



## **CPSA Reconciliation Committee Statement on Inaugural National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30, 2021**

The Reconciliation Committee of the Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA) acknowledges Canada's inaugural National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, September 30, 2021, with this Statement on Canada's genocidal treatment of Indigenous peoples. This is part of the truth, which must be told if there are to be conditions for reconciliation.

We acknowledge the struggles of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Survivors of residential schools and other coercive Canadian institutions that have sought to eliminate Indigeneity. Those institutions pursued genocide.

Residential school Survivors forced Canada to create the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). They ensured that the court-ordered class-action settlement addressing their residential school claims would provide for the TRC's creation and funding. This day, then, is theirs. This first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation is Canada's implementation of the Call to Action #80 from the TRC Report.

In international law, genocide is defined in Article II of the [1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#)

*Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:*

- (a) Killing members of the group*
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group*
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part*
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group*
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group*

"Indian" residential, day and industrial schools, by removing children from their families, homelands, languages, and spiritualities and attempting a complete elimination of their cultural context, fall within the scope of this definition. To quote Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term "genocide," what matters is the presence of "a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of the essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the

aim of annihilating the groups themselves.” We will speak more about this in the future, but today we wish to focus on the Survivors and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

There are numerous other genocidal actions and consequences that Canadians must confront in order to hear the truth that must precede reconciliation: territorial destruction and dispossession; continuing forcible separation of children from their families and homelands; the extraordinary numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and the continuing existence of systemic racism across Canada among others.

Committing to reconciliation means hearing the uncomfortable truth about Canada’s assaults on Indigenous peoples and territories. It means working individually, collectively and through public governments to redress the specific harms and to prevent their continuation and reoccurrence. It is in this spirit that we gratefully thank the Survivors for their courage and leadership and offer this statement.

### **CPSA Reconciliation Committee**

Joyce Green - Éléna Choquette - Gordon Christie - Veldon Coburn - Emily Grafton - Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox - Matthew James - Daniel Voth

### **Media Contact**

The following colleagues are available for interviews on this or other matters relating to reconciliation. Contact the [CPSA Secretariat](#) for professor Joyce Green’s phone number.

#### [Joyce Green](#)

Professor Emerita, Politics and International Studies – Regina

#### [Gordon Christie](#)

Professor – UBC

#### [Veldon Coburn](#)

Assistant Professor – Ottawa

#### [Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox](#)

Adjunct Professor - Carleton

#### [Matthew James](#)

Associate Professor – Victoria