



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

October 18, 2021

### **BCAFN Regional Chief Statement on Prime Minister Trudeau's visit to Tk'emlups te Secwepemc Nation today**

**(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC)** — BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) Regional Chief Terry Teegee's statement regarding Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's scheduled visit to Tk'emlups te Secwepemc in Kamloops, BC:

First Nations leaders' and community members' expectations are finally being upheld today with the late arrival of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's visit to Tk'emlups te Secwepemc in Kamloops, BC. We were all deeply disappointed and hurt when the Prime Minister chose not to observe and attend ceremonies and events for the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on September 30<sup>th</sup>; instead travelling to Tofino, BC, with his family for a vacation. Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir had invited the Prime Minister to visit the Kamloops Indian Residential School grave sites multiple times and was repeatedly ignored. This was not a decision focused on the ideals and aspirations built around reconciliation and instead create a political and social climate loaded with drama and strife.

The actions and attitudes of leaders in Canada are critical in their effectiveness and influence to create change. It is imperative that our leaders be strategic and future-focused and build on each opportunity presented to them to strengthen relationships and further develop trust. It is my expectation that Prime Minister Trudeau and his government will double down on their work toward reconciliation with First Nations.

With the recent recoveries of many unmarked graves of children at former residential schools sites, and more to come, many Canadians have made it clear that they want their governments to confront the legacy of colonialism and transform systems of power that reinforce poverty, injustice and genocide.

I envision innovative and profoundly transformative strategies and policies to fully implement the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* throughout the nation, and all Indigenous peoples must play prominent roles at all levels as we move forward.

We demand much more substantial actions and resources for the work that needs to be done to recover the truth and build a better future for all Canadians, and we expect no more theatrics, useless gestures and words meant to pacify growing anger and distrust.

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