



qathet Museum and Archives Society
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The qathet Museum and Archives is deeply concerned about the rise in anti-Indigenous racism, residential school denialism, and genocide denialism we have observed in our community and across British Columbia. In solidarity with the undersigned museums and organizations, we denounce racism, denialism, and white supremacy in our communities and commit to taking action to resist these movements. Those who perpetuate racism towards Indigenous peoples by misrepresenting history are undermining the true and documented history of Canada and its institutions, Indigenous knowledge, and sound academic research.

The harmful rhetoric that downplays the harms of residential schools has become more mainstream and is increasing steadily. Often fueled by people in positions of influence and power, denialists utilize and disseminate flawed logic and misinformation that feeds mistrust, resentment, and hate towards Indigenous communities. As a museum, we are responsible for showcasing history, public education, community engagement, and working with Indigenous communities in a collaborative way. We are committed to upholding the Truth and Reconciliation's 94 Calls to Action, specifically Calls 67-70 which pertain to museums and archives.

Residential school denialism consists of downplaying the realities that children faced at the schools, justifying the intentions of those who were responsible for their implementation and operations, and revising Canadian settler-Indigenous history to assuage settler guilt and fit an assimilationist narrative. We strongly support NDP MLA Leah Gazan's (Winnipeg Centre) tabling of bill C-413, the Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons which is aimed at combating residential school denialism and stopping the harm it causes to Survivors and their families. We urge other organizations to do the same. If passed, this bill will amend the Criminal Code to include residential school denialism and genocide denialism as hate speech, on par with Holocaust denialism. This bill would protect people from harassment, curb the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation, and allow communities to search for their relatives in peace.

We, the undersigned, stand in solidarity with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities whose young ones perished at Residential Schools across the country, and those whose deaths were related to their attendance at the schools. We acknowledge that many were buried in unmarked graves. We reject bad-faith arguments that fall under the guise of searching for truth that disregards and seeks to discredit the evidence documented in multiple reports published by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Office of the Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools. We are committed to supporting survivors and their families, facilitating the telling of their stories, and supporting them in their searches.

References

2024 Canadian Archaeological Association

Joint Statement on Indian Residential School Denialism by the CAA, the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), the Canadian Association for Biological Anthropology (CABA-ACAB), and the Canadian Permafrost Association (CPA). <https://canadianarchaeology.com/caa/news-announcements/joint-statement-indian-residential-school-denialism-caa-society-american>

2021 Canadian Association of Biological Anthropology

CABA/ACAB Statement on Unmarked Burials at Former Residential Schools.
<https://caba-acab.net/announcements/cabaacab-statement-unmarked-burials-former-residential-schools>

2024 NDP Canada

NDP's Leah Gazan Tables Bill to End Residential School Denialism. <https://www.ndp.ca/news/ndps-leah-gazan-tables-bill-end-residential-school-denialism>

2024 Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Reports. <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>

2024 Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs

UBCIC Resolution 2024-33 “Rejection of Residential School Denialism”. https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2024-10/2024Aug12_Resolution2024-33_FollowUp_UBCICtoMunicipalitiesResidentialSchoolDenialism.pdf