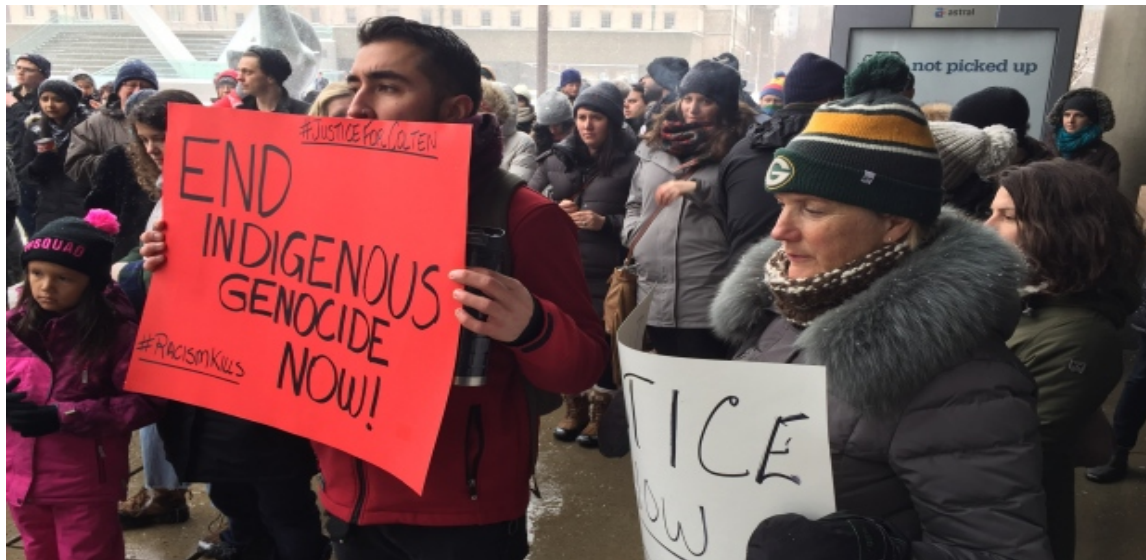


Toronto

Not guilty verdict in death of Colten Boushie is 'black eye' for Canada, says Indigenous leader

Comments by Isadore Day, AFN regional chief, come as people rally in downtown Toronto

By Muriel Draaisma, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 10, 2018 12:06 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 10, 2018 1:52 PM ET



Some 200 people attended a rally at Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square to denounce the verdict. (Colman Jones/CBC)

A verdict of not guilty in the shooting death of a young Indigenous man in Saskatchewan is a "black eye" for Canada, says an Indigenous leader in Ontario.

Isadore Day, Ontario regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations, said the verdict "indicates that there is racism in Canada's legal system" and that it undermines current efforts at reconciliation.

"I think the verdict is an outrage for sure. People are in disbelief," Day told CBC Toronto on Saturday.

- [Shouts of 'murderer' in courtroom after Gerald Stanley acquitted in Colten Boushie shooting](#)
- ['I don't have any hope tonight' says U of M Native studies prof after Gerald Stanley acquittal](#)

A reportedly all-white jury in Battleford, Sask., deliberated for 13 hours before finding Gerald Stanley, 56, not guilty of second-degree murder in the 2016 death of Colten Boushie, 22, from the Red Pheasant First Nation.

"We as First Nations leaders across the country will rally our support for the Boushie family," Day said.



Isadore Day, Ontario regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations, says: 'We can never bring back the life of Colten Boushie. Certainly, in his memory and in preparation for these situations, should they ever happen again, something should be done to ensure justice is served.' (Markus Schwabe/CBC)

Day said the AFN will provide whatever legal support is needed by the family to demand an appeal of the verdict. The AFN is also prepared to raise funds if needed.

According to day, the organization will call upon Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould to intervene in the case, whether that means calling for an appeal or launching a public inquiry into the administration of justice in Canada.

It is not enough to "give sentiment in retrospect," he said.

"We can never bring back the life of Colten Boushie. Certainly, in his memory and in preparation for these situations, should they ever happen again, something should be done to ensure justice is served."

'Cards are stacked' against Indigenous people

Day said the verdict could "derail" efforts at reconciliation, adding that "the cards are stacked against" Indigenous people in Canada.

"In light of social justice and in light in reconciliation, this certainly is a black eye on Canada and it certainly should be corrected," he said.



Colten Boushie was killed on a farm near Biggar, Sask., in August 2016. (Facebook)

Rallies are scheduled across the country both on Saturday and for coming days to demonstrate support for Boushie's family.

A Toronto rally on Saturday drew at least 200 people to Nathan Phillips Square.

Other rallies are expected in Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria, Ottawa, London, Ont., Kitchener, Ont., Thunder Bay, Ont., and Halifax.

The trial heard Boushie was shot in the head while he was sitting in an SUV that had been driven onto Stanley's farm near Biggar in central Saskatchewan.

The SUV driver testified the group had been drinking during the day and tried to break into a truck on a neighbouring farm, but went to the Stanley property in search of help with a flat tire.

Stanley testified that he fired warning shots to scare the group off. He said the fatal shot occurred when he reached into the SUV to grab the keys out of the ignition and his gun "just went off."

Case relevant for Ontario

Day said the case is relevant for Ontario because Indigenous people are mistreated by provincial institutions here as well.

- **First Nations Chiefs 'shocked' by Timmins deaths**

For example, he said Indigenous leaders are wondering if systemic racism contributed to the deaths of two residents from Fort Albany, near the James Bay coast, while under the care of Timmins Police Service. Both deaths are now being investigated by Ontario's Special Investigations Unit.



Protesters at a rally in Toronto drum to show their support for the family of Colten Boushie. (Colman Jones/CBC)

"These two people, what's unfortunate is that they both had altercations with the health care system and community safety system and they both died," Day said.

"This clearly has us questioning the high probability of racism in Ontario's institutions."

Joey Knapaysweet, 21, and Agnes Sutherland, 62, left Fort Albany to seek medical care in Timmins, according a statement released by Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, Mushkegowuk Council Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon, and Fort Albany First Nation Chief Andrew Solomon.

Knapaysweet had an "interaction" with Timmins police, which resulted in a pursuit, where an officer shot and killed him on Feb. 3, according to the SIU.

The chiefs said, Sutherland, confined to a wheelchair, was treated roughly when she was taken into police custody after going to a local shelter. She suffered "severe complications" while detained and taken to a hospital, where she died on Feb. 4.

Day said: "We need to look at this and say something went wrong."



A sign and photo of Colten Boushie sits in front of the Court of Queen's Bench in Battleford, Sask. (Liam Richards/Canadian Press)

With files from The Canadian Press