



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2, 2021

Statement by Grand Chief Arlen Dumas on the sixth anniversary of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement in recognition of the sixth anniversary of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action. On June 2nd, 2015 the TRC released 94 Calls to Action in the areas of education, justice, child welfare, health and for corporate Canada. The final report was released December 15th, 2015 in Ottawa to Prime Minister Trudeau, and completed the work of the TRC.

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, "the sixth anniversary of the TRC's Calls to Action comes at particularly painful time for First Nations in Manitoba and across the country. First Nations have been grieving for almost a week since the horrible discovery in a mass grave of the remains of former Kamloops Indian Residential School students. A sacred fire in honour of these precious souls was lit at the Manitoba Legislature, honour songs were sung in remembrance of these children, and commitments were made by the First Nations leadership in Manitoba to not let their deaths be in vain. First Nations throughout Manitoba have held similar commemoration events. Many have placed shoes as a commemoration at the Catholic Archdiocese of Winnipeg as reminder to the Church for their role in the genocide of First Nations in this country."

"The TRC Commissioners heard from over 7,000 former Indian Residential Schools (IRS) students over the course of 7 years. I thank all the former IRS students from across the country for sharing their painful and traumatizing stories: we hear you, we see you and we honour you. Their truths, including many common stories of the deaths of their fellow students, formed the basis for the 94 Calls to Action. I thank former AMC Grand Chief Phil Fontaine for sharing his painful stories of his experience in residential school. We are all grateful for his leadership for the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Fittingly, the first TRC hearing was held in Winnipeg on Treaty one territory in 2010. First Nations in Manitoba have always historically played a central role in seeking redress and reparations for the colonial violence and injustice perpetrated on First Nations by Canada."

"The Calls to Action laid out a potential roadmap for reconciliation between First Nations and Canada and are intended to be one measure of compensation and healing for the former IRS students; however, in the six years since they were announced, **less than ten of the TRC Calls to Action have been fully implemented**. At this rate, we will be waiting another 50 years for the other 84 to be implemented to the satisfaction of the former students and their family members."

"On the sixth anniversary of the TRC Calls to Action, I urge the Prime Minister, in conjunction with the provinces and territories, to accelerate the implementation of all Calls to Action, and not just the ones the federal government is responsible for. I call on different levels of government to stop pointing fingers at each other and instead join hands and make change for the better."

"The federal government announced today that, as part of its commitment to addressing Calls to Action 74 – 76, it will be making \$27 million available to First Nations and organizations to conduct the work for identifying burial sites associated with residential schools within their respective territories and lands. This

responds to an earlier request to the Prime Minister from the AMC for support for the technical equipment and expertise required to locate unmarked burial sites and to identify remains. This is only one step in addressing the atrocity of IRS deaths and it is unfortunate that it took this tragedy for the federal government to release the funding first identified in Budget 2019. The AMC will continue to guide the government on further measures, including securing an apology and reparations from the Catholic Church, and working with the UN and international community to agree that what Canada did in the name of resource exploitation and dispossession of lands, in fact, constitutes genocide against First Nations,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

First Nations and organizations interested in accessing the announced funding may contact the Department at aadnc.enfants_disparus-missing_children.aandc@canada.ca to request information and to submit plans to access funds.

Former students and others who may be re-traumatized by the unfolding events related to IRS student deaths may seek support through [Hope for Wellness Help Line](http://hopeforwellness.ca) at 1-855-242-3310 (toll-free) or the online chat at hopeforwellness.ca open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Also, for immediate assistance to those who may need it, the National Indian Residential School Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day at 1-866-925-4419.

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Ininew (Cree), Anishininew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.