

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



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June 23, 2021

Francisco Cali-Tzay  
United Nations Special Rapporteur  
OHCHR- UNOG, 8-14  
Avenue de la Paix, 1211  
Geneve 10, Switzerland

## RE: FNLC Request for an official visit from UN Special Rapporteur

Dear Special Rapporteur Cali Tzay,

We are pleased to respectfully request that you make an official visit to Canada in order to meet with our respective membership regarding the May 27, 2021, discovery of unmarked and undocumented mass graves of 215 children at the Kamloops Indian Residential School (KIRS).

The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is a collaborative political relationship between the executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, BC First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. We work together based on mandates provided by our respective members, to develop and coordinate approaches to issues that are relevant to First Nations communities across the province of British Columbia. We are dedicated to ensuring the Title and Rights of First Nations peoples are upheld and to advancing reconciliation in Canada and redressing historical wrongs.

The mass graves of 215 children buried at KIRS not only reflects the significant injustices and atrocities inflicted upon First Nations as a result of colonialism and the colonial history of Canada, but is in direct violation of internationally recognized human rights. It is critical that this matter be thoroughly investigated, accounted for and is independently overseen by an international political body, such as the United Nations.

The historical backdrop regarding the roles of the Canadian state, Churches, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police towards the implementation and operation of Residential Schools must be examined through the apparatus of an international human rights legal framework when determining the level of responsibility and accountability for these actions. We believe that mass grave sites must be regarded and monitored at the international level.

The FNLC recognizes that you have received correspondences from other First Nations such as, the Confederacy of Treaty 6 Nations, and Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. We stand in solidarity with them, and we echo their message for you to provide ongoing support and monitoring.

When the FNLC leadership previously met with you and members of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Chief and Council on June 2, 2021 via Zoom, we were heartened to hear your resolve to assist us and leverage the critical influence of the United Nations to bring peace and closure to the families and loved ones of the missing and undocumented children, and to all survivors of residential schools. We now ask for your support as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights

of Indigenous Peoples to accept our request to visit Canada, to meet with our leadership, and to support and help guide our calls for justice on the international stage.

The disturbing confirmation at KIRS is just the tip of the iceberg regarding the genocidal tactics enforced by the State onto First Nations people. It is time for the gruesome colonial legacy of Residential Schools in Canada to be internationally recognized. Our calls for action must be answered in order to seek justice for our people, our sisters and brothers who never returned home, the survivors, and for our future as First Nations people.

We hope to receive your earliest positive response to our request for your official visit.

Sincerely,

**FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

**On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT**



Cheryl Casimer



Robert Phillips



Lydia Hwitsum

**On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS**



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Don Tom



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson

**On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:**



Regional Chief Terry Teegee

CC: Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir and Council