

The Department of Gender Studies at the University of Victoria would like to offer our deepest condolences to the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation for the 215 children whose lives were taken by the Church and State sponsored Kamloops Indian Residential School.

We feel a deep sense of anger and sadness for the violence faced by these children and all children who were abducted into the residential school system. We acknowledge the trauma faced by residential school survivors and their families who are still grappling with the inter-generational legacy of a system that sought to destroy Indigenous cultures, fracture families, and assimilate Indigenous peoples, doing so in gendered ways. We also recognize the resilience of individuals, families, and communities in spite of this violence and understand, first and foremost, that having to be resilient against state violence is not acceptable.

We would like to add our voice to the call for Canada and Canadian settlers to take responsibility for these actions and to reframe them as representing more than 'a dark chapter of Canadian history.' Canada is a state founded on the genocide of Indigenous peoples and the residential school system represents one link in a chain of many weapons. Residential schools operated as recently as 25 years ago and there are more Indigenous children today in Canada's child welfare system than there were in residential schools. As affirmed by Final Report on the National Inquiry of Missing and Murdered Women Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA, genocide against Indigenous peoples is ongoing.

We understand that Canadian lawyers have made a request with the International Criminal Court to investigate the Canadian government and the Vatican for crimes against humanity in regard to the remains of children found at the former Kamloops Residential School and that there are calls on Canada to search the grounds of all former residential schools for unmarked graves. We will be following these calls for justice closely over the coming months as we grapple with the contradictions of living in a country that is at once reconciling with and colonizing Indigenous peoples.

Settlers in Canada, including those teaching and studying in the Department of Gender Studies, must continue the work of sharing in accountability, reconciliation, and decolonization. As a small gesture, our Department will donate \$1,000 to the BC Indian Residential School Survivors Society.

Resources:

If you require immediate counselling, the Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS) has an Emergency Crisis Line that is available 24/7 for those who may need counselling: 1-800-721-0066 or 24 hour crisis line: 1-866-925-4419 (<https://www.irsss.ca/home>).

Here is information about how to support Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc: <https://tkemlups.ca/how-to-support-tkemlups-te-secwepemc/>

https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.6052054?_twitter_impression=true&fbclid=IwAR3pEtinV9vRprV4it7b3gCA06v4fUSUEASHBwI9Y3Lwht5OwZx_DJfy