



Aboriginal Housing Management Association
Celebrating 25 Years

For Immediate Release

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Solution to Downtown Eastside Encampments Requires Fulfilling Government Commitments to Human Rights and Reconciliation

Unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations, Vancouver BC – In response to the ongoing atrocities taking place in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES) the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) is once again calling on all three levels of government to honour their commitments to human rights and reconciliation.

As residents are being forced to relocate, AHMA CEO Margaret Pfoh says that “Once again every level of government has failed miserably when it comes to fulfilling their human rights and reconciliation commitments. There is insufficient housing. Only a portion of housing providers offer complex care and culturally safe wraparound supports. Homeless youth are treated the same as homeless adults. Quite literally the situation is an unmitigated disaster that has only gotten worse over the past few years.” Pfoh went on to say that “It has been particularly discouraging that no effort was made to engage with AHMA prior to the relocation process beginning given that 40% of encampment residents identifying as Indigenous. This is just more of the same – political rhetoric followed-by deafening silence and inaction.”

In a paper recently commissioned by the National Housing Council to review relevant research on the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing – which included input from both international and domestic housing and human rights professionals – experts summarized the right to adequate housing as ***the right to live in security, peace, and dignity***. According to Pfoh “None of that is possible until there is meaningful leadership by the city, the province and the federal government – leadership that is comprehensive, evidence-based and includes appropriate budgeting and resource allocations.”

Despite Canada having ratified several international human rights conventions – including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – the implementation of these conventions is few and far between. When it comes to advancing reconciliation Pfoh notes that “Advancing reconciliation requires all communities to ensure that decision-making on housing considers the needs of Indigenous Peoples and recognizes that adequate housing is not only foundational to the beginning of a healing path but also a basic human right. If there was ever a time for ***reconciliACTION*** on Indigenous housing, it is now.”

Facts/Statistics

- For every dollar invested in Indigenous housing, seven dollars returns to society in savings and benefits.
- **39%** of British Columbians rate housing, homelessness, and poverty as their number one concern. That is more than double the closest second place issue, healthcare, at **18%**.
- **68%** support including affordable housing targets to meet the unique needs of Indigenous people in housing needs reports.

Earlier in this year AHMA published an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy for British Columbia. Rooted in a 'For Indigenous, By Indigenous' methodology, Pfoh states that "We have solutions to the housing, homelessness, and poverty struggles our people are facing but government seems disinterested in meaningful partnership."

In response to all the above, Pfoh is calling on all of Vancouver's Mayoral Candidates to commit to adopting AHMA's Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy if elected on October 15th. She is further calling on the Union of BC Municipalities to champion new policies at this year's conference – policies that see Indigenous housing as part of each municipalities Official Community Plan or Housing Strategy.

"This is the worst the housing crisis has ever been, and we need to push our elected officials to finally do what they said they would do or show them the door."

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APPENDIX:

Source:

- <https://bcnpha.ca/housing-homelessness-and-poverty-emerge-as-top-issues-for-voters-heading-into-b-c-civic-elections-this-fall/>
- https://housingrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/NHC-Progressive-Realization-Paper_EN.pdf

Canadian Human Rights Ratified Conventions:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racism (CERD).
- UN Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Learn more:

- Information about For Indigenous, By Indigenous housing solutions is available in [AHMA's Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy for BC.](#)

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