



Manitoba Keewatinow Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
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MKO Statement on 160+ Unmarked Graves Found by the Penelakut Tribe in British Columbia

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinow Okimakanak (MKO) is issuing this statement in response to an announcement that more unmarked graves have been found at the site of a residential school in Canada.

The Penelakut Tribe in British Columbia has found more than 160 undocumented and unmarked graves in the area that was once home to the Kuper Island Residential School.

MKO Grand Chief Settee stated:

“I continue to be saddened by the growing number of unmarked graves being found in locations across Canada where residential schools once operated. Today we have learned that more than 160 unmarked graves were found by the Penelakut Tribe in British Columbia.

It is important we continue to remember and honour the children who didn’t make it home from residential schools. As Canadians, we must stand together to hold the people and institutions who created and operated these schools to account. We must also continue to learn about the atrocities of residential schools and seek to understand how the legacy of these schools impacts Indigenous communities and people today.

I encourage Canadians to continue standing with us as we cope with the growing number of announcements regarding the discovery of mass graves. Innocent children were forced to attend residential schools and we must continue to ensure that we work to identify these children and ensure their family members and communities are aware of where their bodies lie.

We are still awaiting action from Canada. We need to hear more than funding announcements. Over a month ago, I wrote to The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada as well as the Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. I have yet to receive a response.

I had asked these two leaders to begin an immediate investigation into the Indian Residential School System as a crime against humanity. We also need assurances that an outside investigator will be brought in to look at these crimes. Once again, I call on Canada’s Prime Minister and Attorney General to begin an investigation into residential schools as a crime against humanity.”

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