



# New Westminster Secondary School Site Memorialization

MAC Meeting | May 17, 2023

 **PFS** STUDIO



## Guiding Principles for Memorialization

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The memorialization area will adhere to the following:

- ✖ Memorialization recommendations will consider and recognize the diverse cultural heritage of the site and respect all groups who have historical connections to the site.
- ◆ Memorialization areas will be a “passive green space”<sup>1</sup>. Both areas, the area designated as cemetery and the area designed as heritage, will be treated in the same way. The committee will recommend permissible activities within the Consumer Protection Branch and Heritage Conservation Act guidelines, and will ensure that activities respect the cultural heritage of groups with historical connections to the site.
- ◆ Memorialization area(s) landscaping will adhere to City of New Westminster’s design guidelines and be consistent with the new school site, incorporating sustainable, low maintenance vegetation.
- ✖ ◆ Memorialization recommendations will integrate educational components throughout the site that provoke dialogue and opportunities for experiential learning so that current and future generations understand the cultural significance and the importance of honouring and respecting the site. Where possible, First Peoples Principles of Learning<sup>2</sup> will be encouraged.
- ◆ Memorialization area(s) will be fully accessible and will allow for easy integration and access to other areas of the site and the surrounding community.
- ◆ Memorialization recommendations will consider community and site user safety and security a design priority.
- ◆ There must be a sustainable long-term plan in place for an operating budget for the memorialization area. If possible, committee members should seek available funding opportunities and resources through their community/industry contacts.
- ◆ Aspirational statements (developed by the committee) should guide the design and development process and may need to be revisited and strengthened throughout the process to reflect additional committee considerations.

# Memorialization Area Aspirational Statements

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## The memorialization area should:

- ◆ Preserve oral tradition by integrating storytelling through the site design.
- ◆ Create a non-static dialogue that engages the community and bridges the gap between all generations.
- ◆ Act as a gathering space where diverse community members can come together to share experiences, while also allowing for peaceful and solitary reflection.
- ◆ Provide an opportunity for experiential learning, and evoke curiosity, community and cultural sharing, and facilitate self-reflection.
- ◆ Be a welcoming space that people enjoy visiting.
- ◆ Be inclusive and accessible to all, including people with disabilities.
- ◆ Recognize the diverse cultural heritage of the site and ensure that First Nations, Chinese, disabled, youth and the general community feel a sense of belonging to the memorialization area.
- ◆ Reflect the long and diverse history of the site, and honour the contributions of various groups in the pre and post-colonial development of New Westminster.
- ◆ Ensure that visitors to the space are reminded that the space is meant to respect and honour those who were buried there.



**FIRST  
PEOPLES**

# PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.



For First Peoples  
classroom resources  
visit: [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca)



*Very draft text*

- This school is located on the unceded, unsundered land of hə́ŋqə́mihəm and halqeméylem-speaking peoples.
- To the West of this school are cemeteries from New Westminster's settler history dating to 1861.
- These include the New Westminster Public Cemetery, Douglas Road Cemetery, Potter's Field, Chinese Cemetery and New Chinese Cemetery.
- As separate-faith cemeteries were established at Fraser Cemetery, marginalized communities were left using the older sites. Those included Indigenous people from the Qayqayt First Nation and other Indigenous communities, the large Chinese community, the Japanese community, and the Sikh community for cremations. Other people who were incarcerated, poor, or otherwise not allowed to be buried at Fraserview were buried on the site by the City of New Westminster, Isolation Hospitals, the Provincial Hospital for the Insane and other institutions.
- These graves were not valued by City leaders. Grave markers were neglected, and were removed before WWII, when the Department of National Defense dug up the grounds to build a barracks. The site was then sold to School District 40, and the former New Westminster Secondary School was built there in 1949.
- In the early 2000's with plans underway to build a new high school, a community debate began about the burials. This debate surfaced many of the same sentiments from decades ago reflecting stigma, racism and exclusionary attitudes toward those buried.
- After advocacy from organizations representing those connected to the site, School District 40 made the decision to build the school at this current location, which does not contain any burials.
- This advocacy included the T̓silhqot'in National Government. T̓silhqot'in War Nits'il?in ?Ahan's remains are believed to be buried at the main entrance to the previous school. The area holds tremendous spiritual, cultural and historical importance to the T̓silhqot'in Nation.
- The official opening of this school on October 14th, 2021 on this new location marks our decision as a community to acknowledge and respect the varied and diverse histories of our past.
- Together in this place we can uncover truths, restore dignity, practise respect and reconciliation, and celebrate resilience.

