

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUNATUKAVUT COMMUNITY COUNCIL REJECTS NUNATSIAVUT GOVERNMENT'S OPINION ON NUNATUKAVUT LAND CLAIM

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, September 16, 2021 – The NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) today issued the following statement in response to a recent media release from the Nunatsiavut Government on NCC's land claim:

“The Nunatsiavut Government does not have the authority to accept or reject our land claim. The opinion expressed in their media release is hurtful and harmful. We are saddened that the Executive Council, representative of our cousins in the north, would conduct research about us and without us and in a way that blatantly undermines our right to self-determine. Inuit in Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut share many of the same kinship networks. Many of us share the same ancestry, the same families. And we share a common story rooted in our collective resistance to colonization.

The facts of history are clear. NunatuKavut Inuit belong to the land, waters and ice of our ancestors. We will continue to affirm and respect our connection to our ancestors. We are beneficiaries of the British-Inuit Treaty of 1765, which recognized and affirmed our presence and connection to our places. For far too long, we have had others try to tell us who we are, or rather, who we are not. NunatuKavut Inuit are the only authority on NunatuKavut Inuit. We invite others to walk with us in a way that respects and honours our story, who we are and where we come from.

Canada announced the start of talks with NCC on a Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination (RIRSD) process in 2018 and we signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2019. While these are significant milestones, it has been achieved after more than 30 years of exhaustive and extensive research, much of which is summarized in our land claim document “Unveiling NunatuKavut.” Our RIRSD process is about NunatuKavut Inuit achieving our vision and acting on priorities that advance the health and well-being of our people. Our process respects the rights and interests of all Indigenous peoples. It in no way, shape or form diminishes or negatively impacts Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, its agreement or that of any other Indigenous peoples.

We want to assure our people that NCC will continue to press on to ensure the recognition and affirmation of our Inuit rights. We will continue to work hard each and every day to strengthen our Inuit governance. And we will continue to build up our families and unify our communities. We are moving forward on a path that builds up, not tears down. One that affirms and does not diminish. That is who we are as a rights-bearing people and as an Inuit governing body.

NCC has indicated time and again an openness to sitting at a table with all Indigenous groups in Labrador, to share information and discuss issues in a respectful way. We have reached out to Nunatsiavut leadership on a number of occasions offering to meet about our respective rights and issues of common concern. In the spirit of our ancestors, we extend that invitation again today and emphasize how we can all be strengthened when we work together.”

To learn more about NCC and NunatuKavut Inuit, please visit our website at www.nunatukavut.ca and we invite you to check out our new Story Map page which helps tell our story. Please also join in the conversation at facebook.com/nunatuKavut and Twitter [@nunatuKavut](https://twitter.com/nunatuKavut).

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