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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 6/7/2022 5:42:34 PM
Subject: [Upcoming news release: Official Apology to Italian Canadian Community \(June 8, 2022\)](#)

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please find below a news release regarding the Official Apology to the Italian Canadian Community.

We will issue this release on Wednesday, June 8 following the Mayor's reading of the proclamation and official apology in Council Chambers at 9:30 AM. There will be corresponding social media posts sharing the apology and historical overview.

Please keep this news release embargoed until it goes live from the City's account.

Best,
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

City of Vancouver
News release
June 8, 2022

Council apologizes to Vancouver's Italian Canadian community for treatment during WWII

Today, Vancouver City Council formally apologized for the injustices enacted upon the Italian Canadian community during the Second World War.

The City hopes that this apology contributes to acknowledging this truth about the past, which is a crucial part of moving forward in ensuring that past injustices are not repeated in the future.

"Today, Vancouver City Council extended a heartfelt apology to all members of the Italian community in Vancouver for City Council's reference to Italian Canadians as 'enemy aliens' in a 1942 Motion," said Mayor Kennedy Stewart. "This led to further harms, alongside the family separation and financial hardship caused by the internment in federal camps."

The Official Apology to the Italian Canadian community in Vancouver is part of broader redress and equity work that the City has embarked upon. The Italian Canadian community is among multiple communities that have historically experienced stigma and discrimination due to their cultural identity and place of origin.

"Recognition and acknowledgment of past wrongs is essential to reconciliation of the past with the

present to assure we strive for a better future for our children and theirs, newcomers to Canada and those who were here before we came,” said lawyer and community advisor Celso A. A. Boscariol, QC. “Although we cannot change history, we can certainly change its consequences.”

“The City of Vancouver's Official Letter of Apology to the Italian Community represents a defining moment in the healing process of the descendants of those Vancouverites classified as Enemy Aliens during Canada's War with Italy circa 1940 – 1943,” said historian and community advisor Ray Culos.

Read the full apology and historical overview here. [\[LINK\]](#)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Following the declaration of war against Italy by the federal government in 1940, certain Italian men were deemed Enemy Aliens. As a result, nearly 3 dozen men in Vancouver were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to Prisoner of War Interment Camps despite governments having no proof of wrongdoing.

Many families of the internees were not notified as to where their loved ones were taken or given definitive reasons as to why or when they had been apprehended. No communication between the interned men and their families was allowed for approximately two weeks. Most of these men were the breadwinner for their families, and their interment caused major emotional trauma and financial hardship.

While none of the interned Italian Canadians from Vancouver are alive today, the City extends this apology to their surviving loved ones and the Italian Canadian community in Vancouver, in recognition of the injustices visited upon the families and impacts on the broader community.

Learn about the [City's recent Anti-Racism and Cultural Redress work](#).

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