



**Office of the Independent
Special Interlocutor**

for Missing Children and Unmarked
Graves and Burial Sites associated
with Indian Residential Schools

**Bureau de l'interlocutrice
spéciale indépendante**

pour les enfants disparus et les tombes
et les sépultures anonymes en lien avec
les pensionnats indiens

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, April 20, 2023

Independent Special Interlocutor encouraged by historic Settlement Agreement initiating investigation into potential unmarked graves and burials at site of the Royal Victoria Hospital and McGill University

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER, April 20, 2023 – The Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites Associated with Indian Residential Schools, Kimberly Murray (“Special Interlocutor Murray”), is optimistic that Thursday’s Settlement Agreement approved by the Quebec Superior Court represents a significant step in the national effort to reconcile the historic injustices against Indigenous Peoples.

As an Intervenor in the Quebec Superior Court matter, Special Interlocutor Murray worked with all parties, as well as the Court, to ensure that claims of the existence of potential unmarked burials were taken seriously, ahead of a planned redevelopment to the site. Special Interlocutor Murray’s interest is to ensure that any investigation is guided by the best practices in archaeology, as well as respectful of Indigenous laws, protocols and cultural practices.

“Indigenous Peoples are often faced with institutional and government denialism when they bring forth concerns relating to burials,” said Special Interlocutor Murray. “These concerns are often discredited, minimized, and not supported by action.”

On October 27, 2022, Justice Gregory Moore granted a precedent setting injunction to pause construction on the redevelopment at the Royal Victoria Hospital, pending a consensus by the parties on an appropriate archaeological plan to investigate the claims of potential unmarked burials on the site.

Over the past six months, the parties have worked diligently to agree on a credible process to conduct such an investigation, which encompasses the best practices from the Canadian Archaeological Association, including the analysis of archival records, collection of Survivor testimonies, and use of the latest technological methods to search the site for potential burials.

“The Settlement Agreement represents concrete action by all parties, which respects the concerns of the Kanien’kehá:ka Kahnistensera (Mohawk Mothers),” said Special Interlocutor Murray. “The terms are given the force of a Court Order to investigate potential unmarked burials through a transparent process, guided by experts with the appropriate experience, and following the guidelines of the best practices in archaeology, while being respectful of Indigenous laws, customs and protocols.”



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Background Information:

The Independent Special Interlocutor's Mandate directs her to "identify needed measures" regarding the process of identifying, recovering, and protecting unmarked burial sites across Canada. Last year, the Kanien'keha:ka Kahnistensera filed an application in Quebec Superior Court seeking an injunction to pause construction on the \$850-million redevelopment project at the Old Royal Victoria Hospital. The injunction was sought to allow for a full and proper search to determine if there are unmarked graves or burials of Indigenous children on the grounds.

The Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor was granted Intervenor status by the Court to assist all parties in understanding the link between hospitals, universities, and Indian Residential Schools, as well as provide guidance on how Indigenous laws, customs and protocols can inform and guide the work ahead.

About Us:

Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites Associated with Indian Residential Schools

- Kimberly R. Murray was appointed by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada as the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools in June 2022.
- The Special Interlocutor is independent and non-partisan and has a two-year mandate to deliver recommendations on a new federal framework to protect unmarked burial sites and support identification of the missing children.
- The Independent Special Interlocutor will deliver an Interim Report in June 2023 and a Final Report in June 2024.

For more information about the Independent Special Interlocutor and Mandate visit:

<https://osi-bis.ca/>

<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/interlocutor-interlocuteur/mtr-mcr.html>

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