October 2022, Maya Russell (336 words)

***For those buried and forgotten***

***For those whose deaths were excluded from official record***

***For those whose graves were looted, vandalized, destroyed and abandoned***

***Some of whose names may never be known***

***We will remember.***

***This place*** is the unceded, unsurrendered land of hə́ŋǰəmiŋə́m and hałqeméylem-speaking peoples, in particular the Qayqayt First Nation on whose territory we live, work and play. From time immemorial this land was a forest, lush with cedar, hemlock, alder, willow, fern and horsetail. To the north along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, marshland fed a stream travelling through Stautlo (Glenbrook Ravine) to Skaiametl, the great Qayqayt settlement located on the shores of the Fraser River.

In 1859, at the time when Chief Tsimilano was living at Skaiametl, New Westminster was founded. Over time, a great diversity of people settled in New Westminster to work in local sawmills, shipyards and canneries, including Chinese, Japanese, Indo-Canadian, Italian, Portuguese, Slovakian, Scandinavian and other European settlers as well as Indigenous people from various Nations. Substantial vibrant communities developed over time with strong inter-cultural relationships.

In 1865, five acres of land on 8<sup>th</sup> Street (then Douglas Road) were cleared for a non-denominational public cemetery – one intentionally created for all regardless of race, class, income or circumstance. This cemetery was the only cemetery in New Westminster at this time, and all deaths up until 1869 were buried here. This included those from the First Nations, Chinese, Japanese, Sikh, and European communities of the area. Many different burial practices were carried out here. Over time, the cemetery was expanded, however until 1908, it operated without a plot map.

Increasing Euro-Canadian pressure for exclusionary burial grounds, specific to church and fraternal organizations, led to increasing segregation within the public cemetery and the city at large. As the cemetery grew, bodies were moved and new burials were allocated according to race, class and circumstance. In addition, B.C.’s Births, Marriages and Deaths Act of 1872 specifically excluded Chinese and Indigenous populations from registration. Between 1897 this act was reversed and re-enacted several times, including and discluding Indigenous and Asian people from official record in response to racist public pressures- effectively erasing them from recorded history.

In 1892 a Chinese cemetery was established in the SW corner of the block, where Japanese burials also occurred along 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In 1908, two acres along 10<sup>th</sup> Street were designated as the ‘New Chinese Cemetery’, and a further two acres south of here were allocated for the City’s unknown and destitute. A further two-acre section along 8<sup>th</sup> Street,

sometimes referred to as the ‘Asylum Grounds’ was designated for those from Essondale, and the Provincial Hospital for the Insane, later known as Woodlands, as well as those who died at the Provincial Jail and (early deaths) at the BC Penitentiary. Up until the City finally closed the cemetery in 1919, the remaining cemetery grounds continued to be used by the general public and included burials from the nearby isolation hospital, orphanage, and work houses for the poor.

The area also holds tremendous spiritual, cultural and historical importance to the T̓silhqot̓in Nation. T̓silhqot̓in War Nits’il?in ?Ahan’s remains are believed to be buried at the main entrance to the previous school. In 1865, Chief ?Ahan was, along with five other T̓silhqot̓in warriors, wrongfully hanged for defending their people against the colonizers who had abused and mistreated their people, including willfully spreading smallpox as a means to annex and colonize T̓silhqot̓in territory. In 2014 Chief ?Ahan was officially exonerated by the Prime Minister, and the BC Premier offered an official apology.

The cemetery was neglected by the City, and lack of maintenance and concern for the communities and individuals laid to rest there resulted in graves being moved, built over and sometimes destroyed to accommodate colonial uses on the site. These uses have included an isolation hospital, city works yard and horse stables, military training barracks, Vincent Massey Junior High School, Lester B. Pearson Sr. High School, and eventually the old location of the New Westminster Secondary School.

