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Delay in naming new chair irks residential school survivors

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RICHARD BRENNAN
 OTTAWA BUREAU

OTTAWA—Aboriginal residential schools survivors say they're growing increasingly frustrated with the delay in the appointment of a new chair for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"Every day they wait, three or four more people die without having the opportunity to tell their story," Michael Cachagee, executive director of the National Residential School Survivors' Society, told the *Toronto Star* yesterday.

Cachagee said survivors feel they have been sidelined, as lawyers representing aboriginal groups, the federal government and the churches that ran the schools, have failed to get the commission back on track.

An estimated 80,000 former students are still living, many of them sick or elderly.

On Oct. 20, Justice Harry LaForme of the Ontario Court of Appeal quit as head commissioner, accusing his two co-commissioners of undermining his authority, something they have denied.

All parties met in Toronto yesterday with former Supreme Court justice Frank Iacobucci, chair of Torstar Corp., which owns the *Toronto Star*, as facilitator. The meeting was to focus on coming up with a plan to choose a new leader. Details were not available last night.

The commission is part of a court-approved Indian residential schools agreement negotiated in 2006 among former students, churches, the federal government, the Assembly of First Nations and other aboriginal organizations.

The commission has postponed the first national event set for January in Vancouver.

With files from The Canadian Press



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