

## **CUPE Atlantic/Maritime Indigenous Council & National Indigenous Council report**

2025-2026 has been a time of reflection and growth.

I sit as the cochair for CAMIC, as well, I was appointed to the National Indigenous Council again for two years. It's an honour to sit with other Indigenous CUPE activists from one coast to another.

National Indigenous Council continues to support Bridget Tolley, founder of Families of Sisters in Spirit. As a member of NIC, I was able to support Bridget Tolley at Parliament in Ottawa, as she held a vigil for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-spirited people.

Why do NIC and CAMIC support Bridget Tolly? Because 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report: Only about 2 have been fully completed, around 138 are "in progress" (or actioned), about 82 are still pending/not yet started. The crisis is not accidental or individual — it is systemic, ongoing, and rooted in colonial violence. It calls for deep, structural change led by Indigenous peoples themselves. The Inquiry concluded that the violence amounts to: A form of genocide — specifically, "race-based genocide of Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis," driven by colonial systems and policies.

Over the past year, First Nations communities across New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have carried profound grief and loss—burdens that are not new, but part of an ongoing pattern rooted in colonial systems. Families and Nations have been shaken by the deaths of two community members during RCMP wellness checks—interventions that were meant to ensure safety but instead resulted in tragedy. These losses echo a deeper and longstanding reality: Indigenous peoples continue to experience harm in interactions with policing systems, with limited accountability and little meaningful change.

From an Indigenous lens, these are not isolated incidents—they are connected to broader histories of over-surveillance, systemic racism, and the disruption of Indigenous ways of caring for one another. The call from communities is not only for accountability, but for a transformation grounded in respect, self-determination, and culturally rooted approaches to wellness and safety.

In response to these urgent and ongoing harms, CAMIC brought forward an emergency resolution, calling for immediate action to address these injustices.

NIC and CAMIC continue to support the Water is Life Campaign. I wrote a letter for CAMIC supporting PEI's local 830 water authority strike, PEI member, Josie Gallant presented the letter to the local.

CUPE's "Water Is Life" campaign is important because it connects Indigenous rights, public services, and environmental justice—and pushes for real accountability where governments have long failed.

The phrase "Water Is Life" comes from Indigenous worldviews that understand water as sacred, living, and relational—not a commodity. CUPE's campaign aligns with this by recognizing water as a human right, the responsibility to protect water for future generations and the leadership of Indigenous communities in water protection

This campaign holds governments accountable. CUPE uses this campaign to pressure governments to end all long-term boil water advisories, invest in public (not privatized) water systems and respect Indigenous sovereignty and decision-making.

**The campaign reinforces that access to clean water is not optional, it is a legal and moral obligation.**

CAMIC continues to post important issues on Facebook. This year, we endorsed Debra Merrier's National DVP campaign. CAMIC has been an active council around CUPE's Anti-Racism campaign. PEI member, Josie Gallant, was interviewed by CUPE Talk in the Atlantic. Over the last year, CAMIC was asked to review land acknowledgements in negotiated contracts.

I participated in a national campaign to highlight NIC members: <https://cupe.ca/mary-guptill-moving-indigenous-people-forward>

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada developed 94 Calls to Action. Reconciliation is not only something written, but also something we carry and live. So, I ask you: what is your personal 95th Call to Action? What teachings will you walk with? What responsibilities will you carry forward? What will be your legacy for those yet to come?

For myself, my call to action is to live in a good way—guided by spirit, grounded in our teachings, and accountable to my relations. I strive to walk gently and with intention, so that I may be a good ancestor, thinking always of the next seven generations and the path we are leaving for them.

Key dates to remember are Red Dress Day (May 5), National Day of Truth & Reconciliation (September 30), National Indigenous Day (June 21) and Treaty Day (October 1).

In Solidarity,

Mary Guptill  
Sipene'katik Mi'kmaq First Nation  
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## References

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