Indians sue Canada over child relocation

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VICTORIA, British Columbia, June 1 (UPI) -- The Canadian government is being sued by British Columbia Indians over a 1960s policy that saw thousands of children placed in non-Indian foster homes.

The class-action suit was filed Tuesday in the Supreme Court of British Columbia in Victoria and could cost the government "millions of dollars in federal compensation," one of the Indians' lawyers, Jason Murray, told The (Vancouver) Province.

"The federal government needs to accept responsibility for the damage done to generations of children alienated from their culture and spirituality," he said.

The practice known as "the Sixties Scoop" involved relocating Indian children into non-Indian foster homes between 1962 and 1996.

The suit was filed by 54-year-old Sharon Russell, who says she and four siblings were taken from their parents and placed in separate homes.

While Indians account for 4 percent of the population in British Columbia, more than half of the 9,500 children in provincial care are Indian, the newspaper said.

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