



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2021

T̓silhqot̓'in Nation Calls for more Searching on Former Residential School Lands

Williams Lake, BC: In the wake of the discovery of remains of 215 children at the former Indian Residential School in Tk'emlups te Secwepemc Nation the T̓silhqot̓'in Nation is calling for more research to be done at all former Indian Residential School sites. For far too long the voices of Indigenous people have been pushed aside as people choose to not believe what happened in our not so distant past.

The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation's thoughts and prayers remain with the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc Nation and all Indigenous families that had their children taken away from them to attend the Kamloops Indian Residential School. Our collective strength and prayers are needed during this haunting and traumatic time.

To fully know the truth of Residential Schools in BC there needs to be further investigation into the former Residential School lands. This includes the use of ground penetrating radar to fully understand the extent of the atrocities at these sites. Of particular interest is the St. Joseph's Mission in Williams Lake, BC where T̓silhqot̓'in children never returned home from.

Quotes:

Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chair, T̓silhqot̓'in National Government

"The events that happened in Kamloops, BC are not isolated events. Our children never came home. Our elders have told us what happened. Children died – we know that. The discovery of remains of 215 children is evidence that nobody wanted to believe – refused to believe. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone that attended the Indian Residential School system as we know this opens so many wounds and memories that we need to heal from. We are organizing an emergency ground ceremony in the Chilcotin, with local and regional Chiefs in wake of the 215 children's bodies found.

"Canada and the Catholic Church have a responsibility to address and apologize for their involvement with this atrocity. These Residential Schools were not about education but were about eliminating Indigenous Peoples. We call for the full investigation at all Residential School lands including St. Joseph Mission in order to bring closure to our families who had their children disappear."

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TŜILHQOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Nts'íl'ín (Chief) Otis Guichon, Vice Chair, Tŕilhqot'in National Government

“As a survivor of a Residential School myself, I can tell you that this news is not surprising to me. We knew children never came home. My heart and prayers go out to everyone that holds the weight and the burden of, not only the discovery, but the knowledge of what truly happened at these sites. All eyes are on Canada now to confront this dark history that is squarely in the spotlight.”

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