



Yellowknives Dene First Nation

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The Honourable R. J. Simpson
Government of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

May 20, 2025

Dear Premier,

We have been informed by NWT chiefs and elders who have been speaking to their relatives in Fort Resolution recently, that the burials of our children who attended St. Joseph's Residential School are proposed by your government to become subject to the *Archaeological Sites Act* and the *Scientific Act*.

Treating the burials of these children in this manner would dishonour the traditions of our Dené people. We would never consider applying for an archaeological permit in order to investigate the deaths of our children. During the investigation into their death, we will be working with the Deninu Kué Chief and Council and expect to be working with the Coroner's Office directly.

We note that Chief Fred Sangris' aunt, his father's sister, is one of those children. She was taken to St. Joseph's Residential School and never returned. His family does not know what happened to her. If there is evidence of any kind that she is buried in the cemetery, Chief Fred Sangris wants his DNA to be used as part of this investigation in order to identify remains which could be those of his aunt. Chief Sangris will be requesting that the Coroner's Office order an investigation into her death.

On behalf of our communities, we emphatically state that we would never agree to the investigation into the death of our children being conducted under the *Archaeological Sites and the Scientific Acts*

Chief Fred Sangris, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Ndilo

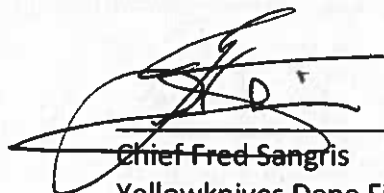
As Chief of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and member living in Ndilo, I have lived a traditional lifestyle with my family raised in modern times, I was raised listening to all stories containing events, legends and wildlife about my ancestors, I have heard it all, however the one touching story that truly disheartening is the story of my grandfather's David Kemili (Sangris) daughter Elizabeth, who was sent to mission school in Fort Resolution, NWT, my grandfather remembers his daughter

vividly, my family would like answers on what happened to our long-lost auntie. According to the Archaeological Act it should not be used to investigate, the indigenous peoples who have lost loved ones due to Missionary school are not artifacts, they are our beloved children. The leadership support the continued work with investigators without the interference from GNWT, we are seeking the knowledge of investigators who can tell the coroner of what happened to our family member, as we are still waiting upon answers to this day.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature, appearing to read 'Ernest Betsina', written over a horizontal line.

Chief Ernest Betsina
Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Dettah

A black ink signature, appearing to read 'Fred Sangris', written over a horizontal line.

Chief Fred Sangris
Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Ndilo

Encl.