



Statement on the discovery of remains of 215 Indigenous Children at Kamloops residential school

May 31st, 2021

Egale Canada is based on the territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinabewaki, Mississaugas of the Credit, and Wendake-Nionwentsio First Nations. If you require support, the free National Indian Residential School Crisis Line for survivors of residential schools is available around the clock at 1-866-925-4419.

Egale Canada is horrified and deeply saddened by the discovery of the remains of 215 children in an unmarked mass grave on the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia. These children are the victims of a horrific regime of colonial violence, many forms of which continue to persist today. We mourn for these children and for the thousands of others who died as a result of abuse and neglect in residential schools. We honour their lives and acknowledge the indescribable loss faced by families whose children were forcibly taken from them. Moreover, we condemn all those working in the residential school system who allowed these children's deaths to go unrecorded, unreported, and unmarked. They, together with the provincial and federal government who supported them, are complicit in these crimes.

In the face of this tragedy, we would like to offer our unconditional support and solidarity to Indigenous communities. We stand with you and we are committed to speaking out against the ongoing processes of colonial violence and dispossession. Indigenous 2SLGBTQI people in Canada are disproportionately affected by poverty, violence, and illness. It is our responsibility to fight for justice for our entire community, especially its most marginalized members, and we are committed to continuing that fight every day.

Now is the time to listen to Indigenous leaders and community members on what they need from us in the broader community in order to begin to heal. We urge decision-makers in every level of government to accept responsibility for the process of reconciliation. The violence committed against the tens of thousands of children interned in residential schools in Canada was ordered by the federal and provincial government, and it is therefore the government's responsibility to do what is needed to make amends. The horrors of the past cannot be undone, but action can and must be taken now to ensure a more just future.