

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Residential School Tragedy

From: Zoë Kazakos

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To the entire governing body of Canada,

The discovery of 215 bodies, undocumented and unregistered deaths found outside of a residential school in Kamloops is devastating news, especially for the Indigenous community who have already suffered such loss at the hands of the Catholic Church and the Canadian Gov't. This heartbreaking discovery should have recognized by a day of mourning for all Canadians, as we all collectively acknowledge and mourn the genocide of our First Peoples. Even more disheartening, is that there are likely more bodies buried around the other residential schools around the country.

The federal government should be funding forensic archeology searches as an immediate priority. In addition to searching for these bodies, the government also needs to request the residential school records from the Vatican be released so that the bodies can be identified.

From the very first moment of colonization, the Canadian government has treated the Indigenous population as second class citizens as proven by a litany of racist political agendas. The fact that the Catholic Church and the Canadian government coordinated a full scale attack on the First Nations of our country through the residential school system/ prison system and the kidnapping of generations of children should be taught in schools at the youngest age.

The government and religious genocide against the Indigenous population is not up for debate, but it is up to the current government to address and reconcile with the Indigenous community, and prove that Indigenous lives matter.

The Truth & Reconciliation Commission came out in 2015 and it's despicable to hear how little the government has done. Justin Trudeau promised fresh drinking water to the Indigenous communities and yet across the country these communities are still without safe drinking water. I am beyond frustrated with the federal and provincial government's role in the Indigenous population's well being. The number of homes and communities without safe drinking water on Canadian soil is a travesty. It is a human rights abuse and it is happening on Canadian soil. A short hour outside of Toronto on the Curve Lake Reserve, fresh drinking water is unavailable and has been for 30 years. This should be a priority of the utmost concern for every level of government. How can a free country have countless pockets of third world conditions?

I would like to hear back from all of you on what steps the government (both provincially and federally) are taking to address these concerns and when we can start seeing action.

Sincerely,
Zoe Kazakos