

# OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

## UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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### UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS CHIEFS COUNCIL

JUNE 7<sup>TH</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

MUSQUEAM COMMUNITY CENTRE, X<sup>W</sup>MƏƏK<sup>W</sup>ƏY<sup>Ə</sup>M (MUSQUEAM TERRITORY)

**Resolution no. 2023-28**

#### **RE: Repatriation of First Nations Children**

**WHEREAS** First Nations title and rights holders have the inherent right to self-determination, which includes jurisdiction over our children and families as constitutionally protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, described in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), and affirmed in Bill C-92: *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (C-92);

**WHEREAS** the UN Declaration should be the framework used to address the horrific legacy of Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the Millennial Scoop, including the forced removal of First Nations children and youth from their families, communities, and Nations, the disproportionate number of First Nations children and youth in care, the adverse outcomes of child welfare involvement, the loss of language, and denial of culture and human rights;

**WHEREAS** the UN Declaration, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

**Article 2:** Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their Indigenous origin or identity.

**Article 7(1):** Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.

**(2):** Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.

**Article 22(2):** States shall take measures, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to ensure that Indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

**Article 23:** Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them, and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions;

**WHEREAS** the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action #1 to #5 call on federal, provincial, and territorial governments to reduce the number of First Nations children in care and improve First Nations child and family services;

**WHEREAS** by UBCIC Resolution 2015-28, the UBCIC Chiefs Council called upon the government of Canada to take immediate steps to develop a legal framework and take immediate steps to fully implement all recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;

**WHEREAS** the Sixties Scoop was an ongoing practice in the 1960s and 1970s which removed First Nations children from their families and communities and placed them in the care of white Canadian and International foster or adoptive homes;

**WHEREAS** by UBCIC Resolution 2022-07, the UBCIC Chiefs Council supported the call for a national inquiry into the Sixties Scoop and permanent child removal, directed the UBCIC Executive and staff to work with likeminded organizations to call on the federal government to launch a national inquiry in partnership with the 60s Scoop Legacy of Canada, and called on the federal and provincial governments for long-term funding to support a First Nations Repatriation program;

**WHEREAS** the Millennial Scoop is an ongoing practice which began in the 1980s and continues to this day, due to the sustained overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth within the Canadian child welfare system; and

**WHEREAS** First Nations children continue to lose their identity, culture, and kinship links as they are removed from their homes, families, and Nations by federal, provincial, and territorial child welfare systems.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** the UBCIC Chiefs Council supports the call made by the Assembly of First Nations for Canada to acknowledge that there are generations of lost First Nations children who were and continue to be placed outside their communities, both within Canada and internationally, and who have never been reunified with their families;

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the UBCIC Chiefs Council calls on Canada to engage with First Nations title and rights holders to develop a Repatriation Strategy to identify First Nations children who are domestically and internationally displaced and have not reconnected with their families, communities, and/or Nations; and

**THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** the UBCIC Chiefs Council calls on Canada to meaningfully engage and collaborate with First Nations to address the impacts of First Nations children who were removed from their families, communities, and Nations, both within Canada and internationally.

**Moved:** Judy Wilson, Osoyoos Indian Band (Proxy)  
**Seconded:** Katisha Paul, UBCIC Youth Representative  
**Disposition:** Carried  
**Date:** June 8, 2023