In the early 2000’s with plans underway to build a new high school, a community debate began about the burials. This debate surfaced many of the same sentiments from decades ago reflecting stigma, racism and exclusionary attitudes toward those buried. After advocacy from organizations representing those connected to the site, School District 40 made the decision to build the school at this current location, which does not contain any burials.

The official opening of the new New Westminster Secondary School on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 marks the official decision as a community to acknowledge and respect the diverse and sometimes painful histories of our past. This plaque is the first of multiple memorialization elements that will be installed in a future phase of the planned Memorialization Park. These elements and the park will help to bring visibility and recognition to these multiple stories, and offer a place to uncover truths, restore dignity, grieve, practise respect and reconciliation, and provide sanctuary where sanctuary is long overdue.

- *To set a tone of solemn reflection in the present*
- *To remind that this is a first step in Memorialization, it is more than just an informational plaque.*

***For those buried and forgotten***

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- *To link this process of atoning for these particular past injustices with the larger processes of Reconciliation with Qayqayt and other Coast Salish Nations.*
- *To bring to mind the much longer-term history of the land, and the occupation of this place (this concept is linked to the landscape plan for the park).*
- *To link the site in relationship to the ravine system of Stautlo and the great longhouse of Skaiametl.*
- *To reference the culturally diverse and robust communities of early New Westminster, and their inter-relationship.*
- *To stress the original intention and reality of the site as a diverse mixed non-denominational cemetery*
- *To clearly state that the increasing fragmentation of the cemetery and the erasure of presence and identity was due to government and public racist and discriminatory legislation and actions.*
- *To illustrate the fragmentation upon the site over time (related to a 'collaged' map on the sign) and to locate specific identity on the land.*

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- *(cont.) To illustrate the fragmentation upon the site over time (related to a 'collaged' map on the sign) and to locate specific identity on the land.*
- *To communicate the story of Chief ?Ahan (before a singular plaque can tell the larger story in the future)*
- *To outline the continued negligence and lack of care for those buried on the site up to the construction of the old NWSS school.*
- *To stress that historic attitudes persist today, and that it isn't without purposeful action and the continued struggle of the disenfranchised that positive change is happening on this site.*
- *To contextualize this plaque as the first gesture of more to come in the spirit of righting past wrongs.*

