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Statement on the discovery around Kamloops Indian Residential School

From: [Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada](#)

Statement

Ottawa, Ontario (May 28, 2021) — The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services, issued the following statement today:

“The mistreatment of Indigenous children is a tragic and shameful part of Canada’s history. Residential schools were part of a colonial policy that removed Indigenous children from their communities. Thousands of children were sent to these schools and never returned to their families. The families were often provided with little to no information on the circumstances of their loved one’s death nor the location of their burial. Children in residential schools were forbidden to speak their language and practice their own culture. The loss of children who attended residential schools is unthinkable and Canada remains resolved to supporting families, Survivors and communities and to memorializing those lost innocent souls.

Yesterday’s news of the discovery of 215 bodies found in the area around the Kamloops Indian Residential School is once again a reminder of the harms families and Survivors have suffered and continue to suffer. We are profoundly saddened by this discovery and our thoughts are with Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, as well as with all Indigenous communities across Canada. We are working with the community and our partners, such as the BC First Nations Health Authority, to provide resources and the support needed as determined by the community. For immediate assistance to those who may need it, the National Indian Residential School Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day at 1-866-925-4419.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to find the truth in our country’s dark and painful history of residential schools. Their 94 Calls to Action are an appeal to mobilize all levels of government, organizations and individuals to make concrete changes in society. They list specific actions to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation was established and is now responsible for the Student Death Registries. Since Budget 2019, we have been engaging with Indigenous communities impacted by residential schools on how best to proceed with implementing Calls to Action 72 to 76. We have listened and are ensuring

that the approaches taken moving forward are Indigenous-led, community-based, Survivor-centric and culturally sensitive.

The TRC revealed the heartbreaking details of the role that residential schools played in the history of Canada and the tragic legacy that continues today. It is said that once you know the truth, you cannot un-know it. Yesterday's discovery reflects a dark and painful chapter in our country's history. We remain committed to supporting Survivors, their families and communities through their healing journeys."

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