



P 416 658 1600
F 416 658 8537

Head Office
1710 Dufferin Street
Toronto, M6E 3P2

costi.org

[Twitter](https://twitter.com/COSTI_org) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/COSTI_org) @COSTI_org

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

June 3, 2021

Dear Prime Minister:

The news over the past week of the discovery of a mass grave of Indigenous children has left us profoundly distressed. We mourn the 215 children found on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School and the thousands of Indigenous children who lost their lives while detained at residential schools. It is hard to understand how past leaders and society separated children from their families, subjected them to abuse, stripped them of their native language and then forced them to convert to another religion. Our sorrow is profound as we live in a country where leaders allowed children to die at school and then buried them on the school grounds in unmarked graves without bothering to return them to their parents after their deaths.

As Canadians who are committed to justice we ask that you invoke a National Day of Mourning to honour the memories of these and all children who lost their lives while in residential schools. We beseech you to work with the direction of the Indigenous community to search for those graves, document the children's names and return the remains to their families.

This is a necessary first step but much more is required if we as Canadians are to address the injustices of the past and present and work towards reconciliation with Indigenous people. You have said that, "No relationship is as important to Canada than its relationship with the Indigenous people." We fully agree but we are troubled that little progress has been made in strengthening that relationship through restorative action.

The release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with its 94 Calls to Action laid out the path forward to reconcile with the tragedy of residential schools. Now, six years later, very few actions have been completed. According to the Yellowhead Institute's well researched document titled, *Calls to Action Accountability 2020 Status Update on Reconciliation*, only **eight** of the Calls to Action have been completed.

We urge you to make it a priority to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

The legacy of the residential schools has had an impact on Indigenous people to the present day. It is time for decisive action to right these wrongs.

Yours truly,


Pina Alberelli-Arone
President


Mario J. Calla
Executive Director

Cc: The Hon. C. Bennett, Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada
The Hon. M. Miller, Indigenous Services Canada