



**YUKON  
REGION**

A Yukon that Leads

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Assembly of First Nations delegation to the Vatican is a critical step on the path to the truth.**

**Whitehorse, Yukon – AFN Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek stands with the Vatican delegation advocating for Papal apology in honour of residential school survivors**

“Today I want to acknowledge the delegates from coast-to-coast-to-coast who will be travelling to the Vatican to meet with the Pope and the leadership of the Catholic church, to seek justice for residential school survivors, and for those who never came home from Catholic-run institutions.

Truth must come before reconciliation. Part of getting to this truth is an acknowledgement from Pope Francis of the Catholic Church’s responsibility in the violence, abuse and genocide inflicted upon Indigenous children in these institutions. This delegation represents a step towards fulfilling Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to action #58 which calls on the Pope to apologise *in Canada*. I further believe he must repeal the Papal Bull of 1493, and all other Papal Bulls that enshrined the “Doctrine of Discovery” which gave license to explorers to claim Indigenous land and led to the genocide of Indigenous people. As the leader of the Catholic church, the Pope must take responsibility for this appalling legacy, and he must do so unequivocally. I join the leadership and delegation in their calls for a Papal apology to be delivered in Canada, on the traditional territories of those families and children whose lives were violently interrupted by these institutions.

While the horror of residential “schools” along with the thousands of young souls who revealed themselves, has largely disappeared from headlines across the country, it has never faded from the minds and hearts of the survivors and families who still experience the lingering effects of those traumatic institutions every day, including my own. My late grandmother Ch’aalj umą was a survivor of a residential school. I carry her memory with me always, and am reminded of her pain. I cherish her strength and I hold her, my great aunts and my uncles close to my heart as I watch this delegation travel

around the world to demand honour and justice for her and the countless more who experienced the same trauma at the hands of the Catholic church and other colonial institutions.

I would like to express admiration and gratitude for Elder Adeline Webber - Kh'ayàdê - an Elder and Matriarch from Teslin Tlingit Council and Kukhittan Clan, who is attending on behalf of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Region, as part of the Assembly of First Nations delegation. I thank and acknowledge her for her leadership and her bravery as she travels to Rome to ensure the Yukon has a meaningful presence on this important journey. Thank you to my colleague Dene National Chief/Regional Chief Gerald Antoine who represents NWT (Denendeh) at the AFN, for leading the delegation. I have the utmost respect and admiration for all 15 First Nation delegates travelling to Rome, including the youth, Elders, survivors and spiritual advisors. They are travelling alongside Inuit and Métis delegates, and will no doubt face difficult moments in the weeks ahead. I wish them peace and healing as they take this journey together.

Again, truth must come before reconciliation. I remain optimistic that this visit will be one step in the right direction along the continued path to healing. There is much more work to be done, and I welcome all those willing to do that work alongside us.”

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## Background:

### **TRC Calls to Action**

<https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/2091412/trc-calls-to-action.pdf>

### **Assembly of First Nations Delegation Looking Forward to Meeting with Pope Francis in Rome**

<https://www.afn.ca/assembly-of-first-nations-delegation-looking-forward-to-meeting-with-pope-francis-in-rome/>