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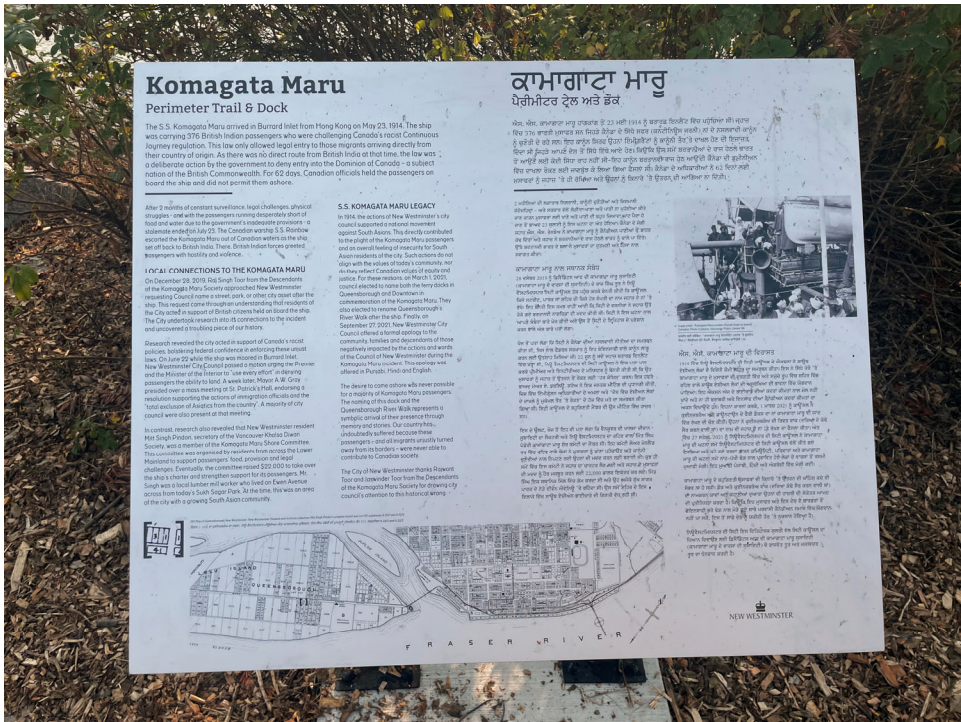
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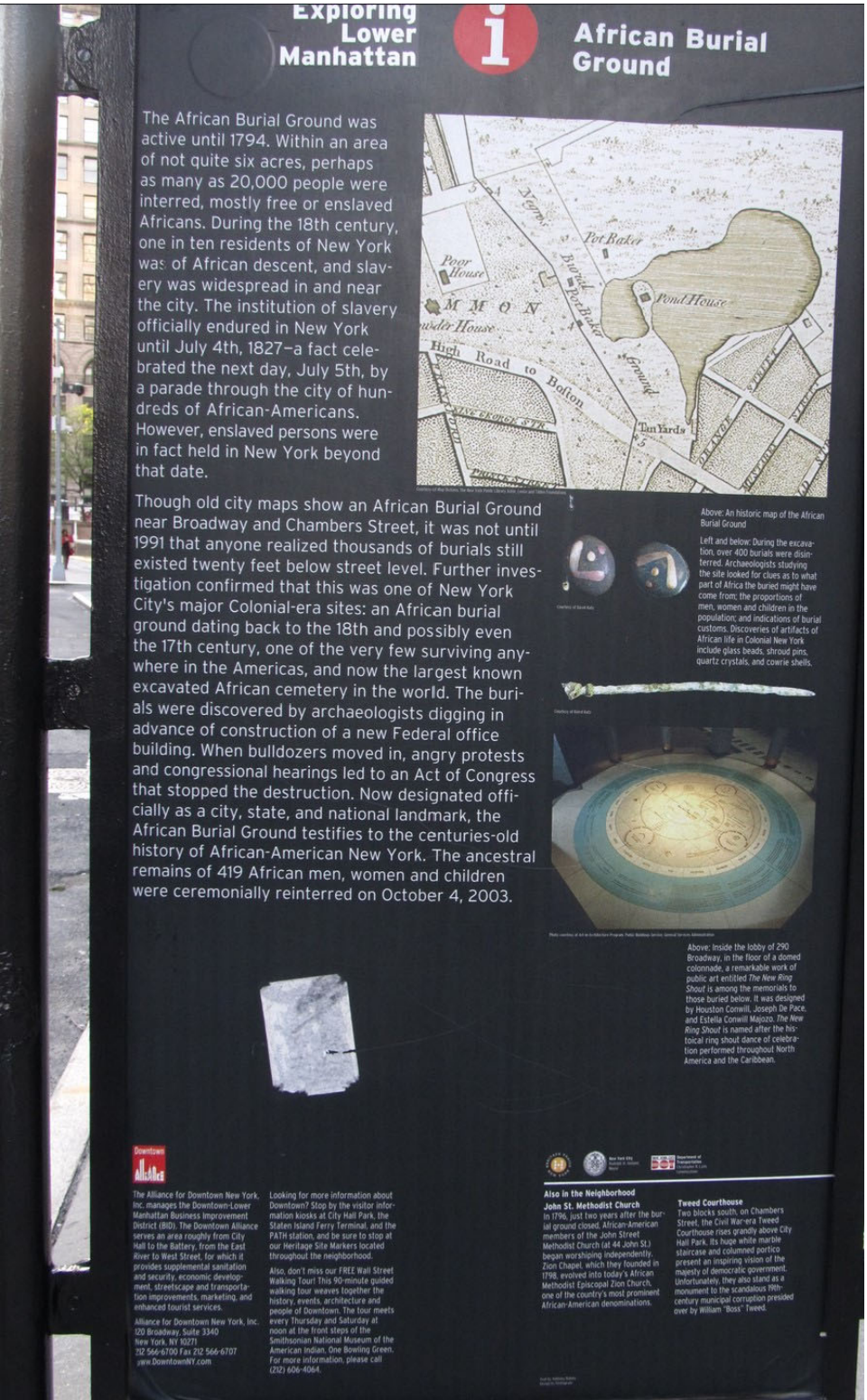
Africville, NS



