



Press Release

Federal, Provincial & Territorial Ministers Meeting on “Human Rights” is Systemically Racist, Colonial & Discriminatory

November 9th 2020 (Ottawa, ON) – The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) today formally labelled the decision to exclude the organization from a key human rights meeting with Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers as systemically racist, colonial and discriminatory.

The National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Elmer St. Pierre, stated “A meeting on the issue of “Human Rights” cannot be undermined by treating CAP’s membership as second-class citizens. As it stands, this meeting is guilty of the same systemic racism and exclusion that the Supreme Court cited as a barrier facing non-Status and off-reserve Indigenous people. This is nothing more than racial profiling.”

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the federally recognized National Indigenous Organization that represents off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Metis and Southern Inuit Aboriginal Peoples. Over 80% of Indigenous people in Canada live off-reserve. CAP has been in existence since 1971, bringing together provincial and territorial organizations from coast to coast. CAP is responsible for victories in Indigenous rights, such as the April 14th 2016, CAP-Daniels Supreme Court decision, and fighting for the inclusion of S.35 of the Constitution Act.

Today’s meetings are on “Human Rights”, yet the very agenda reflects the same kind of systemic racism against CAP’s constituents that was already cited as damaging and marginalizing in the CAP-Daniels Decision. The Supreme Court declared:

whether non-status Indians and Metis are “Indians” under s. 91(24), would have enormous practical utility for these two groups who have found themselves having to rely more on noblesse oblige than on what is obliged by the Constitution. A declaration would guarantee both certainty and accountability.

federal and provincial governments have, alternately, denied having legislative authority over non-status Indians and Metis. This results in these Indigenous communities being in a jurisdictional wasteland with significant and obvious disadvantaging consequences

National Chief St. Pierre added, “It is unacceptable to bring together National Indigenous organizations (NIOs) for a discussion on the rights of Indigenous Peoples while excluding the representative organization for off-reserve Status and Non-Status, Metis and Southern Inuit Indigenous people from a speaking role equal to other NIOs.”

Earlier, CAP had written federal and provincial ministers responsible for human right stating:

“Our people face even more discrimination and exclusion than other Indigenous peoples, created by being "in a jurisdictional wasteland." Ministerial meetings where that systemic racism is reinforced and **perpetuated through racial profiling** is unacceptable. The apartheid "Indian Act" is not an excuse for ignoring the rights, needs and interests of CAP constituents that you have recognized CAP and our PTOs of representing, under the CAP-Canada political accord signed by your government in 2018.”

The National leadership of CAP is calling on Ministers to do the right thing and stop racial profiling in dealing with Human Rights. CAP is also calling on Ministers to add the voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve.

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