



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Calls on Federal Attorney General to Investigate Indian Residential School System as a Crime Against Humanity

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) Grand Chief Garrison Settee wrote to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General David Lametti to request that the federal Attorney General “immediately commence an investigation with the objective of determining the basis for prosecution under the *Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act*.”

“The underlying state-sanctioned circumstances and federal government policies and legislation which led to the remains of 215 First Nation children recently and tragically being recovered on the grounds of the former Indian Residential School in Kamloops, British Columbia meet the tests of crimes against humanity in accordance with the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act S.C. 2000, c. 24 and Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,” wrote Grand Chief Settee in a June 3, 2021, letter that is jointly addressed to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Justice and Attorney General David Lametti.

MKO has written this letter as an initial step toward seeking the engagement of the international community, including the International Criminal Court and of the United Nations Human Rights Council, to investigate and prosecute the Indian Residential School system as a crime against humanity. The International Criminal Court complements, and does not replace, national criminal justice systems and only assumes jurisdiction to prosecute cases when states do not, are unwilling, or are unable to genuinely prosecute a matter.

“A review of the complete history of the *Indian Act* and all amendments, including a review of the related *Hansard* for each and every legislative step, reveal a collection of open and unguarded racist statements which form an irrefutable record of the unclothed intentions of government and Parliamentarians to establish and formally set into action a state-sanctioned policy of systemic and progressive cultural genocide and the intentional social and economic isolation and impoverishment of First Nations across Canada which measures collectively meet the tests of crimes against humanity,” wrote Grand Chief Settee.

Grand Chief Settee continued, “MKO will view any failure by the Minister to respond and take action in a timely manner as a refusal by Canada – as a State in an international context – to uphold the rule of law. MKO will immediately communicate any such refusal to the International Criminal Court and to the United Nations Human Rights Council.”

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