Komagata Maru, New Westminster



Yale (courtesy of Bill Chu)



African Burial Ground, NY



# Komagata Maru

## Perimeter Trail & Dock

The S.S. Komagata Maru arrived in Burrard Inlet from Hong Kong on May 23, 1914. The ship was carrying 376 British Indian passengers who were challenging Canada’s racist Continuous Journey regulation. This law only allowed legal entry to those migrants arriving directly from their country of origin. As there was no direct route from British India at that time, the law was a deliberate action by the government to deny entry into the Dominion of Canada – a subject nation of the British Commonwealth. For 62 days, Canadian officials held the passengers on board the ship and did not permit them ashore.

After 2 months of constant surveillance, legal challenges, physical struggles - and with the passengers running desperately short of food and water due to the government’s inadequate provisions - a stalemate ended on July 23. The Canadian warship S.S. Rainbow escorted the Komagata Maru out of Canadian waters as the ship set off back to British India. There, British Indian forces greeted passengers with hostility and violence.

### LOCAL CONNECTIONS TO THE KOMAGATA MARU

On December 28, 2019, Raj Singh Toor from the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society approached New Westminster requesting Council name a street, park, or other city asset after the ship. This request came through an understanding that residents of the City acted in support of British citizens held on board the ship. The City undertook research into its connections to the incident and uncovered a troubling piece of our history.

Research revealed the city acted in support of Canada’s racist policies, bolstering federal confidence in enforcing these unjust laws. On June 22 while the ship was moored in Burrard Inlet, New Westminster City Council passed a motion urging the Premier and the Minister of the Interior to “use every effort” in denying passengers the ability to land. A week later, Mayor A.W. Gray presided over a mass meeting at St. Patrick’s Hall, endorsing a resolution supporting the actions of immigration officials and the “total exclusion of Asiatics from the country”. A majority of city council were also present at that meeting.

In contrast, research also revealed that New Westminster resident Mitt Singh Pindori, secretary of the Vancouver Khalsa Diwan Society, was a member of the Komagata Maru Shore Committee. This committee was organised by residents from across the Lower Mainland to support passengers’ food, provision and legal challenges. Eventually, the committee raised \$22,000 to take over the ship’s charter and strengthen support for its passengers. Mr. Singh was a local lumber mill worker who lived on Ewen Avenue across from today’s Sukh Sagar Park. At the time, this was an area of the city with a growing South Asian community.

### S.S. KOMAGATA MARU LEGACY

In 1914, the actions of New Westminster’s city council supported a national movement against South Asians. This directly contributed to the plight of the Komagata Maru passengers and an overall feeling of insecurity for South Asian residents of the city. Such actions do not align with the values of today’s community, nor do they reflect Canadian values of equity and justice. For these reasons, on March 1, 2021, council elected to name both the ferry docks in Queensborough and Downtown in commemoration of the Komagata Maru. They also elected to rename Queensborough’s River Walk after the ship. Finally, on September 27, 2021, New Westminster City Council offered a formal apology to the community, families and descendants of those negatively impacted by the actions and words of the Council of New Westminster during the Komagata Maru incident. This apology was offered in Punjabi, Hindi and English.

The desire to come ashore was never possible for a majority of Komagata Maru passengers. The naming of this dock and the Queensborough River Walk represents a symbolic arrival of their presence through memory and stories. Our country has undoubtedly suffered because these passengers – and all migrants unjustly turned away from its borders – were never able to contribute to Canadian society.

The City of New Westminster thanks Rajwant Toor and Jaswinder Toor from the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society for drawing city council’s attention to this historical wrong.

# ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ

## ਪੈਰੀਮੀਟਰ ਟ੍ਰੇਲ ਅਤੇ ਡੌਕ

ਐਸ. ਐਸ. ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ ਤੋਂ 23 ਮਈ 1914 ਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਰਡ ਇਨਲੈੱਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿੱਚ 376 ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਸਨ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਸਫਰ (ਕਨਟੀਨਿਊਸ ਜਰਨੀ) ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਸਲਵਾਦੀ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਸਿਰਫ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਇੰਮੀਗਰੈਂਟਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਤੌਰ’ਤੇ ਦਾਖਲ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਇੱਥੇ ਆਏ ਹੋਣ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਰਤਾਨੀਆ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਹੇਠਲੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਸਿੱਧਾ ਰਾਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ–ਇਹ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਰਾਜ ਹੇਠ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੀ ਫ਼ਰਮੀਨੀਅਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਾਖਲਾ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ ਜਾਣਬੁੱਝ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਸੀ। ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੇ 62 ਦਿਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ’ਤੇ ਹੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ’ਤੇ ਉਤਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਨਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ।

2 ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਨਿਗਰਾਨੀ, ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਚੁਣੌਤੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸਮਾਨੀ ਜੱਦੋਜਹਿਦਾਂ – ਅਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਲੋੜੀਂਦਾ ਖਾਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਨਾ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਲਈ ਖਾਣੇ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਘਾਟ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ 23 ਜੁਲਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਦਾ ਅੰਤ ਹੋਇਆ। ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਜੰਗੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਐਸ. ਐਸ. ਰੇਨਬੋਅ ਨੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕੱਢ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੇ ਬਰਤਾਨੀਆ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਹੇਠਲੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਲੇ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤੇ। ਉੱਥੇ ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਬਲਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਨਾਲ ਸਵਾਗਤ ਕੀਤਾ।

### ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਸੰਬੰਧ

28 ਦਸੰਬਰ 2019 ਨੂੰ ਡਿਸੈਂਡਿਟਸ ਆਫ ਦੀ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ (ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਵਾਰਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ) ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੂਰ ਨੇ ਨਿਊ ਵੈਸਟਮਿਨਸਟਰ ਸਿਟੀ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕਰਕੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਟਰੀਟ, ਪਾਰਕ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਸੰਪਤੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ’ਤੇ ਰੱਖੇ। ਇਹ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਇਸ ਸਮਝ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਆਈ ਕਿ ਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਵਸਨੀਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਉੱਤੇ ਰੋਕੇ ਗਏ ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਸਿਟੀ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਖੋਜ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਪਰੋਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਅੰਸ਼ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ।

ਖੋਜ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਕਿ ਸਿਟੀ ਨੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਸਲਵਾਦੀ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਮਰਥਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਫੈਡਰਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਬੇਇਨਸਾਫੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੀ। 22 ਜੂਨ ਨੂੰ ਜਦੋਂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਬਰਾਰਡ ਇਨਲੈੱਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਖੜਾ ਸੀ, ਨਿਊ ਵੈਸਟਮਿਨਸਟਰ ਦੀ ਸਿਟੀ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਮਤਾ ਪਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਮੀਅਰ ਅਤੇ ਇਨਟੀਰੀਅਰ ਦੇ ਮਨਿਸਟਰ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਤੋਂ ਉਤਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ “ਹਰ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼” ਕਰਨ। ਇਕ ਹਫਤੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੇਅਰ ਏ. ਡਬਲਿਊ. ਗਰੇਅ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਜਨਤਕ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਗੀ ਕੀਤੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੰਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ “ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਾਖਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕੰਮਲ ਤੌਰ ’ਤੇ ਰੋਕਣਾ” ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਤੇ ਦਾ ਸਮਰਥਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਸਿਟੀ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਗਿਣਤੀ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਵੀ ਉਸ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਸਨ।

