

June 15, 2020

**First Call Statement On Anti-Black Racism and Police Violence**

First Call is committed to ensuring that Canada and BC live up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and that all decisions are made through the lens of children’s rights. We recognize that police violence against Black people stems from white supremacy and the long-term oppression of Black people and we condemn it in the strongest terms. We know this oppression takes a variety of forms including state-sanctioned violence, economic inequality, food insecurity, housing insecurity, and is evident in unequal outcomes with respect to education and health, among other things.

We also know systemic racism is not unique to our southern neighbours. Canada has its own history of police violence, economic inequality, and a myriad of injustices leveled against Black, racialized, migrant and Indigenous people. These injustices are often perpetrated by public policy including the apprehension of children from their families with devastating intergenerational impacts.

As a policy and advocacy coalition based on human rights and the right of children to grow up free from violence, we see the life-long impacts from trauma, marginalization and indifference. First Call is committed to shining light on these injustices and challenging discrimination in policy and practice.

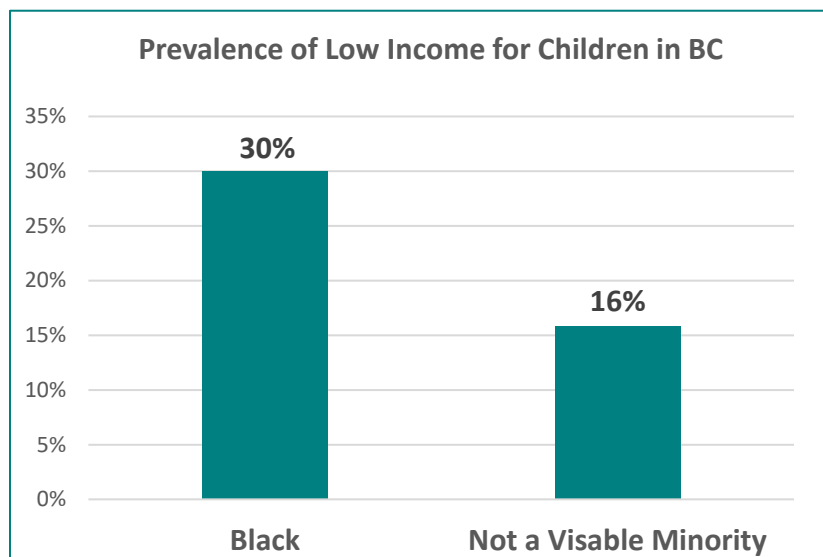
In partnership with [Campaign 2000](#) and provincial/territorial partners, we have issued [a special report](#) that examines the overrepresentation of Black, racialized and Indigenous families with children among Canada’s poorest families. And we call for government, civil society and indeed, all of us to take action – meaningful action to right historic wrongs and ensure Black Canadians and their families can live and thrive free from systemic discrimination and fear of violence.

**Prevalence of Black and Indigenous Family Poverty in BC**

Year over year, the data shows us poverty rates are significantly higher for Black and Indigenous children.

This chart shows the rate for Black children in BC measured by the 2016 Census.

**Of course we know that children’s poverty is family poverty.**



The data also shows shameful rates of poverty for Indigenous children and their families.

Eliminating child poverty is critical because we know the impacts of living in deep poverty are devastating for children and youth.

They can even have a higher risk of becoming homeless and, potentially, being removed from their families and placed in government care.

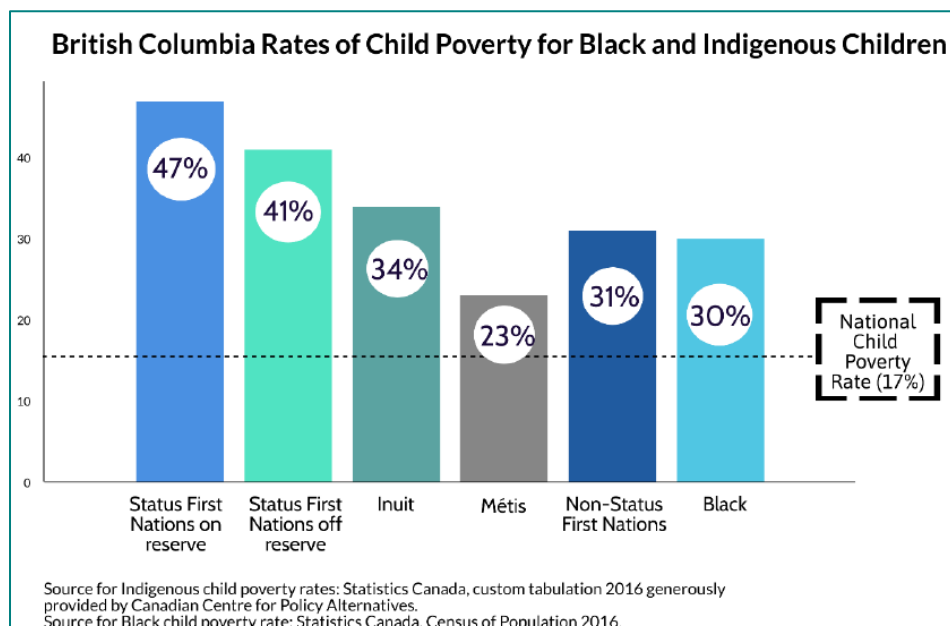


Chart Source: [Campaign 2000](#)

Based on a small sample of only 40 urban and rural First Nations reserves in BC, we can see that children living on these rural reserves have an even higher rate of poverty at 54.2%:

**On-reserve child poverty (0-17 year olds), based on CFLIM-AT, 2017 taxfiler data**

	Number of reserves/First Nations communities	Number of poor children	Child poverty rate
Urban	18	1,730	35.0%
Rural	22	1,880	54.2%
Total	40	3,610	42.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, Income Statistics Division, T1 Family File, data revised on November 13, 2019

Poverty is the most important social determinant of health. Long-term studies show that even access to universal medical care cannot overcome the likelihood that growing up poor will lead to life-long, persistent health issues. And new research indicates that growing up in poor communities is a reliable predictor of limited socio-economic mobility as an adult.

All levels of government must ensure poverty reduction strategies are properly resourced, targeted at the most marginalized families and implemented in a timely way. Children can't wait.

**putting children and youth first**

## Recommendations

- Declare anti-Black racism a public health crisis.
- Enhance accountability infrastructure to address police brutality, police violence and harms to Black communities.
- Accelerate implementation of the recommendations from the 2017 United Nations Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its Mission to Canada so Black communities and families can fully and equally participate in all aspects of society.
- Accelerate implementation of the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and recommendations from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.
- Adopt the 231 Calls to Justice to end genocide from the Final Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

First Call's [2019 BC Child Poverty Report Card](#) includes [maps](#) and [regional factsheets](#) with additional detail on child poverty in BC.

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