



Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak Inc.

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Permanent People's Tribunal Finds Evidence of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity; MKO Calls on Justice Minister to Launch Criminal Investigation

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, Mb - The Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) on Missing Indigenous Children and Unmarked Graves concluded hearings in Montreal from May 25–29, 2026, issuing preliminary findings that Canada's Indian Residential School (IRS) system constitutes genocide and crimes against humanity under international law.

Convened by the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, the Tribunal heard testimony from Survivors, families, and experts detailing the forced removal of children, widespread abuse, enforced disappearances, and thousands of deaths linked to residential schools and related institutions. Canada was formally invited but did not attend.

The Tribunal found that Canada's actions meet the legal threshold for genocide, including the forcible transfer of Indigenous children, measures intended to prevent births, and the systematic infliction of serious physical and mental harm. It also identified crimes against humanity, including enforced disappearance, torture, persecution, and systemic violence. These were described as deliberate, state-supported policies rooted in colonial law and aimed at the destruction of Indigenous identity, cultures, and Nations.

In response, Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak (MKO) is calling on Canada's Minister of Justice to immediately launch a full criminal investigation into Indian Residential Schools as crimes against humanity and genocide.

"It is clear: the evidence is overwhelming," said MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee. "These were not isolated abuses, but coordinated, state-driven crimes. The failure to investigate continues to deny justice to Survivors, families, and Nations."

Evidence presented showed that approximately 150,000 Indigenous children were taken into institutions, with recorded deaths between 4,000 and 6,000 - though the true number is likely much higher due to missing records and inadequate investigations. The Tribunal emphasized that these harms are not confined to the past, referring to continued child removals, restricted access to records, development of burial sites, and reports of coerced sterilization.

Key recommendations include:

- **Full and independent criminal investigations into missing and disappeared children and unmarked graves**
- **Unrestricted access to all records related to Indian Residential Schools and associated institutions**
- **Long-term funding for Indigenous-led investigation and commemoration efforts**
- **Protection and preservation of burial sites**
- **Full implementation of the TRC Calls to Action and MMIWG Calls for Justice**
- **Alignment of Canadian law with international standards**
- **Recognition of Indigenous self-determination consistent with UNDRIP**
- **Action to address residential school denialism**

MKO emphasized that these recommendations must be matched with immediate federal action through the justice system, including prosecutorial review and investigation.

The Tribunal stressed that true remediation requires truth recovery, restitution, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence. MKO reiterated that without accountability, reconciliation efforts will remain incomplete.

“Canada cannot claim reconciliation while failing to investigate crimes of this magnitude,” said Grand Chief Settee. “Justice requires action, now.”

An interim statement has been issued, with a final declaration from the Tribunal expected in the coming months.

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Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba’s North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.