



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMC acknowledges support and calls for reflection on colonial history on Canada Day 2021

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – As there are wide-spread calls across the country to cancel Canada Day celebrations this year in reaction to the past and ongoing injustices against First Nations, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement today to mark the event and to call for reflection on the true history of this country. First Nations and Canadians are profoundly saddened and distressed as unmarked graves of students who were forced to attend Indian Residential Schools (IRS) died and are now being recovered and announced. There are calls from many First Nations and their allies across the country to hold special commemorative events on July 1st, to honour the stolen spirits recently uncovered in unmarked graves, and the many more whose graves are yet to be discovered, as well as to reconcile the true history of Canada. The AMC joins with our fellow First Nations political advocacy organizations, tribal councils, First Nations governments and grassroots organizations in Manitoba in organizing and participating in some of these events scheduled for July 1.

Grand Chief Arlen Dumas states, “I urge all Canadians and Manitobans on this Canada Day to honestly reflect on the true history of this country and the price our First Nations ancestors and all of us have paid for the quality of life, affluence and prosperity enjoyed by millions of Canadians. This reflection and acknowledgement that the ancestors paid for Canadian prosperity with their lives will help us all to come to terms with the injustices of the past, help the IRS survivors to heal from the ongoing trauma, and to recommit to chart a new path forward so that there is justice and reparations for the sins that were committed by the Church and State against First Nations in this country in the name of colonization and empire.”

Grand Chief Dumas added, “there can be no softening or mischaracterization of the brutal events of the past perpetrated on First Nations: it was genocide and must be recognized as such by all levels of government and, especially, by the Catholic Church in atonement for its transgressions against First Nations. Canada Day presents the perfect opportunity for the Church to repent and for Canada to reset the relationship by standing with and supporting First Nations as we grieve the deaths of these children and as we partner for a better future for this generation of First Nations children and the generations yet unborn.”

Grand Chief Dumas added, “I offer a special acknowledgement to the incarcerated inmates: women, men and youth, being held in all the penal institutions across the prairies, who have committed to a hunger strike in support of the stolen and lost children of the IRS system. We have not forgotten you. To all Manitobans and Canadians, all cities and municipal organizations, on behalf of the Assembly, I thank and acknowledge all First Nations allies and all Canadians for your strong show of support during these extremely difficult times. I therefore encourage all Manitobans and Canadians to take a minute on July 1, to acknowledge and reflect on an uncomfortable truth, and if possible join in support of First Nations in some of the scheduled events, including the No Pride in Genocide event.”

“I understand Canadians are deeply troubled and hurt as the veil of these injustices has been yanked away to reveal a horrific reality, and that some are struggling to come to terms with the extent this country went to exterminate the cultures and languages of the First Nations across this country. I note that there can be no reconciliation without truth, justice and a sharing of the bounty of the land as envisioned by our ancestors when they entered into Treaty. The work of reconciliation is hard, but it must begin with the truth,” concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

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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 / Inineu (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.