



SOVEREIGN NATIONS OF TREATY NO. 8 CHIEFS (AB) STATEMENT ON VATICAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE REPUDIATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 6, 2023 (Unceded Territory of Treaty No. 8) Last week the Vatican announced repudiating the “Doctrine of Discovery”. The Doctrine of Discovery is a series of policies also known as ‘Papal Bulls’ established by the Vatican in the 14th century to justify the “taking up” of First Nations lands and territories.

This policy enabled 530 years of presumed governance, systemic and deliberate extermination structures and laws created to institute subjugation and Genocide of the First Peoples. This resulted in the development of legislations; policies to displace the First Nation peoples off their lands, including the racist discriminatory Indian Act, which was an amalgamation of their Gradual Civilization and Enfranchisement Acts.

The First Nations have long called for “Rescinding” of the Doctrine of Discovery. The Vatican did not rescind or revoke the Doctrine of Discovery - they ‘Repudiated’ it. This does not exonerate the Roman Catholic Church and their role.

The Vatican and its churches were contracted by the governments to establish and operate the Indian Residential Schools responsible for the atrocities our children, families and communities endured over years of genocidal practices by church run schools. We are still suffering from these atrocities today and we have yet to begin our healing journeys.

Repudiation is when a ‘contractual party’ refuses, rejects or renounces their duty or obligation. The Vatican’s policies including the Doctrine of Discovery abetted the colonial governments. They established the most harmful policies against our peoples to justify the stealing of our lands and our children, murdering millions of our peoples on turtle island and deliberately displacing us from our lands to disconnect us from our way of life, our cultures, and languages. The Doctrine remains the basis for Canadian law that continues to impact First Nations to this day.

We have International Treaties that acknowledge our Sovereignty. Our Elders knew all along that these lands are ours. It has taken the Vatican 124 years to acknowledge the devastation committed against millions of lives. But where is the Crown? In June of 1899 we entered Treaty with Her most Gracious Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland. We still honour Treaty No.8. It is now time for the Crown to fully implement and honour our International Treaty. King Charles III must meet with his Sovereign brothers and sisters of Treaty No. 8 immediately to address these outstanding Treaty matters.

The Corporation of Canada must also fulfill its role and its obligations to uphold the Honor of the Crown. Ever since the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution, the Honor of the Crown has been decimated. They must rescind every legislation that hinges on the Doctrine of Discovery.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Grand Chief Arthur Noskey
Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
Telephone: 780-444-9366 EMail: Reception@treaty8.org