



Grand Council Treaty #3

Office of the Ogichidaa

P.O. BOX 1720
Kenora, Ontario P9N 3X7
Ph: (807) 548-4214

Fax: (807) 548-5041
Email: ogichidaa.kavanaugh@treaty3.ca

MEDIA RELEASE

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Grand Chief of Treaty #3 says Canada must compensate First Nations families impacted by 'broken' child welfare system

KENORA, ON --- Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh, Grand Chief of Treaty #3 says it's about time that Canada owned up to its responsibilities and compensate First Nations children and their families impacted by the on-reserve child welfare system.

"For the longest time the federal government fought us on this knowing full well that they were not putting the rights and safety of our children at the forefront," said Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh. "There are many of our people affected by this broken child welfare system and though there is no amount of money to that will fix it, I am glad that the families will be compensated for their grief and loss. Our children need to be with their families, in their own communities surrounded by their culture, teachings and ceremony."

Canada must pay billions of dollars in compensation to First Nations children harmed by the on-reserve child welfare system, following a ruling Sept 6 by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal that also called for payments to some of their parents and grandparents.

The Tribunal ordered the federal government to pay \$40,000 to each child — the maximum allowed under the Canadian Human Rights Act — who was apprehended or taken from their homes on reserve, no matter what the reason. The ruling covers all children in the care of the on-reserve child welfare system at any point from Jan. 1, 2006, to a date to be determined by the tribunal.

Disappointingly, the Tribunal has had to issue 10 subsequent orders to ensure Canada's compliance. In 2014, Canada argued that no compensation should be paid. In 2019, they argued the Tribunal was the wrong forum for the compensation issue to be heard and also suggested that there was no evidence of harm to individual children before the Tribunal. The Tribunal rejected both arguments.

Some estimates place the number of potentially affected children at about 50,000.

The federal government, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) have until Dec. 10 to work out a process to identify, and then distribute the compensation to those who are eligible.

To view a summary on the case and the non-compliance orders from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal please visit the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society page: <https://bit.ly/2kMwEJX>