

Location of Mass Graves of Residential School Children Revealed; Independent Tribunal Established

Contributed by Brenda Norrell
Tuesday, 15 April 2008

Squamish Nation Territory ("Vancouver, Canada") - At a public ceremony and press conference held today outside the colonial "Indian Affairs" building in downtown Vancouver, the Friends and Relatives of the Disappeared (FRD) released a list of twenty eight mass graves across Canada holding the remains of untold numbers of aboriginal children who died in Indian Residential Schools.

The list was distributed today to the world media and to United Nations agencies, as the first act of the newly-formed International Human Rights Tribunal into Genocide in Canada (IHRTGC), a non-governmental body established by indigenous elders.

In a statement read by FRD spokesperson Eagle Strong Voice, it was declared that the IHRTGC would commence its investigations on April 15, 2008, the fourth Annual Aboriginal Holocaust Memorial Day. This inquiry will involve international human rights observers from Guatemala and Cyprus, and will convene aboriginal courts of justice where those persons and institutions responsible for the death and suffering of residential school children will be tried and sentenced. (The complete Statement and List of Mass Graves is reproduced below).

Eagle Strong Voice and IHRTGC elders will present the Mass Graves List at the United Nations on April 19, and will ask United Nations agencies to protect and monitor the mass graves as part of a genuine inquiry and judicial prosecution of those responsible for this Canadian Genocide.

Eyewitness Sylvester Greene spoke to the media at today's event, and described how he helped bury a young Inuit boy at the United Church's Edmonton residential school in 1953.

"We were told never to tell anyone by Jim Ludford, the Principal, who got me and three other boys to bury him. But a lot more kids got buried all the time in that big grave next to the school."

Press Statement: April 10, 2008
Mass Graves of Residential School Children Identified – Independent Inquiry Launched

We are gathered today to publicly disclose the location of twenty eight mass graves of children who died in Indian Residential Schools across Canada, and to announce the formation of an independent, non-governmental inquiry into the death and disappearance of children in these schools.

We estimate that there are hundreds, and possibly thousands, of children buried in these grave sites alone.

The Catholic, Anglican and United Church, and the government of Canada, operated the schools and hospitals where these mass graves are located. We therefore hold these institutions and their officers legally

responsible and liable for the deaths of these children.

We have no confidence that the very institutions of church and state that are responsible for these deaths can conduct any kind of impartial or real inquiry into them. Accordingly, as of April 15, 2008, we are establishing an independent, non-governmental inquiry into the death and disappearance of Indian residential school children across Canada .

This inquiry shall be known as The International Human Rights Tribunal into Genocide in Canada (IHRTGC), and is established under the authority of the following hereditary chiefs, who shall serve as presiding judges of the Tribunal:

Hereditary Chief Kiapilano of the Squamish Nation

Chief Louis Daniels (Whispers Wind), Anishinabe Nation Chief Svnoyi Wohali (Night Eagle), Cherokee Nation

Lillian Shirt, Clan Mother, Cree Nation

Elder Ernie Sandy, Anishinabe (Ojibway) Nation

Hereditary Chief Steve Sampson, Chemainus Nation

Ambassador Chief Red Jacket of Turtle Island

Today,
we are releasing to this Tribunal and to the people of the world the enclosed information on the location of mass graves connected to Indian residential schools and hospitals in order to prevent the destruction of this crucial evidence by the Canadian government, the RCMP and the Anglican, Catholic and United Church of Canada.

We call upon indigenous people on the land where these graves are located to monitor and protect these sites vigilantly, and prevent their destruction by occupational forces such as the RCMP and other government agencies.

Our Tribunal will commence on April 15 by gathering all of the evidence, including forensic remains, that is necessary to charge and indict those responsible for the deaths of the children buried therein.

Once these persons have been identified and detained, they will be tried and sentenced in indigenous courts of justice established by our Tribunal and under the authority of hereditary chiefs.

As a first step in this process, the IHRTGC will present this list of mass graves along with a statement to the United Nations in New York City on April 19, 2008. The IHRTGC will be asking the United Nations to declare these mass graves to be protected heritage sites, and will invite international human rights observers to monitor and assist its work.

Issued by the Elders and Judges of the IHRTGC

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IHRTGC

Sponsors include The Friends and Relatives of the Disappeared, The Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada, the Defensoria Indigenia of Guatemala, Canadians for the Separation of Church and State, and a confederation of indigenous elders across Canada and Turtle Island.

Issued on Squamish Territory , 10 April, 2008, under the authority of Hereditary Chief Kiapilano. For more information: www.hiddenfromhistory.org, or write to the IHRTGC at: genocidtribunal@yahoo.ca

Mass Graves at former Indian Residential Schools and Hospitals across Canada

A. British Columbia

1. Port Alberni:

Presbyterian-United Church school (1895-1973), now occupied by the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council (NTC) office, Kitskuksis Road . Grave site is a series of sinkhole rows in hills 100 metres due west of the NTC building, in thick foliage, past an unused water pipeline. Children also interred at Tseshaht reserve cemetery, and in wooded gully east of Catholic cemetery on River Road .

2. Alert Bay :

St. Michael's Anglican school (1878-1975), situated on Cormorant Island offshore from Port McNeill. Presently building is used by Namgis First Nation. Site is an overgrown field adjacent to the building, and also under the foundations of the present new building, constructed during the 1960's. Skeletons seen "between the walls".

3. Kuper Island: Catholic school

(1890-1975), offshore from Chemainus. Land occupied by Penelakut Band. Former building is destroyed except for a staircase. Two grave sites: one immediately south of the former building, in a field containing a conventional cemetery; another at the west shoreline in a lagoon near the main dock.

