



**FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.**  
**QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.**

**Press release**  
**For immediate distribution**

**Canada Day: What are we really celebrating?**

**Kahnawake, June 30, 2021** — Canada Day, celebrated on July 1, is a national holiday that marks the anniversary of Confederation, the day the British North America Act came into effect in 1867. However, it has been the subject of much controversy since the discovery of the bodies of Indigenous children buried in a mass grave at the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia. Since the discovery in May, the number of bodies found at other sites across the country has continued to rise, rekindling the deep-seated trauma of colonial and residential school policies.

These tragic "discoveries", which are not really a surprise to many Indigenous families, are plunging them and the citizens of Canada into a movement of sadness and demands. Peaceful marches and commemorations of all children found in residential schools will take place on July 1st in Quebec City, Montreal, and across Canada. These events, which will take place on Canada Day, are just one of many measures of how essential it is to support each other, to commemorate and honour the victims and their families. We cannot do it alone and Canada cannot continue to deny the truth about what Indigenous people have suffered for decades. Canada must acknowledge and take responsibility for the imposition of colonial policies and practices whose effects still linger, and act to provide reparations.

Viviane Michel, President of Quebec Native Women (hereafter QNW), will be present to march alongside grieving families, communities and activists.

For QNW, according to the majority of its Nations representatives, the celebration and meaning of Canada Day should be changed and adapted to the colonial history and genocide that the State has perpetrated against indigenous peoples. It is essential to change the vision of this day by making it a moment that recalls Canada's role in the serious violations of the human rights of indigenous peoples. July 1st should be a day of remembrance to honour the resilience of Indigenous peoples and to commemorate the victims of many colonial policies. This would ensure that past actions by the state are not forgotten and thus ensure that serious violations of Indigenous human rights are not repeated.

*"I have never celebrated June 24 or July 1. This country committed genocide on us, the Indigenous people. Why should I celebrate all these atrocities that our ancestors went through, and that we are still going through today? Things need to change and Canada needs to develop an action plan that shows a desire for true reconciliation,"* says Viviane Michel, President of QNW.

Source:

**Doreen Petiquay Barthold**

*Communication Officer*

Quebec Native Women

Business Complex, River Road

C.P. 1989, Kahnawake (Québec) J0L 1B0

[514-757-1508](tel:514-757-1508) | [communication@faq-qnw.org](mailto:communication@faq-qnw.org)