



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
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MKO Condemns Ignorant Remarks by Winnipeg Mayoral Candidate

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing a statement to condemn ignorant remarks made at a forum for Winnipeg mayoral candidates yesterday evening in Treaty One territory.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee states:

“On behalf of MKO, I condemn the ignorant, uninformed remarks by a Winnipeg mayoral candidate regarding violence against Indigenous women. This candidate is placing the onus on Indigenous men when asked about safety for women in Winnipeg. He stated Indigenous men need to come to the table to address the issue—clearly, this man has no ties to First Nations citizens or communities. This is very concerning. I urge the mayoral candidate to apologize to the First Nations citizens across the province for your disparaging comments and reconsider your decision to seek the position of Mayor.

If he had a strong connection to First Nations, he would have relationships with us and know we already have many warriors who are ‘at the table,’ working to reclaim cultural teachings and to end gender-based violence. I commend all First Nations citizens who are doing this work, along with our allies who are supporting us.

MKO’s Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Liaison Unit has been actively working for years to address the issue of gender-based violence. Every year, we host events in Winnipeg, including vigils for our missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Our organization continues to promote and recognize the importance of *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.

I have urged leaders at all levels to work diligently to address the ongoing issue of gender-based violence and its deadly impacts on First Nations citizens across the Province of Manitoba. The future leader of the City of Winnipeg should have strong ties and a comprehensive understanding of the issues First Nations women, girls, Two Spirit, and gender-diverse people are facing in this city. It is essential that the incoming Mayor has a strong relationship with our community members and leadership, as Winnipeg has the largest urban Indigenous population in Canada.

MKO honours all the people, families, and Nations who are being impacted by gender-based violence. I am sorry that you are exposed to disgusting remarks shared by a mayoral candidate. This type of attitude does nothing to improve public safety in the City of Winnipeg—it only creates division and spreads misinformation. It is essential we see mayoral candidates who are willing to build bridges and stand with us as we continue to heal from the genocidal practice of residential schools.

As we embark on Truth and Reconciliation Week, there is an opportunity for this candidate to take time to learn about the realities of First Nations citizens. We need allies, not more racism, especially from community leaders. MKO stands in solidarity with all First Nations citizens.”

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