



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## COALITION SEEKS ANSWERS ABOUT CHILDREN WHO WENT MISSING AT U.S. INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL VIA UNITED NATIONS WORKING GROUP ON ENFORCED AND INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCES

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, May 14, 2019—Today a coalition of tribes, organizations, and independent researchers will go before the United Nations to testify about **American Indian and Alaskan Native Children who went Missing under the United States' Indian Boarding School Policy.**

The coalition filed a submission with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances (UNWGEID) on April 12, 2019 detailing a number of children who were taken into federal custody and whose fate and whereabouts remain unknown to this day.

The filing outlines how the U.S. has never acknowledged, accepted responsibility for, nor shown accountability for the many children that did not return home from federal Indian boarding schools. Nor has the U.S. provided any evidence that they systematically notified families or tribes when the children passed away or went missing from schools despite attempts by the coalition to obtain this information through the FOIA process. The coalition who filed the UNWGEID submission includes the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, and independent researchers Preston McBride, Marsha Small, and Eleanor Hadden.

Between 1879 and the 1960s, tens of thousands of American Indian and Alaskan Native children were forced to attend boarding school against their parents' and tribes' wishes. The United States enforced attendance at federal and church-run boarding schools by withholding rations from families or by incarceration of family members. Once taken into federal custody, many children died at the schools or went missing.

The coalition urges the UNWGEID to call on the United States to provide a full accounting of American Indian and Alaskan Native children who were taken into government custody under the United States' Indian Boarding School Policy.

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The International Indian Treaty Council is an organization of Indigenous Peoples from North, Central, South America, the Arctic, Pacific and Caribbean in General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). IITC was founded in 1974 on the Standing Rock Reservation.

<https://www.iitc.org/>

The mission of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) is to lead in the pursuit of understanding and addressing the ongoing trauma created by the U.S. Indian boarding school policy. NABS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, incorporated in June 2012 under the laws of the Navajo Nation. Visit us online to learn more. <http://boardingschoolhealing.org>

The Native American Rights Fund (NARF) is the oldest and largest non-profit Native American law firm in the United States, providing legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide who might otherwise have gone without adequate representation. NARF has successfully asserted and defended the most important rights of Indians and tribes in hundreds of major cases, and has achieved significant results in such critical areas as tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, natural resource protection, and Indian education. NARF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that focuses on applying existing laws and treaties to guarantee that national and state governments live up to their legal obligations. The Native American Rights Fund is headquartered in Boulder, Colorado, with branch offices in Washington, D.C., and Anchorage, Alaska. <https://www.narf.org/>

The National Indian Child Welfare Association works to support the safety, health, and spiritual strength of Native children along the broad continuum of their lives. NICWA promotes building tribal capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect through positive systems change at the state, federal, and tribal level. For more information, visit [www.nicwa.org](http://www.nicwa.org)

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan (SCIT) is a federally recognized Tribal nation with just over 3,600 members. The Tribe's government offices are located on the Isabella Reservation in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan and Saganing Reservation in Standish, Michigan. The SCIT is a progressive sovereign entity dedicated to the preservation of its rich cultural history while striving to protect the interest of its indigenous community for the next seven generations.

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe is a federally recognized Tribe with 21,245 members living on the Rosebud Reservation. The Reservation is located on the border of Nebraska in the south central area of western South Dakota. The Tribe actively works in concert with the other six (6) Tribes comprising the Oceti Sakowin (Seven Fires) in protecting Treaty lands, resources, inclusive of the cultural landscapes of the ancestral Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota in common.