



Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

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NTC Statement on Discovery of 215 Children Buried at Former Kamloops Indian Residential School Site in Tk'emlups Traditional Territory

May 28, 2021

Port Alberni, BC – On May 27th, 2021 Tk'emlups te Secwepemc (Kamloops Indian Band) issued a press release confirming they had found the remains of 215 children by using ground penetrating radar around their community that housed the Kamloops Indian Residential school. Shock waves reverberated around the world and grief, horror and incredulity circulated throughout Indian country with respect to this horrific news.

First and foremost, the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council would like to send our deepest condolences to the families, friends, and Nations of the children discovered buried at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. These children never had the opportunity to return home and live a life they deeply deserved, nor were they respected with a proper burial with their loved ones present to grieve their loss.

We acknowledge that many children were taken far from their Nations, families/loved ones, and communities to attend Kamloops Indian Residential School, including Nuu-chah-nulth children. This was a direct result of Canada's racist mandate that was implemented through laws to rid this country of the "Indian in the child" through assimilation.

The lasting impacts of these schools/institutions continues to impact all Nuu-chah-nulth-aht and we acknowledge their healing journey. We ask people to be gentle with one another as this information can be triggering.

President Judith Sayers states "It is important that light has been shed on this tragic truth that many have known for so long, that numerous of our loved ones never returned home from residential school". Furthermore, Judith adds "the reality is that the federal and religious institutions may have wanted to silence these innocent children and forget about them, but these children can be silenced no longer."

Vice-President Mariah Charleson adds "Many Nuu-chah-nulth travelled very vast distances, far from their homes and families to attend Kamloops Indian Residential School. My heart goes out to every person impacted by these schools. This discovery is a reminder to all the survivors of the truth that they are forced to live with daily." Charleson goes on to say, "Though Canada's

mandate to assimilate us all failed, the legacy is still alive in each of us. Let's commit to healing; I believe our land and teachings as Nuu-chah-nulth-aht will be instrumental in this."

Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal council joins the calls for governments and churches to support Kamloops Indian Band including, financial, emotional, spiritual and educational. Tk'emlups needs money to put these children to rest in a good way.

Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council demands that the Government of Canada and the Catholic and other churches be accountable that these kinds of practices were carried on and not stopped. They must work with First Nations to discover the truth around other residential schools using ground penetrating radar to find any other burial sites. We cannot rest until this is done.

We cannot bring the lives of these children back, but we can recognize and educate on the truth of these horrific practices at residential schools and work on current education practices that nurture and teach our children in ways that builds their esteem and worth. Every child matters.

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About Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) provides programs and services to over 10,000 registered members. The role of the NTC is to represent 14 First Nations in three regions stretching 300 kilometers of the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island from Brooks Peninsula in the north to Point-no-Point in the south. The NTC represents Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkint, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay- aht, Kyuquot/Checklesah, Mowachaht /Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshaht, Uchucklesaht and Ucluelet First Nations and provides a variety of programs and services to them.

For more information, please visit www.nuuchahnulth.org.