

Statement on Canada Day 2021

While acknowledging that there are things to celebrate about Canada, there are also many things about the country that require us to pause, reflect, and act. We know the nation and the community are in mourning. We honour and grieve the loss of #OurLondonFamily — the Afzaal family, the 215 young lives stolen at Kamloops Residential School in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation territory, the lives stolen and disrespected in the 751 unmarked graves at Marieval Indian Residential School on what is now the Cowessess First Nation, and the missing children in unmarked graves at other residential schools across Canada. We acknowledge the atrocities committed against Indigenous Peoples and the lasting legacy the damaging policies and practices have had on our community. We condemn Islamophobia and acts of discrimination, racism, and hate against any individuals, organizations, or communities.

Racism doesn't exist only in tragic events; it's in everyday moments. According to a recent report from the London Police Service, alleged hate crimes spiked by nearly 50% last year in London and more than doubled in the past four years, despite acknowledgement from authorities that most hate crimes still go unreported. Canadians must confront and reckon with the racism and discrimination that exists in our country and our city and commit to real, tangible change. Traditionally, we host events and programming, virtual or in-person, that celebrate Canada Day. However, in consultation with our stakeholders, we feel now is not the time to celebrate; it is the time to reflect and commit to real change.

This Canada Day, we invite the community to spend the day reflecting on the history of our country and the role colonialism, racism, and genocide have played in its structures. We have included a list of resources to help with this reflection, including:

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports: nctr.ca/records/reports
- Anti-Islamophobia Resources: islamophobia-is.com/resources
- London Public Library Resources on Racism: londonpubliclibrary.ca/research/social-sciences-and-humanities/racism
- Indigenous Canada Online Course from the University of Alberta: ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html
- Atrocities Against Indigenous Canadians For Dummies by Jenna Rose Sands: atrocitiesagainstindigenouscanadians.com
- A Reading List To Learn About Colonialism & Racism In Canada: bookriot.com/cancelcanadaday-reading-list

Recognizing that Canada Day has a different meaning for everyone, the London Heritage Council is also organizing a virtual panel on “The Future of Canada Day.” On Tuesday, June 29 at 7 PM, Londoners are encouraged to tune into the Council's [Facebook page](#) for a facilitated discussion with community members who will share their perspectives about the future of Canada Day.