



NEWS RELEASE

GTC RESPONSE ON PAPAL APOLOGY

INUVIK (July 25, 2022) - The Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) recognizes that the Pope, on behalf of the Catholic Church, has apologized today on Treaty 6 Territory at Maskwacis, Alberta for its participation in the generations of systemic abuse, genocide and the suppression of cultural identity and language of Indigenous people in the residential school system across Canada.

While this apology indicates the beginning of a renewed relationship, the Gwich'in recognize that this means different things to people of all ages and backgrounds across Canada. There is also more to be done in terms of restitution and acceptance, both within our Gwich'in communities in the Northwest Territories and for Survivors across Canada.

"Today is about those who did not make it back home, and acknowledgement of the inter-generational damage inflicted upon our Nation. We honour those we lost and our Survivors by continuing our proud and respectful Gwich'in customs, traditions and language," says GTC Grand Chief Ken Kyikavichik. "With ongoing efforts to identify unmarked graves and the Indigenous children who went missing in the Residential School system, including in the Gwich'in Settlement Area, the Pope's apology is a formal acknowledgement that the Catholic Church was wrong and motivated by ignorance of our long history, vibrant culture and many contributions to this country. It is the first step in our long process of reconciliation with the Catholic Church."

The GTC sent fifteen (15) Gwich'in Residential School Survivors to Alberta this week to attend the Papal Visit and meet with representatives of the Catholic Church. Funding for this travel was provided to the GTC by Indigenous Services Canada and supported by the Dene Nation.

For More Information:

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