First Nations Summit

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:
A day for Canadians to cast aside misinformation and denialism and to learn about Indigenous peoples and Canada's colonial history

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, BC) – The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) is a time to recognize, reflect, learn, and honour the resilience of Indigenous Peoples. It is a reminder of the painful legacy and intergenerational impacts of Canada's horrific residential school system as well as the ongoing impacts of colonialism. We must cast aside misinformation, political rhetoric and denialism. Reconciliation, through the building of respectful relationships rooted in truth, justice, understanding, and healing, is our collective path forward.

Unfortunately, this year we must also acknowledge the disgusting incident that took place just days ago, when a white nationalist group deliberately placed itself near the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School (KIRS) with the intention of invoking fear and sowing division.

"What we saw at Tk̓emlúps te Secwépemc was not a peaceful protest, nor an act of free speech. This was an act based on hate, racism and residential school denialism. Actions from hate groups like this cannot change our history or erase our reality. The harmful impacts of colonialism and the deeply damaging residential school system on First Nations citizens and communities is our truth and the basis for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. There is simply no excuse for this abhorrent behaviour," stated Robert Phillips of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

The First Nations Summit stands in support of Tk̓emlúps te Secwépemc, and the many other communities that have experienced similar acts of racism, and denounces those who use this community or any other former residential school sites, as a target for denialists, political contestation and division. Communities entrusted with the memory of children who were taken from their families should not be a stage for fear and division, and must remain a place where we mourn with dignity and we remember with truth and purpose.

This year NDTR also happens to occur during a BC provincial election.

"What happened over the weekend at the site of the former KIRS, is unfortunately not separate from the broader political climate in which we find ourselves. We are unfortunately exposed to some who are emboldened by Trump-style politics that feed on division and misinformation. This rhetoric is intentional, it is calculated, and must be rejected. Reconciliation is not an abstract concept that should lead to fear. For example, modern day treaties show us what reconciliation in action looks like. Treaties are negotiated agreements that represent the highest form of

reconciliation. They show us that reconciliation is not the absence of disagreement, but the practice of resolving that disagreement and moving forward together," said Chief Shana Thomas of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. "Collectively, we need to reject the use of anti-reconciliation rhetoric and misinformation about First Nations Title and Rights as political pawns. We implore all candidates to rise above the rhetoric."

On the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation we also hold our hands up in recognition of all residential school survivors and we honour all of the children who never went home, who never got to lead fulsome lives, and who were lost forever to their families.

"It is important for Canadians to use this important day as a time of education, recognition and reflection on the devastating impacts that colonialism has had, and continues to have, on Indigenous communities across the country. We ask Canadians to stand with us in solidarity to break down the systemic colonialism, denialism and racism that still exists today. By embracing truth and working toward reconciliation, we can all create a future where Every Child Matters and where the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples is respected," added Hugh Braker of the First Nations Summit Political Executive.

The First Nations Summit encourages all Canadians to wear orange today as a symbol of acknowledgement of the destruction and pain caused by Indian Residential schools and Canada's colonial history, to remember the children who never went home, and to stand with us in partnership on our collective path forward.

-30-

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For further information:

Robert Phillips, FNS Political Executive	778-875-4463
Laxele'wuts'aat, Chief Shana Thomas, FNS Political Executive:	250-618-6905
Hugh Braker, FNS Political Executive:	604-812-2632

For additional information please visit these online resources:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:	*www.trc.ca*
Reconciliation Canada:	*www.reconciliationcanada.ca*
Indian Residential School Survivors Society:	*www.irsss.ca*
UBC Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre:	*www.irshdc.ubc.ca*
First Nations Education Steering Committee Education Resources:	*www.fnesc.ca/irsr/*

Counselling supports are available for residential school survivors and intergenerational survivors Through the Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS) toll-free support line at 1-800-721-0066. Please reach out if in need.