



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

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Racism in Canada Must End - Canadians Must Do Better

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – July 13, 2018) – The British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) is an advocacy organization which assists First Nations in BC in improving their livelihoods and also seeks to educate and raise awareness with on First Nations issues with Canadian society. Racism in Canada is the most invasive problem that hinders all Canadians in moving ahead together. The BCAFN calls upon Canada and all the leaders, teachers and parents to do more to educate youth and adults to end racism against First Nations peoples and minorities across Canada.

"Recent events in the Secwepemc Territory should be very concerning to all. It seems that ignorance and bigotry against First Nations hasn't changed in this era of reconciliation", stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. He added, "First Nations people have inhabited their homelands since time immemorial. The idea of this country we call Canada, is founded on principals of cultural genocide and policies that have taken away our jurisdiction, lands, resources and customs. Canadians, both new and old, must understand that prior to colonization we had our own distinct languages, cultures and systems to govern our peoples and lands." In Secwepemc territory (Kamloops area) a sign posted by the Shuswap Tribal Council regarding mushroom picking laws was vandalized several weeks ago with racist comments. The BC government has already condemned and denounced the actions, but the RCMP have not laid any charges and ask that the public be vigilant. Meanwhile in Fort William First Nation territory, in Thunder Bay, Ontario a First Nation man was randomly attacked by a non-First Nation man this week; RCMP are seeking more information into the incident, which is considered racially motivated. There have also been recent court decisions regarding First Nations people seeking justice in the case of Colten Boushie, Tina Fontaine and Jon Styres which demonstrate perhaps Canadian law is not 'blind'.

Racist attitudes are no longer the foundational values that are needed by Canadians if we want to live in a tolerant and just society. In a time of reconciliation and beyond, all Canadians must do better to ensure this generation of youth (First Nation and non-First Nation alike) have the education and skills to work and live in multi-ethnic society and a country that was founded on First Nations lands and resources. We all must do better to eradicate hatred and racism. We cannot repeat history, nor will First Nations leaders and citizens let this attitude carry on.

Regional Chief Teegee said, "We are all here to stay. Changes are urgently needed in school curriculums, training manuals and public spaces to reconnect Canadians with accurate information and the truth about First Nations peoples and their cultures. In BC alone, there are over 18 First Nations language groups and 32 distinct dialects that make up over 60% of all the indigenous languages in Canada. While there are significant differences in attitudes and values from even a generation ago,



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there still exists dangerous misconceptions, lies and bigotry about First Nations rightful place in their homelands." Regional Chief Teegee concluded, "The BCAFN will be launching a series of information bulletins for Canadians to learn more about First Nations in BC in the coming year. We will also outreach to partners in the public and private sector to build awareness about ending all forms of racism against First Nations peoples."

For further information, contact:

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