

NEWS RELEASE

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Families With no Recourse for Death Investigations Call for Disbandment of Thunder Bay Police Service

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QUEEN'S PARK, ON: Families with no recourse for credible death investigations into the loss of their loved ones are calling for the disbandment of the Thunder Bay Police Service, and a new police service to investigate these losses, in complaints filed today with the Inspector General of Policing of Ontario.

"The Thunder Bay Police Service has turned into a cold case factory when it comes to investigations into the deaths of Indigenous Peoples. There is a complete lack of trust. Everything has broken down and it can't be repaired. It's like watching a disaster unfold in slow motion, and it has life-changing consequences for our members. It is time for the provincial government to show they care about what is happening in Thunder Bay and disband this Service. Our families don't need any more reports – they need action," said Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler.

Nearly 50 family members, leaders, and supporters participated in the announcement during a press conference hosted by Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa at Queen's Park this morning.

In light of the Thunder Bay Police Service's historic and current failures to provide adequate and effective policing, families members are requesting that the Inspector General reassign the death investigations of Jenna Ostberg, Corey Belesky, and Mackenzie Moonias to a different police service and dissolve the Thunder Bay Police Service.

"We are in this situation because Ontario failed to act when we called for the disbandment of the Thunder Bay Police in 2022. More and more, our members are asking why they are allowed to disregard the lives of Indigenous Peoples the way that they do. There is no trust, and there are no answers for our grieving families. We fully support the complaints filed by these families and acknowledge their tremendous courage for holding those in power accountable," said Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum.

The complaints were brought to the Inspectorate of Policing because of the specific failure of the Thunder Bay Police Service to provide adequate and effective policing in relation to the death and death investigation of Indigenous Peoples, the historic failure to provide adequate and effective policing to Indigenous people in Thunder Bay, and Ontario's failure to disband this police service in the face of ongoing calls from Indigenous leadership and our communities.

Established under the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* (CSPA), the Inspector General of Policing has a legislative mandate to drive improvements in policing performance, modernize police governance, and enhance public trust.

Under the SCPA, the Inspector General (and the Inspectorate of Policing) has the authority to improve the performance of police services and police service boards by:

- Responding to public complaints concerning adequate and effective police service delivery and allegations of police board member misconduct.
- Imposing measures to ensure the provision of adequate and effective policing or in cases of a policing emergency.

Copies of the complaints and background information available at: www.falconers.ca

Video of today's press conference will be available at: www.youtube.com/@nishnawbeaskination

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