ᐧᐃᓂᐯᑯᐃᐅᔥᒡ ᓃᐦᒋᑦᑭᐃᐅᔥᒡ ᐁ ᓇᑕᒫᑐᐧᑖᐤ (ᐃᐅᔥ ᐊᔾᑦ)
Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)
Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)

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Cree Nation Government
Gouvernement de la Nation Crie

Whapmagoostui
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Chisasibi
ᒋᑦᓱᐢᐃ

Wemindji
ᐃᒥᓐᑦ

Eastmain
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Waskaganish
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Nemaska
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Waswanipi
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Ouje-Bougoumou
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Mistissini
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Washaw Sibi
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Message from the Office of Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty

In Honour of the Lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Gender Diverse People

Nemaska, Eeyou Istchee (October 4, 2021) – Each year, a Sisters in Spirit Vigil is held in honour of the lives of missing and murdered women and girls and to show support for their families across the country and in Eeyou Istchee.

This year also marks the one-year anniversary of the death of Joyce Echaquan, who died last September while in the care of a hospital just north of Montreal, moments after she recorded footage of herself receiving a barrage of racist remarks from health care staff. The mistreatment that Joyce Echaquan experienced was a painful reminder to indigenous people across the country of the systemic racism and neglect that still exists.

Not unlike the deplorable treatment Joyce received, the families and friends of MMIWG are often subject to below adequate or standard services from the police and justice system. In a country where Indigenous women are 5x more likely than other women to die from violent acts, proper and compassionate services must be the norm, not the exception. To fix a problem, we must be able to identify and name it. The roots of systemic racism are deep and painful and have no place in today's society.

"Commemorating and keeping the conversations alive on the crude reality our People have been subject to is essential to changing the standards that have been inadequate for far too long. The Cree Nation acknowledges those who have gone too soon, like Sindy Ruperthouse, and continues to lend support to the families still seeking answers. The implementation of the Viens Commission's Calls for Action in collaboration with Indigenous organizations is necessary if we are to ensure that never again a family will have to go through what Joyce Echaquan's has had to. We acknowledge the strength of her family and children as they enter their healing journey." – Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty

As we enter Women's History Month, let us celebrate the contributions women have made to our society, past and present. May we encourage our young girls to dream big and support them in their curiosities and interests. Empowered women empower women. May we be role models for the next generation.

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