



## Press Statement

### **CAP: Kamloops a Sobering Reminder of Ongoing Genocide**

May 31, (Ottawa, ON) – It is with great dismay that we recognize Canada’s Indigenous children whose lives were lost while suffering at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. 215 children had their lives cut short while being systematically persecuted and abused by the Government of Canada and religious authorities. These children were never given the chance to embrace their family heritage and culture, and were instead subject to forced assimilation. There must be accountability from federal, provincial, and religious officials as our people come to terms with this atrocity, and we investigate the sites of Canada’s other residential schools.

Elmer St Pierre, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples shares the following statement:

*What we have seen over the weekend triggers extreme trauma for the Indigenous Peoples who experienced the abuse of Canada’s residential school system first hand. Words cannot express our sympathy to all of the families of the 215 children unearthed at Tk’emlups te Secwépemc First Nation in Kamloops, B.C. These were innocent lives, the sons and daughters, nieces and nephews, grandsons and granddaughters. They were violently stolen by the Government of Canada, with the intent of exterminating their culture, language and way of life.*

*This was not an isolated incident. The residential school system was in operation until 1996, and our governments must take ownership of the costs associated with a full investigation of these sites. Thousands of children were taken from their families never to return. The survivors continue to carry the experience with them to this day, and continue to fight against the destruction of their language, culture and communities.*

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued 94 calls to action in its landmark 2015 report. These included measures to improve child welfare protections, education, language, health, and other areas where ongoing damage was seen from the legacy of residential schools. According to the Yellowhead Institute, only 9 of the 94 calls to action have been completed as of 2021. This is disgraceful.

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 70% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.