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Northwest Territories  
Regional Office  
**ASSEMBLY  
OF FIRST  
NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT FROM DENE NATION NATIONAL CHIEF NORMAN  
YAKLEYEA ON DISCOVERY OF LOCATION OF UNMARKED GRAVES AT  
KAMLOOPS INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – JUNE 2, 2021**

"We, the Dene, call on all levels of government and all Nations to support the families that have experienced Canada's aggressive assimilation policies. We stand in solidarity and remembrance of the 215 children who perished at the Kamloops institute, and for all children that did not survive Indian Residential Schools or other Canadian institutions.

We call upon the Churches of Canada to participate in acknowledgement of their wrong actions and to participate in the pursuit of truth and justice that honour each child taken as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Recommendation #46 Covenant to Reconciliation.

We call upon all levels of government to work together to immediately begin similar search and excavation sites of former residential schools – sadly, we know this is not the only unmarked grave at one of 139 residential schools in Canada."

"The tide of the reconciliation is exposing the powerful deep hidden chapters of colonialism on a Nation of Peoples. It's time we ask our Creator for guidance and protection as we call upon a National Inquiry to what we have been exposed to with the Residential Schools, Indian Hospitals, 60's Scoop, Federal Day Schools, and in Justice such as correctional institutions. It's time to gather the evidence-based distinction that fell on deaf ears as our Elders speak too.

The families are still waiting for their children to come home. Enough is enough and the Federal Government and Churches must come clean as we walk the path of reconciliation. It is time we say the children's' names and bring them home," says Dene National Chief Yakeleya and AFN Regional Chief for the NWT.

**Dene Nation Response**

The Dene Nation will host a Residential School Memorial Walk and Honouring Ceremony Friday, June 4 at 12:00pm to 2:00pm with the City of Yellowknife beginning at the former Akaitcho Hall Site. Public Health guidelines will be observed.

Dene Nation National Chief Norman Yakeleya is the Assembly of First Nations portfolio holder for residential schools and continues to advocate at both the Territorial and National level for survivors. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has reported that of the 130 Indian Residential Schools across Canada, an estimated 6000 children died while at the schools so far.

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