



OLIP Statement on the Unmarked Graves of Indigenous Children

June 25, 2021

OLIP joins the rest of Canada in mourning Indigenous children whose remains were found in unmarked graves at former residential schools in Kamloops, British Columbia, and near Marieval Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan. We extend our heartfelt support to the families of these innocent victims and Indigenous communities across the country.

Residential schools were part of a deplorable colonial system that forcibly removed Indigenous children from their families and confined them to a school where they were forbidden to speak their language or practice their culture and where they suffered physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; many of these children never returned to their families.

The recovery of the children's bodies brings a spotlight to the cruel reality Indigenous peoples have experienced and serves as a reminder of the persistent systemic issues that still need to be addressed. We, as a country, still have work to do to repair damages of the colonial system and that work starts with true reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

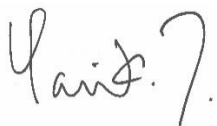
OLIP, therefore, joins Indigenous communities across the country in their calls for the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, in particular the calls 71-76 which deal with the issue of missing children and unmarked burials.

We also must ensure new Canadians learn the history of their new country, acknowledge this land is the unceded territories of Indigenous people and share the important role Indigenous communities have played in Canada's history. To that end, OLIP calls for an improved understanding of Canada's colonial history and the widespread and systematic violence against Indigenous populations, to ensure all Canadians take ownership in redressing the damages done to Indigenous populations.

OLIP also welcomes the amendment of Canada's oath of citizenship. The revised oath, which received royal assent this week, responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action #94 to include recognition and affirmation of the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

OLIP supports efforts of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and strongly believes to create an inclusive society, we need to get rid of all forms of hatred, bias and racism (anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, anti-Semitic, anti-Islam, anti-Asian). Through multiple initiatives and working with its partners and allies, OLIP is committed to advancing this important work.

Stronger together,



Yasir Naqvi
Chair, OLIP Council



Hindia Mohamoud
OLIP Director