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For Immediate Release

Federal Housing Advocate cites human rights concerns with NL Government over Inuit housing

Nunatsiavut President Johannes Lampe and Federal Housing Advocate Marie-Josée Houle met yesterday with Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey, Paul Pike, minister responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, and Julia Mullaley, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, to discuss the dire need solutions to the housing crisis in Inuit communities.

The meeting came on the heels of a report on housing conditions in the North, which affirms what has been said by Inuit for decades: the right of Inuit to adequate housing is being violated.

“Our report documents very clearly that Inuit continue to live in deplorable housing conditions, despite repeated promises by governments to solve this crisis,” says Marie-Josée Houle, Federal Housing Advocate. “We welcome the engagement of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to implement the recommendations in our report. This work must be carried out in full cooperation and collaboration with the Nunatsiavut Government. Inuit know what solutions are needed, and must be guaranteed the right to control and manage their own housing. This ongoing human rights failure requires urgent action at all levels of government.”

The Federal Housing Advocate has a legislated duty under the National Housing Strategy Act to engage with “rights holders,” or people whose human right to adequate housing has been violated, such as those who are unhoused or precariously housed. Under this mandate, the Advocate travelled to Nain and Hopedale in October 2022 to listen, observe, and bear witness to the housing challenges being faced by Labrador Inuit within both communities.

“Our communities suffer every day, and have for generations, due to these shortages and indignities,” says Nunatsiavut President Johannes Lampe. “Reconciliation with Canada and with Newfoundland and Labrador, for Nunatsiavut particularly, cannot be meaningful until Inuit can live in dignity.”

The provincial government has agreed to continue seeking housing solutions alongside the Nunatsiavut Government. President Lampe has also extended an invitation to Minister Pike and Premier Furey to visit Nunatsiavut and see first-hand the conditions in which some Inuit live.