



PRESS RELEASE

Yellowhead Tribal Council Chiefs Affirm that Treaties' are the Highest Law of the Land

February 17, 2018, Edmonton, Treaty No. 6 Territory: The Chiefs of Yellowhead Tribal Council (YTC) reject Prime Minister Trudeau's recent announcement of its intention to develop a 'Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework'. We remind the Government of Canada that Treaties are the highest law of the land. While the Prime Minister is touting this framework as a step towards reconciliation our Nations see this move as an attempt to corral our peoples into a very narrow approach that dismisses the international standing of the Treaty our ancestors made.

Our ancestors entered into Treaty with the British Crown with the understanding that the agreement made would last "as long as the sun shines, grass grows and waters flow" which meant forever. YTC Chiefs will never step away from this treaty understanding and we affirm that Treaty No. 6 supercedes any legislation or policy created by the Government of Canada. We are disappointed that the Prime Minister made little mention of the Treaty relationship and treaty rights. Our Chiefs see this initiative as the final implementation of then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's White Paper of 1969, which was intended to terminate our Treaties, municipalize our lands, move us under Canada and we will never accept this. It is no surprise that Prime Minister Trudeau is finishing the work his father started. We view this announcement as a direct violation of our Treaties.

Chief Kurt Burnstick, Alexander First Nations stated "Our Nation has been adamant that the Treaty is the only legal instrument that guides the relationship we have with the Crown. We will not accept the domestication of our international Treaty No. 6 that Canada intends to move towards through this new legal framework."

Chief Jonathan Frencheater from Sunchild First Nation stated "The Treaty is the highest law that our Nation works from to oversee the responsibility we have to the land and how we govern our inherent laws".

Acting Chief Cedric Whitford, O'Chiese First Nation stated "Our Nation has our own laws, legal processes and inherent jurisdiction that is confirmed by the Treaty. Any other instruments used by the Government of Canada, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples do not reflect the laws the Creator gave to our people".

As Treaty Chiefs, we have a responsibility to consider the children who are unborn, the next seven generations yet to come and we make these statements thinking about their future.

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