

URGENT ACTION

JUSTICE FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

On 27 May, the remains of 215 Indigenous children were found on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia. Remains have also been found on the grounds of the former Brandon Indian Residential School in Manitoba, and it is expected that remains could be confirmed at additional sites across Canada. Residential schools were part of a colonial policy to eradicate Indigenous cultures, languages, and communities. While the last school closed in 1996, intergenerational trauma, ongoing harms and discriminatory practices continue. The Canadian government must take responsibility for ending human rights abuses against Indigenous peoples now.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council
80 Wellington St, Ottawa,
ON K1P 5K9, Canada
Email: pm@pm.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

On 27 May 2021, the remains of 215 Indigenous children were found on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in Tk'emlups te Secwépemc First Nation near Kamloops, British Columbia. These children should never have been taken from their families.

The Canadian government is responsible for discriminatory colonial policies and practices like residential schools, and Canada must take responsibility for ending human rights abuses against Indigenous peoples now.

I call on you to take the following actions without delay:

- * Investigate and prosecute those responsible for the deaths of Indigenous children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School and other former residential and day schools;***
- * Where requested by affected communities, fully fund examinations of burial grounds at other former residential and day schools and ensure that Indigenous peoples control access to sites according to their own laws and customs;***
- * Continue urging the Catholic Church to release all records and photos related to residential schools, and again seek an apology and reparations for survivors and their families;***
- * Implement the calls in the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada's Spirit Bear Plan, including stopping litigation of First Nations children;***
- * Fully fund mental health and other services to support Indigenous peoples in dealing with traumas caused by colonial policies and practices, in accordance with their wishes; and***
- * Implement the 94 calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.***

There must be justice and accountability for the harms that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada experience.

Sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Residential schools in Canada were part of a colonial policy to eradicate Indigenous cultures, languages, and communities. While the last school closed in 1996, intergenerational trauma, ongoing harms and discriminatory practices against Indigenous Peoples continue.

Because of discriminatory colonial policies, Métis, Inuit, and First Nations children continue to be disproportionately represented in the child welfare system. First Nations children living on reserve receive less money for healthcare and education than other children in Canada. Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people experience staggeringly high rates of violence. Inuit, Métis, and First Nations people too often experience racism when accessing or interacting with public services like policing and healthcare. The Canadian government frequently approves industrial projects on Indigenous territories without free, prior, and informed consent or recognition of Indigenous laws and scientific knowledge.

The reports of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2019, plus numerous reviews by the UN and other international human rights bodies, have documented the extent of the harms against Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and made thousands of recommendations to Canada to ensure justice and accountability for Indigenous Peoples.

Despite the harms being well known, and recommendations for change clearly laying out the path forward, Canada continues to resist real justice and accountability. It has yet to pass Bill C-15 to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It continues to litigate against First Nations children living on reserve, denying them the same levels of funding for basic services as other children in Canada. Canada is still fighting residential school and day school survivors in court, and it continues to resist calls from Indigenous Peoples to respect their right to self-determination and apply the principle of free, prior, and informed consent regarding industrial development on their territories.

To ensure justice and accountability—not only for the 215 children whose bodies were buried at the Kamloops Indian Residential School—but for all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples, Canada must take concrete action without delay.

You can read more about the Family Caring Society of Canada's Spirit Bear Plan [here](#) and the 94 calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation [here](#).

For more information, see: [Amnesty International Canada's statement, Lowering flags is not enough](#), 1 June 2021, and [blog post, Indigenous Children Deserve Justice and Accountability](#), 3 June 2021.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or French

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 26 July 2021

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Indigenous residential and day school survivors in Canada (they/them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: n/a