



October 7, 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) does not accept the federal government's recognition of NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) as an "Inuit" organization, an approach that has negative implications for Inuit-Crown partnership. With this letter ITK calls on the federal government to exclude NCC from accessing federal Inuit-specific policies, programs, and initiatives that are intended to benefit Inuit, and to refrain from including NCC communities in any future federal Inuit-specific budget allocations or Inuit-Crown processes.

NCC is the southern Labrador group previously known for decades as the Labrador Metis Council and whose members began publicly identifying as Inuit in 2010. ITK does not recognize NCC as an Inuit organization nor do the four Inuit land claims organizations that form ITK recognize its members as Inuit. It is therefore alarming that NCC has gained eligibility for federal programs and initiatives based on its assertion that it is an Inuit organization.

The archeological and historical evidence suggests that the territory claimed by NCC has never been permanently occupied by Inuit. Inuit never relinquished our homeland, have always occupied Inuit Nunangat, and were never widely absorbed through processes of colonialism into other Canadian societies the way some Indigenous peoples were.

The four Inuit land claims organizations in Canada collectively represent all Inuit in our relationship with the Crown. An Inuit territory outside of the four regions that constitute Inuit Nunangat does not exist. It is therefore perplexing and alarming to ITK that the federal government has entered into a process with NCC that could potentially result in the recognition of rights and territory on the basis of assertions that appear unfounded.

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The manner in which the federal government has chosen to engage NCC harms Inuit. NCC is drawing down and diverting sorely needed federal funding away from Inuit. Furthermore, NCC's influence across the federal system threatens to diminish the rights and status of Inuit rights holders and adversely impact progress made by your government to strengthen Inuit-Crown partnership. This is unacceptable. Continued federal engagement with NCC sets an alarming and disturbing precedent that could enable similar groups with fraudulent claims to an historical Indigenous heritage to emerge in pursuit of the recognition of rights and territory that Inuit and other Indigenous peoples have struggled and sacrificed for decades to secure. Further, this engagement deliberately obscures who Inuit are and therefore who represents them. It takes away agency and power from Inuit to self-determine membership.

ITK has welcomed the federal government's policy of respecting and supporting our right to self-determination, including by engaging Inuit bilaterally in policy and legislative development, as well as by allocating federal funding directly to Inuit land claims organizations for Inuit-specific programs, policies and initiatives. The finalization of an Inuit Nunangat Policy and its implementation by the federal government remains ITK's main priority, and is urgently needed to formalize this policy approach. However, continued federal engagement with NCC has caused this work to lag, threatens to diminish the distinct rights and status of Inuit, and may undermine our ability to achieve shared Inuit-Crown priorities.

Our right to self-determination must entail respect and support for our distinct rights and status, including those who we collectively identify as members of our communities and society.

Nakummek,



Natan Obed  
President

c.c. Duane Smith, Chair & CEO, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation  
Pita Aatami, President, Makivik Corporation  
Johannes Lampe, President, Nunatsiavut  
Aluki Kotierk, President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated  
The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations  
The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services  
The Honourable Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs

