



TRUTH BEFORE RECONCILIATION EDUCATION & ADVOCACY NETWORK
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PRESS RELEASE

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE'S EXCLUDED FROM THE 'FIRST NATIONS – FIRST MINISTERS' MEETING: AFN AND HAND-PICKED CHIEFS HAVE NO MANDATE TO REPRESENT OUR INHERENT & TREATY RIGHTS!

(Algonquin Territory/Ottawa October 23, 2026) The Truth Before Reconciliation Network is calling for a National Day of Action on October 26 to Stand Up for Our Rights in Opposition to the FN-FM meeting, which is an exercise in both futility and duplicity.

The AFN is a lobby group that is 100% funded by the politicians it is supposed to be lobbying, putting it in serious conflict of interest when dealing with the government that pays its salaries.

Along with the obvious conflict of interest, the AFN has no right to represent Indigenous Nations because traditional laws are based on participatory democracy NOT representative democracy--examples are the Algonquin customary system of governance, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Nuxalt Nation, and all continue to have traditional governments.

At the same time, the federal and provincial governments are using this meeting to continue to advance policies that weaken our First Nations. These policies:

- deny the international right of self-determination
- reinterpret and erode historic Treaties
- use land claims to extinguish or modify Aboriginal Title and end ongoing Treaty obligations
- push First Nations toward municipal or corporate status on fee-simple lands

Instead of opposing this attack, the AFN has been negotiating renewal of the *AFN-Canada Permanent Bilateral Mechanism*, which aligns with federal plans to:

- end the **Indian Act** and replace it with colonial, one-sided, unfair, modern treaties and self-government agreements
- promote “*economic reconciliation*” tied to incurring dept and resource extraction on lands and waters that First Nations rely on for cultural and economic survival
- implement a federal Rights Definition Framework, what we call White Paper 2.0, a Termination framework

This is not reconciliation. This is termination of First Nations collective rights.

Our National Day of Action comes at a time when the Liberal and Conservative parties are ramming Bill C-39 through Parliament—what we call the Building Canada Wrong Act--and the Carney government is in court trying to deny First Nations water rights while it passes Bill C-37, the *First Nations Clean Water Act*, without affirming access to clean water as a fundamental human right, as is guaranteed by the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**.

This also occurs at a time when the Kebaowek First Nation, upriver from Ottawa, is threatened by the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories near surface disposal facility (NSDF) on Algonquin Aboriginal title land. Kebaowek had invoked UNDRIP to defend their right to protect their land from the nuclear disposal facility, but on October 16, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that Canada's UN Declaration Act (UNDA), which was supposed to implement UNDRIP, is not binding as law in Canada, because it did not "*implement the articles of UNDRIP into Canadian law.*" The result not only means a nuclear waste dump near the Ottawa River can proceed, but that the government has failed on its key promise to implement UNDRIP into Canadian law.

This is another serious blow to our internationally recognized rights and fighting for the restoration of UNDRIP is critical to our future. Compliance with UNDRIP Articles 18 and 19 requires direct engagement with First Nation's Peoples through their own decision-making institutions, chosen according to their own laws, customs, and procedures and with government and courts recognizing that our Free, Prior and Informed Consent is required before development on our lands.

In this fight, our Network supports the growing coalition of First Nations, environmental organizations and labour unions who oppose both Bills C-39 and C-37 and the wreckage they threaten to our lands and waters with dangerous projects like nuclear near surface disposal facilities on our Aboriginal Title lands, transportation of nuclear waste through our territories and construction of small modular nuclear reactors, among other environmental impacts from resource extraction projects.

We also support the Onion Lake Cree Nation in its cease and desist order warning the AFN that it has no authority to represent or negotiate on behalf of the Onion Lake Cree Nation in the October 26 FN-FM meeting.

Our Truth Before Reconciliation Network also categorically opposes AFN speaking on behalf of First Nations rights holders or signing any documents with the First Ministers'.

We will assess the outcome of the October 26th First Ministers' Meeting and respond accordingly as a Network.

We are also circulating the attached recommendations for UNDRIP Article 18 compliance to First Nations Rights Holders, for our Network's consideration and follow-up.

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For More Information Contact:

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Truth Before Reconciliation Network: *We work to ensure Crown governments and Canadian society confront the real truth: colonial policies under the Constitution Act 1867 and unilateral federal rights-definition frameworks under section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982 that continue to dispossess First Nations today. Reconciliation without truth is just another form of denial.*



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FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNDRIP ARTICLE 18 COMPLIANCE

RESTORING FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO DECISION-MAKING

A rights-based approach to self-determination requires moving beyond consultation with federally controlled organizations like the Assembly of First Nations and its Affiliates alone. Compliance with Articles 18 and 19 requires direct engagement with First Nation's Peoples through their own decision-making institutions, chosen according to their own laws, customs, and procedures.

This standard shifts First Nations-Crown relations from representation by colonial administered bodies like AFN, toward decision-making by Inherent & Treaty rights holders and Indigenous Nations themselves, consistent with Articles 3, 4, 18, and 19 of UNDRIP.

Recommendation 1: Recognize Rights Holders as the Primary Authority

- Federal and provincial governments should recognize First Nations citizens, families, clans, and nations as the ultimate rights holders.
- Chiefs, councils, and political organizations should derive mandates directly from the people.
- Major policy positions should require community authorization before negotiations begin.

Recommendation 2: Create First Nation-Based Decision Processes

- Re-establish traditional governance forums alongside existing administrative structures.
- Support clan, family, hereditary, and customary decision-making processes where communities choose them.
- Support each First Nation community's process to define its own decision-making procedures.

Recommendation 3: Require Community Mandates Before Legislative Change

- No First Nations-related legislation should proceed without documented community engagement and authorization.
- Consultation should occur before drafting legislation, not after policy decisions have been made.
- Governments should demonstrate how First Nations input changed outcomes.

Recommendation 4: Reform National First Nations Representation

- National organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, and its Affiliates, should strengthen mechanisms for direct First Nations citizens participation.
- AFN resolutions should be supported by transparent community engagement processes.
- Representation should include citizens, elders, youth, women, hereditary leaders, and knowledge holders where nations determine appropriate.
- Publicly disclose mandate sources before negotiations with Canada.

Recommendation 5: Implement Free, Prior and Informed Consent Standards

- Communities must receive complete information on proposed laws, agreements, and policy changes.
- Adequate time and resources must be provided for community review and discussion.
- Consent should be obtained through First Nations decision-making institutions identified by the nation itself.

Recommendation 6: Establish Article 18 Compliance Reviews

A policy should not proceed unless it can demonstrate:

- **Article 18 Compliance**
 - Rights holders participated through institutions of their choosing.
- **Article 19 Compliance**
 - Good-faith consultation and cooperation occurred before decisions were made.
- **FPIC Compliance**
 - Free, Prior and Informed Consent was sought and documented.
- **Article 3 Compliance**
 - First Nations Peoples retained the ability to determine their own political future.
- Independent First Nations-led review bodies should assess whether governments complied with Articles 18 and 19 before legislation proceeds.
- Public reports should identify whether First Nations representative institutions and rights holders were properly engaged.

Recommendation 7: Resource First Nations Governance Rebuilding

- Invest in language, spiritual & legal traditions, nation rebuilding, data sovereignty, citizenship redevelopment, and governance restoration initiatives.
- Support First Nations communities in rebuilding decision-making systems independent of federal legislation and funding structures.

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