

Statement

Premier Akeeagok on Pope's Residential School Apology

April 1, 2022
Iqaluit, Nunavut

Nunavut's Premier, P.J. Akeeagok, today released the following statement:

“I was encouraged to hear his Holiness Pope Francis’ apology to the First Nations, Inuit and Metis delegates for the conduct of some members of the Roman Catholic Church in Canada’s residential schools.

What occurred in Canada's residential schools at the hands of members of the church and educators is nothing short but systemic cultural genocide.

No words can erase the impact of the abuse endured by Inuit families, especially the children who were forcefully removed from parents and communities to be subjected to mistreatment and abuse at the hands of individual entrusted with their care and education. However, this apology is a significant step on the long road that leads to reconciliation.

While intergenerational trauma resulting from residential schools continues to haunt our communities, our people continue to show resilience in the face of these unspeakable hardships. Inuit have continued to preserve and protect our culture and language and to reclaim our traditional values and beliefs.

I would like to thank Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami for their advocacy regarding this dark chapter in Canada's history and all the residential school survivors who have bravely shared their truths for years to lead to this acknowledgement and apology.

There is much more to do until we can achieve true healing and reconciliation including ensuring that surviving members of the church who preyed on children have a day in court.

I look forward to welcoming his Holiness to Canada, and hope that he will visit Nunavut to meet with Inuit survivors of residential school.”

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