



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY

March 9-10, 2023

Hybrid - In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 11/2023

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR TSESHAHT FIRST NATION, ALBERNI INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL (AIRS): CALLS FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE

MOVED BY: CHIEF WAHMEESH (KEN WATTS), TSESHAHT FIRST NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF DALTON SILIVER, SUMAS FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. Tseshaht First Nation had the Alberni Indian Residential School placed in its territory without its consent, a school they never asked for but have had to live with the impacts of that school in their community since it was a girls boarding school in 1893 and a Indian Residential School (IRS) from 1900-1973;
- B. Since the news arrived of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc shook the world and impacted Survivors deeply and communities who had these "schools" placed in their territory. Since then Tseshaht has undertaken important engagement, scanning and research which led to their February 21st, 2023 announcement including the confirmed deaths of at minimum 67 students who died as students of AIRS and at minimum 17 geophysical features representing suspected graves at the site of AIRS of which only 12% was scanned of the 100 hectare research and scanning area;
- C. AIRS Survivors have indicated to Tseshaht First Nation that "there is no Reconciliation without Truth" and that "justice and accountability" must occur after these results have

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been shared with the world;

- D. the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the governments of Canada and British Columbia have adopted without qualification and passed into federal and provincial law, affirms the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples to practice and revitalize our cultural traditions and customs, including the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of our culture, such as historical sites, and the right to privacy in our religious and cultural sites, as well as the right to the repatriation of the human remains of our people;
- E. this resolution is without prejudice to First Nations Title and Rights, other First Nations who had Indian Residential Schools in their territories, and further potential action from First Nations and survivors with respect to Indian Residential Schools; and
- F. This resolution reflects initial next steps/action/justice required for Tseshaht First Nation from their Phase 1 scanning and research of the Alberni Indian Residential School which includes, but not limited to: their 26 Calls for Truth and Justice.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly hereby support the Tseshaht First Nation in their Calls for Truth and Justice(attached) stemming from their research and scanning of the Alberni Indian Residential School(AIRS) to help ensure Truth, Justice and Accountability;
- 2. BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly hereby recommend that the Regional Chiefs support Tseshaht leadership and the Tseshaht First Nation to ensure that the Province of BC, Government of Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police(RCMP), faiths/churches not only meet with Tseshaht, but implement all of their Alberni Indian Residential School 26 Calls for Truth and Justice;
- 3. BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to advocate for Tseshaht First Nation's Calls for Truth and Justice at the National AFN level including the Executive, National Chief's Office and Chiefs in Assembly; and
- 4. BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly hereby call upon all applicable parties to implement Tseshaht First Nation's Calls for Truth and Justice.

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