



Press Statement

“We Will Not Be Forgotten” – Day of Action Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

June 20, 2019 (Ottawa, ON) – Today, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) led a Day of Action on Parliament Hill and in many provinces to demand an end to the exclusion and discrimination faced by our peoples – the off-reserve, non-status, Métis and Southern Inuit.

Over 100 people, from CAP’s affiliates and community members from across the country gathered in Ottawa as a voice for the “forgotten peoples”. The Day of Action captured the growing disappointment with the government’s failed agenda for Indigenous peoples.

This government promised reconciliation and the full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but it has failed to deliver. Examples where CAP’s constituencies are left out of programs and cannot access much-needed services include health benefits, child and family services, and post-secondary education supports.

“Today we told the government you must recognize the rights of our peoples and end the discrimination against them. They must uphold the rights of ALL Indigenous peoples” says National Chief Bertrand. “You can’t have reconciliation without engaging the over 70% majority that live off-reserve”

CAP is calling for Canada to uphold the honour of the Crown. They must recognize our peoples, end discrimination and exclusion, and upholding our rights equitably, to ensure that ALL Indigenous peoples are engaged in the reconciliation process, not just handpicked advocacy groups.

Ottawa says it is reconciling with Indigenous peoples. Yet CAP, one of five nationally-recognized Indigenous organizations, one that sat at the constitutional table, is being deliberately excluded from negotiations and the development of legislation and programs, between the Trudeau government and others.

There are 200,000 non-status peoples, and thousands more in cities and communities, accounting for over 70% of the Indigenous populations, according to Statistics Canada.

In the famous CAP Daniels decision of April 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled unanimously that under the Constitution Act, 1867, the federal government is responsible for all Indigenous peoples, including nearly 600,000 Métis and Non-Status peoples.

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“We are honoured by the outpouring of support for CAP’s Day of Action – we had members from our grassroots community who travelled from across the country to demand action from Canada. We are here fighting for Treaty, Section 91(24), and Section 35 rights in Canada’s Constitution. We are here to say ‘We Will Not Be Forgotten’”.

CAP is planning continued advocacy leading up to the fall 2019 election to ensure action for our peoples.

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