4. Nanaimo Indian Hospital:
Indian Affairs and United Church experimental facility (1942-1970) on Department of National Defense land. Buildings now destroyed. Grave sites are immediately east of former buildings on Fifth avenue , adjacent to and south of Malaspina College .

5. Mission: St. Mary's Catholic school (1861-1984), adjacent to and north of Lougheed Highway and Fraser River Heritage Park . Original school buildings are destroyed, but many foundations are visible on the grounds of the Park.

In this area there are two grave sites: a) immediately adjacent to former girls' dormitory and present cemetery for priests, and a larger mass grave in an artificial earthen mound, north of the cemetery among overgrown foliage and blackberry bushes, and b) east of the old school grounds, on the hilly slopes next to the field leading to the newer school building which is presently used by the Sto:lo First Nation. Hill site is 150 metres west of building.

6. North Vancouver: Squamish (1898-1959) and Sechelt (1912-1975) Catholic schools, buildings destroyed. Graves of children who died in these schools interred in the Squamish Band Cemetery , North Vancouver .

7. Sardis: Coqualeetza Methodist-United Church school (1889-1940), then experimental hospital run by federal government (1940-1969). Native burial site next to Sto:lo reserve and Little Mountain school, also possibly adjacent to former school-hospital building.

8. Cranbrook: St. Eugene Catholic school (1898-1970), recently converted into a tourist "resort" with federal funding, resulting in the covering-over of a mass burial site by a golf course in front of the building. Numerous grave sites are around and under this golf course.

9. Williams Lake : Catholic school (1890-1981), buildings destroyed but foundations intact, five miles south of city. Grave sites reported north of school grounds and under foundations of tunnel-like structure.

10. Meares Island (Tofino):
Kakawis-Christie Catholic school (1898-1974). Buildings incorporated into Kakawis Healing Centre. Body storage room reported in basement, adjacent to burial grounds south of school.

11. Kamloops : Catholic school
(1890-1978). Buildings intact. Mass grave south of school, adjacent to and amidst orchard. Numerous burials witnessed there.

12. Lytton: St. George's Anglican school
(1901-1979). Graves of students flogged to death, and others, reported under floorboards and next to playground.

13. Fraser Lake : Lejac Catholic school
(1910-1976), buildings destroyed. Graves reported under old foundations and between the walls.

Alberta:

1. Edmonton
: United Church school (1919-1960), presently site of the Poundmaker Lodge in St. Albert . Graves of children reported south of former school site, under thick hedge that runs north-south, adjacent to memorial marker.

2. Edmonton : Charles Camsell Hospital
(1945-1967), building intact, experimental hospital run by Indian Affairs and United Church . Mass graves of children from hospital reported south of building, near staff garden.

3. Saddle Lake : Bluequills
Catholic school (1898-1970), building intact, skeletons and skulls observed in basement furnace. Mass grave reported adjacent to school.

4. Hobbema: Ermineskin Catholic school
(1916-1973), five intact skeletons observed in school furnace. Graves under former building foundations.

Manitoba:

1. Brandon : Methodist-United Church school (1895-1972). Building intact. Burials reported west of school building.

2. Portage La Prairie: Presbyterian-United Church school (1895-1950). Children buried at nearby Hillside Cemetery .

3. Norway House:
Methodist-United Church school (1900-1974). "Very old" grave site next to former school building, demolished by United Church in 2004.

Ontario:

1. Thunder Bay

: Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital , still in operation. Experimental centre. Women and children reported buried adjacent to hospital grounds.

2. Sioux Lookout: Pelican Lake Catholic school (1911-1973). Burials of children in mound near to school.

3. Kenora: Cecilia Jeffrey school, Presbyterian-United Church (1900-1966). Large burial mound east of former school.

4. Fort Albany : St. Anne's Catholic school (1936-1964). Children killed in electric chair buried next to school.

5. Spanish: Catholic school (1883-1965). Numerous graves.

6. Brantford

: Mohawk Institute, Anglican church (1850-1969), building intact. Series of graves in orchard behind school building, under rows of trees.

7. Sault Ste. Marie: Shingwauk Anglican school (1873-1969), some intact buildings. Several graves of children reported on grounds of old school.

Quebec:

1. Montreal

: Allan Memorial Institute, McGill University , still in operation since opening in 1940. MKULTRA experimental centre. Mass grave of children killed there north of building, on southern slopes of Mount Royal behind stone wall.

Sources:

- Eyewitness accounts from survivors of these institutions, catalogued in Hidden from History: The Canadian Holocaust (2nd ed., 2005) by Kevin Annett. Other accounts are from local residents. See www.hiddenfromhistory.org .

10 microfilm series on Indian Residential Schools in Koerner Library,
University of B.C.

- Survey data and physical evidence obtained from grave sites in Port Alberni , Mission , and other locations.

This

is a partial list and does not include all of the grave sites connected to Indian residential Schools and hospitals across Canada. In many cases, children who were dying of diseases were sent home to die by school and church officials, and the remains of other children who died at the school were incinerated in the residential school furnaces.

This information is submitted by The Friends and Relatives of the Disappeared (FRD) to the world media, the United Nations, and to the International Human Rights Tribunal into Genocide in Canada (IHRTGC). The IHRTGC will commence its investigations on April 15, 2008 on Squamish Nation territory.

For more information on the independent inquiry into genocide in Canada being conducted by the IHRTGC, write to: genocidetribeun@yaho.ca

10 April, 2008

Squamish Nation Territory (" Vancouver , Canada ")