



News Release

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## Inuit and Innu United Against False Claims of Indigenous Identity

**OTTAWA** — Innu Nation, Nunatsiavut Government and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, are calling on the Government of Canada to reject the false Indigenous claims from the NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC).

Innu Nation is in federal court this week, challenging a Memorandum of Understanding between the federal government and the NCC. The agreement is another example of the threat of non-Indigenous groups who wrongly seek to adopt Indigenous identities for themselves. Innu Nation has the full support of national Indigenous representative organizations Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Assembly of First Nations.

“Settler governments do not have the power to legitimize non-Indigenous groups as Indigenous. The Government of Canada’s actions are not in line with reconciliation — in fact they undermine the good work that has been done over many years to build stronger communities for our children. We must stand up against false claims of Indigeneity that put our identities and livelihoods at risk,” said Grand Chief Simon Pokue.

“We are witnessing firsthand the consequences of groups that are making false claims to our culture and land. To entertain the land claims of a group who is asserting that half of Nunatsiavut’s territory belongs to them, is disrespectful, harmful and blatantly undermines our agreement with Canada. It also undermines Canada’s commitment to reconciliation,” said Johannes Lampe, President, Nunatsiavut Government.

“Inuit are calling on Canada to uphold Inuit rights by bringing an end to its relationship with organizations like NCC that seek to falsely align themselves with a recognized Indigenous people to secure lands, resources and status. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami supports Innu Nation and Nunatsiavut Government in their appeals to the federal court this week. We stand with them in decrying the misguided agreement struck in 2019 that is damaging to Inuit and First Nations and must be nullified,” said Natan Obed, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

The NCC was originally founded as the Labrador Metis Association (LMA) in 1985. Today, the group claims its members are now Inuit.

The NCC is not recognized by the Government of Canada as a rights-holding Indigenous group. In fact, Canada categorically rejected NCC's claims on four separate occasions over two decades, concluding each time that there is insufficient evidence to support the group's claim.

The NCC's land claim encroaches into a significant amount of the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, in Nunatsiavut territory, as well as into traditional Labrador Innu lands.

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### **About ITK**

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is the national representative organization for the 70,000 Inuit in Canada, the majority of whom live in Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland encompassing 51 communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Québec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). Inuit Nunangat makes up 40 percent of Canada's land area and 72 percent of its coastline. ITK represents the rights and interests of Inuit at the national level through a democratic governance structure that represents all Inuit regions. ITK advocates for policies, programs, and services to address the social, cultural, political, and environmental issues facing our people.

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### **About NG**

The Nunatsiavut Government is the self-governing body representing approximately 7,000 Labrador Inuit. It was established on December 1, 2005 following the ratification of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement. Labrador Inuit are one of the original inhabitants of northern Labrador and have lived in this region since time immemorial. Nunatsiavut encompasses the five Labrador Inuit Communities of Nain, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik and Rigolet.

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### **About Innu Nation**

The Innu are the Indigenous inhabitants of an area in Canada they refer to as Nitassinan ("Our Land"), which comprises much of Labrador and some eastern portions of the province of Québec. Their ancestors have lived on these lands for several thousands of years. Innu Nation is the governing body that formally represents the Innu of Labrador: approximately 3,200 people, most of whom live in the two Innu communities of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. To find out more, visit the Innu Nation website.

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