



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**STATEMENT FROM CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**  
**NATIONAL CHIEF RE: JULY FIRST CANADA DAY CELEBRATIONS**

(OTTAWA, ON. June 30, 2021) Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) National Chief Elmer St. Pierre has echoed the voices of countless Indigenous Peoples in this country stating that this July 1<sup>st</sup>, Canada Day celebrations across Turtle Island should be cancelled. National Chief St. Pierre has stated:

**“Given the recent discovery of the remains of over one thousand of our children and youth, and news of ongoing injustices that all Indigenous people have faced, and continue to face to today, what is there to celebrate? We should use Canada Day every year as a day to mourn and remember Indigenous peoples.”**

Many Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities are developing other alternatives to commemorate July 1<sup>st</sup> in a way that honours Indigenous Children and Youth. CAP strongly encourages anyone that is able, to participate in one of these alternatives in a safe way that is consistent with following public health regulations. We ask all of our Indigenous brothers & sisters to check in and take care of one another during these difficult days.

July 1<sup>st</sup> has been a contentious date on the calendar for some time in the Indigenous community but more so given the recent revelations that have come to light in this country. It is at this time that we would like to extend our thanks to the non-Indigenous community and allies of the Indigenous community for helping to amplify these stories and look to support in a meaningful way that will produce tangible results. On page 2 of this release, please find a number of resources to find support if you are a former residential school student in distress or have been affected by the residential school system and need help. Additionally we have provided actionable items that we encourage everyone to consider and participate in, as well as National Organizations to donate to if you are in a position to do so.

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the federally recognized National Indigenous Organization that represents off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Metis and Southern Inuit Aboriginal Peoples. Over 80% of Indigenous people in Canada live off-reserve.

***For media interviews please contact:***

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#### WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT:

If you are a former residential school student in distress, or have been affected by the residential school system and need help, you can contact the 24-hour **Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line** at **1-866-925-4419**, or the [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](#) with the toll free line at **1-800-721-0066**.

Additional mental-health support and resources for Indigenous people are [available here](#).

#### HOW TO HELP:

If you want to know what you can do in response to the recent, and coming news you can contact one of our [10 Provincial and Territorial Organizations to learn more](#). For other actionable items, please see below:

- Write, call, or email your MP to advocate for the Federal Government to resource all five Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls To Action number 72-76. These are the Calls To Action that ensure Canada works with Indigenous communities to locate their missing loved ones and the unmarked burial places in a culturally informed way.
- Support organizations that make a difference to survivors and their relations
- Educate your children, family and friends and help guide them through this difficult time for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of this country.

#### National Organizations to Donate To:

1. The Indian Residential School Survivors Society provides counselling as well as health and cultural support. They have an easy to use donation button. Go here for their website: <https://www.irsss.ca/>
2. The Legacy of Hope Foundation (LHF) is a national, Indigenous-led, charitable organization that has been working to promote healing and Reconciliation in Canada for more than 19 years. The LHF's goal is to educate and raise awareness about the history and existing intergenerational impacts of the Residential School System (RSS) and subsequent Sixties Scoop (SS) on Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) Survivors, their descendants, and their communities to promote healing and Reconciliation. You can donate here: <https://legacyofhope.ca>
3. Witness Blanket is a large-scale traveling art installation inspired by a woven blanket, made out of hundreds of items reclaimed from Residential Schools, churches, government buildings and traditional and cultural structures including Friendship Centres, band offices, treatment centres and universities, from across Canada. The Witness Blanket stands as a national monument to recognize the atrocities of the Indian Residential School era, honour the children, and symbolize ongoing reconciliation. You can donate by going here: <http://witnessblanket.ca>