



Press Statement

Forgotten Again: The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples offended by discrimination under the federal budget

March 19, 2019 (Ottawa, ON) – The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is outraged by the federal budget tabled today as the government continues to ignore the needs of the Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve in Canada.

“Back in December 2018 when we signed the CAP-Canada Political Accord we thought it was a breakthrough for our people,” said National Chief Robert Bertrand, “but an Accord without resources does not deliver results for Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve in Canada”. Budget 2019 commits no new dollars for CAP or programs and services for the off-reserve population (except for investments to Friendship Centres for capital infrastructure). Worse, the government is discriminating against groups of Indigenous peoples by creating funding that only benefits some.

For example, Budget 2019 has made investments for Indigenous students to have better access to post-secondary education, yet it is politically-based and does not include our constituency and the majority of Indigenous peoples that live off-reserve in Canada:

- \$327.5 million for First Nation Communities over five years to renew and expand funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program;
- \$125.5 million over ten years for an Inuit-led post-secondary education strategy and \$21.8 million per year ongoing; and,
- \$362.0 million over ten years, and \$40.0 million per year ongoing a Métis Nation-led post-secondary education strategy consisting of financial assistance for Métis Nation students.

“Colonial violence continues today because of this government’s approach to pitting Indigenous groups against each other instead of creating inclusive programs that non-status peoples, Métis peoples with origins across Canada, and those living in urban and rural communities can access”, argues National Chief Bertrand. “Government has said they want to get out of the

business of defining who an Indian is, but by creating programs that only benefit some, it's another form of eradication against our peoples”.

In 2016, CAP won a landmark victory in the Supreme Court of Canada's unanimous decision in *CAP Daniels v. Canada*, which confirmed that Métis and non-status Indians fall under the federal government's jurisdiction and fiduciary duty. The decision affirmed that Métis and Non-Status Indians are “Indians” under section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867. As stated in the decision, “[Métis and non-status Indians] are deprived of programs, services and intangible benefits recognized by all governments as needed.”

For 48 years CAP has advocated as the national voice of off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Métis, and Southern Labrador Inuit – Indigenous peoples across Canada who are often the most disenfranchised and marginalized populations.

“Through this Budget, the government is continuing to discriminate between Indigenous peoples,” concludes National Chief Robert Bertrand, “our students need support to access post-secondary education, our peoples need access to adequate housing, but instead the government has forgotten them again”.

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the rights, interests and needs of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 75% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.