



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

**Press release
For immediate release**

**A day to reflect and acknowledge the atrocities Indigenous peoples have experienced:
"Every Child Matters"**

Kahnawake, September 30, 2021 — Since 2013, September 30 has been Orange Shirt Day, in honour of residential school survivors. This date has been added to the federal government's calendar of holidays, becoming the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.

Quebec Native Women (QNW) welcomes the decision to finally give official meaning to this day so that every Canadian can take a moment to reflect and acknowledge the physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and sexual atrocities that Indigenous peoples have experienced as a result of colonization.

The 215 bodies of Indigenous children found last May in Kamloops were the first of several gruesome discoveries. Since then, the number has continued to rise and the mobilization surrounding it is not representative of the deep wounds inflicted on Indigenous peoples. More than ever, "Every Child Matters" is a moment to remember the 6,509 children discovered at former residential school sites.

The phrase "killing the Indian in the child" indicates the seriousness of the situation that QNW has been deploring for years regarding the existence of racism and systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples, and in particular, Indigenous women. Since the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* identified residential schools as a central tool of cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples, Canada must acknowledge that Indigenous peoples have been victims not only of cultural genocide, but of genocide in the sense of international human rights law.

QNW would like to express its support to all those who are overwhelmed by this sad event which unfortunately revives painful memories of Canada's colonial past. The organization is nevertheless pleased to note that last Friday, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops finally apologized publicly to the First Nations. They have committed themselves fully to the process of healing and reconciliation by announcing funds for this purpose.

"Moving forward is first and foremost about acknowledging wrongs. This is the first step towards true reconciliation, and I am pleasantly surprised that the Church has finally taken this step. Our organization is committed to initiating meetings that will address all the necessary means to protect our Indigenous women and girls. We must put an end to all forms of violence against our Elders, our sisters and our daughters," says Viviane Michel, President of QNW.

Please note that former residential school students can call [1-866-925-4419](tel:1-866-925-4419) for emotional and crisis referral services and information on other health support services offered by the Government of Canada.

About QNW

Founded in 1974, Quebec Native Women is a non-profit organization that represents First Nations women in Quebec, as well as urban Indigenous women.

[Femmes autochtones du Québec | Femmes autochtones du Québec \(faq-qnw.org\)](http://Femmes autochtones du Québec | Femmes autochtones du Québec (faq-qnw.org))

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