police officers are held to the same legal standard as civilians and charged immediately once a homicide takes place.**
- **Ensure actual civilian oversight and ban all former and current police officers from working at oversight agencies.**
- **Ban the use of "drunk tanks" for holding intoxicated people in police custody.**
- **Ban the use of policing to respond to mental health wellness checks, overdose calls, and end to police powers of apprehension under the provincial Mental Health Acts across the country.**
- **Ban the use of "no-knock raids" by all police forces.**
- **Ban the use of spit hoods by all police forces.**
- **Eliminate policing positions in high schools.**

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<sup>42</sup> Pinette, C. 2020.