



UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

News Release

May 4, 2026

Court Affirms Importance of Defending Residential School Survivors and UBCIC's Work Upholding Truth in Public Discourse

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil Waututh)/ Vancouver, B.C. – May 4, 2026) The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) celebrates the decision of the Supreme Court of British Columbia in *Morton v. Union of BC Indian Chiefs*, which affirms the critical importance of protecting UBCIC's advocacy supporting residential school Survivors and addresses harmful misinformation in the public sphere.

The Court dismissed a defamation claim against UBCIC, recognizing that the organization's statements were made in the public interest and grounded in its longstanding mandate to support Survivors and challenge residential school denialism. The Court, in applying British Columbia's *Protection of Public Participation Act*, concluded that the public interest in protecting UBCIC's expression outweighed any alleged harm, and recognized the organization's role in contributing to public discourse on matters of national importance.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated "This decision reinforces that standing up for Survivors and speaking the truth about residential schools is not only necessary, it is protected. UBCIC has a responsibility to our member Nations and to Survivors to challenge misinformation that causes harm, and we will continue to do so without hesitation."

The Court confirmed that UBCIC's expression formed part of a broader public dialogue on reconciliation and the legacy of residential schools, emphasizing that such advocacy contributes to democratic debate and must be protected, particularly where it seeks to defend marginalized and vulnerable communities.

UBCIC's advocacy in this matter arose in response to concerns raised by member Nations regarding the promotion and distribution of materials that undermine the documented experiences of residential school Survivors. Acting on its mandate, UBCIC provided support through public statements intended to prevent further harm and retraumatization.

Chief Councillor Linda Innes, UBCIC Vice-President, stated "This ruling affirms the role of UBCIC, and other First Nations organizations, in advocating for our people and ensuring that Survivors are respected and supported. Efforts to silence that advocacy through litigation cannot be allowed to undermine the broader work of truth, justice, and reconciliation."

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Chief Marilyn Slett, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, concluded “UBCIC will continue to stand with Survivors and our Nations in confronting denialism and ensuring that the truth of residential schools is upheld. This work is fundamental to reconciliation and must be supported, not suppressed.”

UBCIC remains committed to advancing truth, supporting Survivors, and ensuring that public discourse reflects the lived realities and histories of Indigenous peoples.

The full decision is available here: <https://www.bccourts.ca/jdb-txt/sc/26/07/2026BCSC0788.htm>

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UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information, please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca

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