



Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc
(Kamloops Indian Band)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Calls out Action over Apologies on National Day For Truth and Reconciliation

September 30, 2021, Kamloops – In the buildup to the very first National Day For Truth and Reconciliation, Tkemlúps te Secwépemc Chief and Council reflected on both words and actions offered to them since the confirmation of the Kamloops Indian Residential School missing children in unmarked burial sites on the former residential school grounds.

“As an intergenerational survivor of Indian Residential schools and as a chief who serves a First Nation where the past is truly remembered by the very big footprint of an Indian Residential School in our community, Orange Shirt Day is very important to Tkemlúps te Secwépemc. This year it is especially poignant as we brought forward the confirmation of the unmarked graves of missing children from the Kamloops Indian Residential School,” said Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir

“This past week has been a true testament of the journey we have been on since May 27 – filled with poignant as well as disturbing moments,” stated Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir. “On Friday September 24, we were in the thick of filming for two important projects. Earlier this summer, when our hopes to hold a gathering for September 30 were dashed by the need to reduce contact due to COVID-19, we were delighted in how the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation leaned in to ensure that we had a virtual presence. We are honoured to be part of the national special broadcast. They also chose to uphold our vision to create a longer video where we could honour Kamloops Indian Residential School Survivors, the missing children in our care, and intergenerational survivors. We chose to honour them by demonstrating how, despite the concerted efforts of the federally mandated Indian Residential Schools to eradicate our culture, language, and ways of being, we are reclaiming, and revitalising our Secwepemc language, traditions, and ways of knowing. We get to share our cultural treasures with the world!”

The video, me7 w7ec-kt wel me7 yews // We will always be here, bears witness to the beauty of Secwepemc people, language, lands, and cultural expression.

On the very same day that filming began, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) issued a statement of apology to the Indigenous Peoples of This Land.

“In reviewing this apology, I had a disturbing sense of déjà vu. Had we not seen this sort of statement before as there was a sense of familiarity to it The acknowledgments contained in the apology regarding the suffering and grave abuses caused by “some” members of the Roman Catholic community and the legacy of suffering and challenges faced by Indigenous peoples to the present day are essentially a repeat of the apologies made to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC),” declared Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir.



The apology contains no acts of contrition or living up to the promises made by the CCCB with regards to the disclosure of documents and information to the TRC, and of the raising of funds for Indian Residential School survivors. Reconciliation requires truth; and truth is but one milestone along with restitution and, potentially, retribution, in the path towards reconciliation. At the very least, steps towards reconciliation demands honesty and transparency.

Tkemlúps te Secwépemc finds the apology's commitment "to continue the work of providing documentation or records that will assist in the memorialization of those buried in unmarked graves" cynical in light of the ample opportunity the CCCB had to exert whatever authority they might have over the Catholic entities in which they preside to provide those records and documents. It is clear from volume 4 of the TRC's Final Report, entitled *Missing Children and Unmarked Burials*, that the cynicism of the Church's commitments to provide "all relevant documents" is not misplaced.

"If this apology is truly a commitment, then Tkemlúps te Secwépemc insists on the complete and full production of *all* relevant records and documents in a manner and form useful and accessible to Indian Residential School Survivors to help identify those missing children, those unmarked graves and repatriating those lost," stated Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir.

Tkemlúps te Secwépemc calls upon the CCCB to work toward the implementation of TRC Call to Action #58, which demands the Holy See "to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools." Additionally, Tkemlúps te Secwépemc call upon the CCCB to use their full authority and moral suasion to work with TteS, my Council and the community we represent to assist in the full implementation of TRC Calls to Action #s 71-76.

Finally, Tkemlúps te Secwépemc call upon the CCCB to work with TteS to implement any and all outstanding Calls to Action from the TRC.

"We extend our deep appreciation to all for standing in solidarity with Tkemlúps te Secwépemc. This is not just a story of whose time has come and gone. We need to ensure justice and accountability happens in the long-term which means keeping pressure on politicians and the church to do the right thing. It's time that we all embrace our real collective history, recognize the painful past shared by so many, and continue on a path that we can change for all our future generations.," stated Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir

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