ਇਸ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ, ਖੋਜ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਕਿ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੀ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਦਾ ਸੈਕਟਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਊ ਵੈਸਟਮਿਨਸਟਰ ਦਾ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਸਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਿੰਡੌਰੀ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਲੋਅਰ ਮੇਨਲੈਂਡ ਭਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਣਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਚੁਣੌਤੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਪਟਣ ਲਈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਣਾਈ ਸੀ। ਕੁਝ ਹੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦਾ ਚਾਰਟਰ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ 22,000 ਡਾਲਰ ਇਕੱਤਰ ਕਰ ਲਏ। ਸਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਕ ਸਥਾਨਿਕ ਮਿਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸੁੱਖ ਸਾਗਰ ਪਾਰਕ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਈਵੇਨ ਐਵੇਨਿਊ ’ਤੇ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਊਥ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵੱਧ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ।



Image credit: "Komagata Maru incident" [Gurdit Singh on board], Canadian Photo Company, Vancouver Public Library 136

ਭਾਰਤ ਵਲੋਂ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ: “ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਇਨਕੀਡੈਂਟ (ਜਹਾਜ਼) ’ਤੇ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ” ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਫੋਟੋ ਕੰਪਨੀ, ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਪਬਲਿਕ ਲਾਇਰੇਰੀ 136.

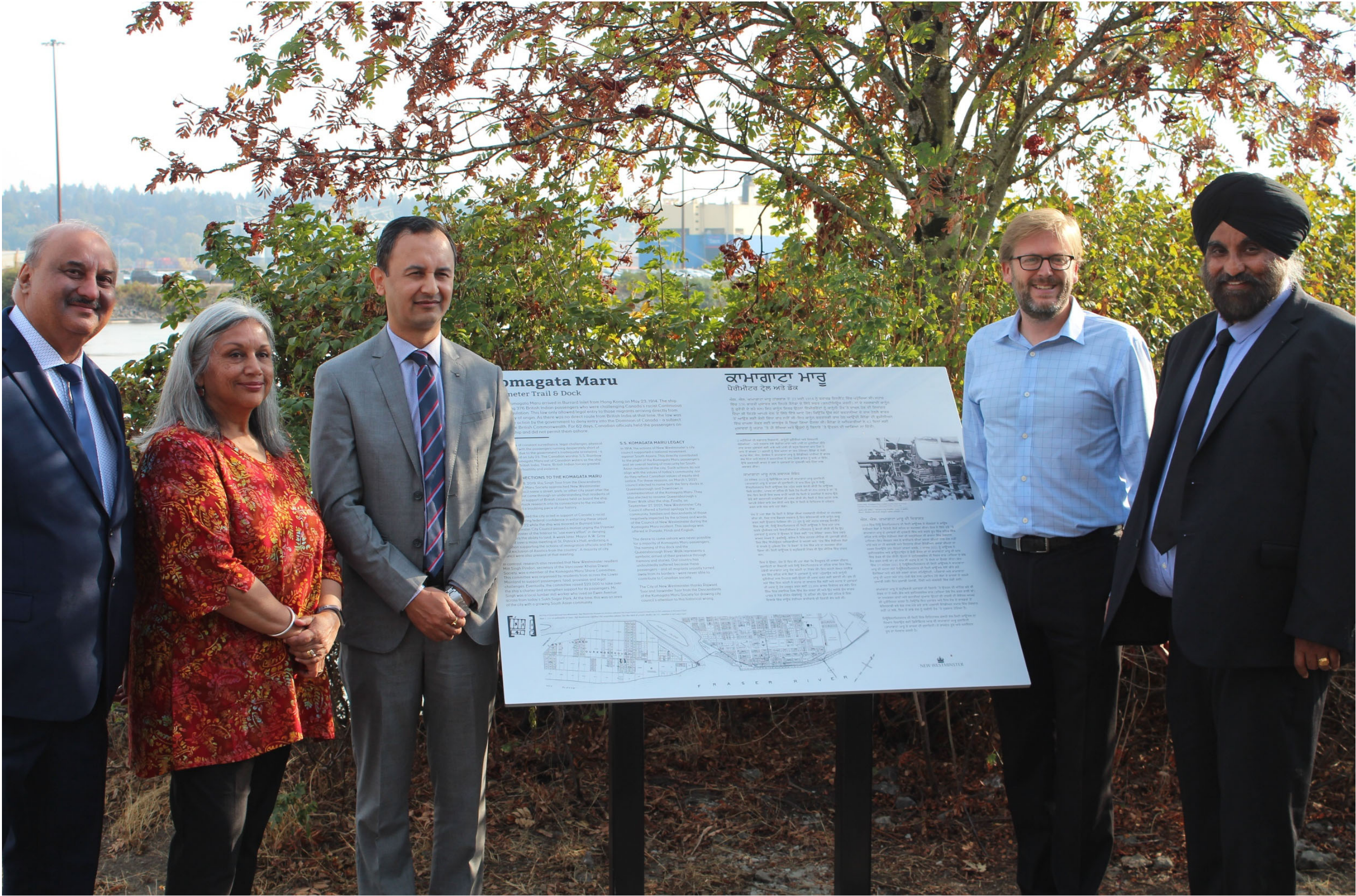
### ਐਸ. ਐਸ. ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਵਿਰਾਸਤ

