



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

www.bcafn.ca

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

June 21, 2021

BCAFN CALLS ON CANADA TO ACT ON THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY 2021

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – June 21, 2021) – June 21, 2021, is the 25th Anniversary of National Indigenous Peoples Day and it is a bittersweet celebration. On this special day First Nations embrace each other, their Nations, cultures, and histories at a sorrowful time with the recent Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc announcement of 215 unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) calls for Canada to act on calls for justice and work to implement sweeping transformations in all social, political, and economic institutions.

Canada's international reputation as a tolerant and diverse nation is damaged and in tatters and the deeply entrenched racism that has been unacknowledged for so long must be addressed immediately. The evidence of the ongoing suffering and death of Indigenous peoples, Black Canadians and those who are racialized is clear.

The past year has been a challenging year with the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued violence and killings of numerous Indigenous people at the hands of the RCMP/police across Canada. Systemic racism must end, and actions must be immediately taken to stop targeting and endangering human lives.

"I am hopeful that Canada has reached a turning point with the passing of Bill C-15 – *An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. It is a critical leap in upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples. As the framework is fully implemented the relationship between Canada and the Indigenous Nations across Canada will be transformed," stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "In addition, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA action plan will be available soon to help guide reforms across societal institutions. The Truth and Reconciliation Calls for Action are partially fulfilled as they are slowly being enacted and implemented, but much more work must be done more quickly by both governments and the private sector."

"First Nations continue to participate in the process of reconciliation and are steadfast as they steer the course toward advancing Title, Rights and Treaty Rights," added Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee and staff will be joining family, friends and communities to embrace and showcase their diverse cultures, knowledge, history and languages. This year we are focused on acknowledging our collective grief and gathering in a cautious manner to practice healing ceremonies and hold up residential school survivors and those impacted by the inter-generational trauma.

National Indigenous Peoples Day was recognized for the first time in Canada as National Aboriginal Day in 1996 following a recommendation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples the year before. June 21st, the summer solstice, has been chosen as the day to honour the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples who have lived on this land since time immemorial.

-30-

For further information, contact: Annette Schroeter, Communications Officer, phone (250)962-1603.

#honouringourancestors



bcafn