



June 22, 2021 –At their recent meeting, Ontario’s Big City Mayors (OBCM) made a joint statement calling on all levels of government to address Islamophobia and racism in all forms in our communities across Ontario and Canada. Our caucus condemns the racist and Islamophobic terrorist attack in London, Ontario that shook our communities and robbed a young boy of his family. We stand in solidarity with Mayor Holder of London and his community who we know continue to mourn this tragic loss. Our Mayors are committed to working with their communities and partners to combat racism against Muslim-Canadians.

UNIDENTIFIED GRAVES AT FORMER RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SITES

OBCM joins the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation, Indigenous communities and individuals across the country to mourn the 215 children found in an unmarked grave at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. The OBCM caucus supports the funding of searches of all former residential school sites to ensure these atrocities and these children are never forgotten.

“The past weeks have been a stark reminder that Ontario and Canada are not free of racism. The pain of our country’s past is not as distant as we’d like to think, as the impacts of the residential school system continue to be felt across Indigenous communities,” said Jeff Lehman, Mayor of Barrie and OBCM Chair. “As uncomfortable as it may be, we must face the realities of racism in our communities so that we may work together to create a future that is free of racism for all of our residents.”

The OBCM caucus passed the following motions at its June 18th meeting:

CITY OF LONDON, ONTARIO, TERROR ATTACK

Ontario’s Big City Mayors wish to strongly condemn the act of terrorism that occurred on June 6, 2021, and express our sincere condolences to the Afzaal family. We stand united with Mayor Holder of London and his community. We are only too aware that hate and islamophobia are present in Ontario, and collectively we condemn all forms of racism and islamophobia and encourage participation in anti-Islamophobia events and activities.

KAMLOOPS RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL UNMARKED BURIAL SITE DISCOVERY

Whereas in May 2021, the remains of 215 children were found in unmarked burial sites at the Kamloops Indian Residential School;

Whereas we join with the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation and Indigenous communities and individuals across the country in mourning these 215 lives;

Whereas our communities recognize the importance of and support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action.



Therefore, OBCM expresses condolences and offer our support to the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation, and we commit to continuing to support our local indigenous communities and organizations through addressing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We support the funding of searches of all former residential school sites and the proposed Day of Mourning.

About Ontario's Big City Mayors

Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM), formerly known as the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario, includes mayors of 29 single and lower-tier cities with a population of 100,000 or more, who collectively represent nearly 70 per cent of Ontario's population. OBCM advocates for issues and policies important to Ontario's largest cities.

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