1914 ਵਿੱਚ ਨਿਊ ਵੈਸਟਮਿਨਸਟਰ ਦੀ ਸਿਟੀ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ ਦੇ ਐਕਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਊਥ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਸਮਰਥਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ’ਤੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਦੁਰਗਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਾਊਥ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਇਆ। ਇਹ ਐਕਸ਼ਨ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਖਾਂਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਨਸਾਫ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਕਸ ਦਿਖਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ, 1 ਮਾਰਚ 2021 ਨੂੰ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ ਨੇ ਕੁਈਨਜ਼ਬਰੋਅ ਅਤੇ ਡਾਊਨਟਾਊਨ ਦੇ ਫੈਰੀ ਡੌਕਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੁਈਨਜ਼ਬਰੋਅ ਦੀ ਰਿਵਰ ਵਾਕ (ਦਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਕੰਢੇ ਸੈਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਥਾਂ) ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਵੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ’ਤੇ ਰੱਖਣ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ 27 ਸਤੰਬਰ 2021 ਨੂੰ ਨਿਊਵੈਸਟਮਿਨਸਟਰ ਦੀ ਸਿਟੀ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ ਨੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਿਊਵੈਸਟਮਿਨਸਟਰ ਦੀ ਸਿਟੀ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਫੈਸਲਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਹੇ ਗਏ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਾਂਹ-ਪੱਖੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹੋਏ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਾਰਸਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਰਸਮੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ ਮੰਗੀ। ਇਹ ਮੁਆਫੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, ਹਿੰਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੰਗੀ ਗਈ।

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਗਿਣਤੀ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ’ਤੇ ਉਤਰਨ ਦੀ ਖਾਹਿਸ਼ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਸੰਭਵ ਨਾ ਹੋ ਸਕੀ। ਡੌਕ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਈਨਜ਼ਬਰੋਅ ਵਾਕ (ਦਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਕੰਢੇ ਸੈਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਥਾਂ) ਦਾ ਨਾਮਕਰਨ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਦੀ ਸੰਕੇਤਕ ਆਮਦ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧਤਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਬਾਰਡਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਇਨਸਾਫੀ ਭਰੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਮੌਤੇ ਗਏ ਸਾਰੇ ਪਰਵਾਸੀ ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾ ਸਕੇ, ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਤੌਰ ’ਤੇ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ।

ਨਿਊਵੈਸਟਮਿਨਸਟਰ ਦੀ ਸਿਟੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਗਲਤੀ ਵੱਲ ਸਿਟੀ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਦਿਵਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਡਿਸੈਂਡਿਟਸ ਆਫ ਦੀ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ (ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਵਾਰਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ) ਦੇ ਰਾਜਵੰਤ ਤੂਰ ਅਤੇ ਜਸਵਿੰਦਰ ਤੂਰ ਦਾ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।





Courtesy of Rob McCullough



*For those buried and forgotten*

*For those whose deaths were excluded from official record*

*For those whose graves were looted, vandalized, destroyed and abandoned*

*Some of whose names may never be known*

*We will remember.*

