

North

## Inuit leaders call for healing and education in wake of TRC final report

'What needs to happen now is the Canadian public has to accept the recommendations as fact'

[Sima Sahar Zerehi](#) · CBC News · Posted: Dec 16, 2015 4:30 AM CT | Last Updated: December 16, 2015



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Inuit leaders say now that the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission's long-awaited final report is out, it's time for healing, education and action.

Commission chair Justice Murray Sinclair formally ended the six-year commission Tuesday with the release of its final report and 94 recommendations for action.

The extensive final report shows how residential schooling in the North played a major role in the rapid transformation of the region's traditional lifestyles and economies by taking Inuit, Métis and First Nations children tremendous distances away from their families and stripping them of their languages and traditional skills.

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"We've been waiting for it for a very, very long, long time," said James Eetoolook, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s vice-president. He attended a residential school for a year.



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"I think we need to push our government in order to keep on top of it rather than putting it on the back burner."

Eetoolook said Nunavut Tunngavik is looking forward to meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in the near future to work on the action plans associated with the report.

Airing these dark chapters in Canadian history will go a long way in addressing the trauma from the past, said Eetoolook.

"I know it's not going to put an end to the disaster that was created by the Canadian government," he said.

"I think we're going to see some healing come out of it."

Eetoolook said he is eager to see the truths in the report be incorporated into how history is taught.

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"It is part of our Canadian history. This history is not all great; there's a lot of madness and a lot of sadness in it as well."

## 'We can forgive, but we cannot forget'

Jack Anawak, a former residential school student and a former Nunavut MP, said he believes that it's time for better education that fosters cultural understanding of Inuit, Métis and First Nations.

"We have come to the understanding that yes we can forgive, but we cannot forget," he said.

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Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, poses with John Banksland, a member of the TRC survivors committee from Inuvik, in Ottawa Tuesday at the release of the final Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami)

"What needs to happen now is that the Canadian public has to accept the recommendations as fact."

Rebecca Kudloo, president of the Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, attended residential school as a child, and was in Ottawa for the release of the report.

Kudloo said that the problems associated with the abuses of residential schools will continue until Inuit populations are given the resources needed to assist with the healing process.

"It was nice to hear that the government is committed to the next steps and healing but the resources are scare," she said.

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Kudloo said she hopes that a part of the action plan will include funding social services that can

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"The truth that we now have in these volumes, and the truth that has been said over the course of this entire process should change us," said Obed.

"It should reach our hearts...it should affect us not just today but throughout the entirety of our lives."

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*With files from Madeleine Allakariallak*

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