



United Nations - Geneva  
Expert Mechanisms on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – 15 Session  
Item 10: Future work of the Expert Mechanism, including the focus of future thematic studies  
Thursday, July 7, 2022  
Speaker: Rosalee Gonzalez

Thank you, Madame Chair,

On behalf of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas, North Region and in solidarity with the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, we recommend that EMRIP consider a study on the impact of “assimilation of indigenous children and peoples through education”.

*Under article 8 of the UNDRIP, “Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture” (UNDRIP).*

#### **Definition of Genocide according to Article 2 of the UN Geneva Convention, 1948:**

1. *A mental element:* the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such"; and
2. *A physical element,* which includes the following five acts, enumerated exhaustively:
  - Killing members of the group
  - Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
  - Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
  - Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
  - Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

Currently, there’s a revitalized movement to raise the visibility of the history and current impacts of North American Indian Boarding schools. The truth about the North American Indian boarding school policy has largely been written out of the history books. In the US, there were more than 350 government-funded, and often church-run, Indian Boarding schools across the US in the 19th and 20th centuries. Indian children were forcibly abducted by government agents, sent to schools hundreds of miles away, and beaten, starved, or otherwise abused when they spoke their native languages. In Canada alone, over 150,000 children were forced to attend boarding schools, and many never returned. The search for unmarked burials of indigenous children is occurring as we speak.

To achieve a more inclusive global dialogue on this issue, we propose that you consider the broader topic on “Assimilation of indigenous peoples in Education”.

Thank you.