

FIRST NATIONS STRATEGIC BULLETIN

FIRST NATIONS STRATEGIC POLICY COUNSEL

The Future of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN): *A Tool for Re-Colonization or De-Colonization?*



AFN National Chief Roseanne Archibald leading Grand Entry into AFN Assembly July 5, 2022, Vancouver, BC.

By Russ Diabo

Although many grassroots Peoples and increasingly more First Nations would like to see **AFN** dissolved, the **Alberta Treaty #8 First Nations** pulling out of **AFN** is an example. The dissolution of **AFN** is highly unlikely to happen for many reasons, one big reason is that the federal government uses the **AFN** as a consultative body, purportedly to “co-develop” policy and legis-

lation, although it is an uneven partnership with the **federal government controlling the funding, process and agenda.**

If **AFN** didn't exist the federal government would have to directly consult the numerous **First Nation regional bodies**, or the over 600 **First Nation Governments (Band Councils)**. This is a consultation burden the federal government seeks to avoid.

So that leaves re-structuring **AFN**, but to what end?

The illegitimate suspension of the first female **AFN National Chief, Roseanne Archibald**, by the **AFN Executive Committee** in June, brought national media attention to the **AFN** as an organization. For many, this was the first time the less informed learned that the **AFN structure** includes a federally incorporated body—the **National Indian Brotherhood**—to receive and account for federal monies.

While the **National Indian Brotherhood (NIB)** is a **federal corporation** to hold federal funds the other part of the organization, the **Assembly of First Nations**, operates under a **Charter** that was developed in the 1980's by a committee largely led by the late **Chief Joe Mathias** from the Squamish Reserve in North Vancouver and was drafted by a West Indies lawyer, **Joe Saunders**, modelled as they say

Special points of interest:

- **Archibald's Illegitimate Suspension by AFN Executive Committee Rejected by 90% of Chiefs**
- **AFN Investigation & Audit Supported by 75% of Chiefs**
- **AFN Assembly Supports Changing Bell-garde's MOU with Canada**
- **Pope agrees Residential Schools were Genocide**

Inside this issue:

What's Future of AFN?	1
AFN v. Archibald	12
Changing AFN MOU	15
AFN UNDRIP Lobby	18
Pope Admits Genocide	21
Overview Chart –Feds	23
Contact Us	24



“I was informed by a member of the 1980’s NIB re-structuring Committee the purpose of adopting a new structure was to move away from the NIB governance structure, which was governed by an Executive Committee comprised of Presidents of Provincial-Territorial Organizations (PTO’s) who acted as if the regions were their own personal fiefdoms”



‘AFN’s Future’ continued from page 1

on the **United Nations**. Under the **one Chief, one vote, system** of the **AFN Charter** the BC region has over 200 Chiefs, about one-third of the Chiefs in Canada and the BC region has a significant influence in **AFN Chiefs’ Assemblies**.

I was informed by a member of the 1980’s **NIB re-structuring Committee** the purpose of adopting a new structure was to move away from the **NIB** governance structure, which was governed by an **Executive Committee** comprised of Presidents of **Provincial-Territorial Organizations (PTO’s)** who acted as if the regions were their own personal fiefdoms.

The idea was to create an organization where **community Chiefs** directed the **executive** of the organization instead of the other way around, like under the **NIB** structure. Apparently, there was insistence by Chiefs from a couple of the regions to have a representative on the executive of the new organization. This led to the **AFN Executive Committee** being included as a body in the new **AFN structure**, which consisted of:

- First Nations-in-Assembly (Chiefs or Proxies)
- Confederacy of Nations
- Executive Committee
- National Chief
- AFN Secretariat (National Indian Brotherhood Incorporated)

The **AFN structure** was adopted at a Chiefs’ Assembly in 1982, but it wasn’t until 1985 that the **AFN Charter** was adopted at an **AFN Chief’s Assembly** in Vancouver during an election for **AFN National Chief**, which saw **Georges Erasmus** (Dene) defeating incumbent **David Ahenakew** (Cree).

This **AFN election** was the culmination of a bitter divide within **AFN**, between the First Nations who supported the **1980’s First Ministers’ constitutional talks** regarding the meaning of section 35 of Canada’s new constitution (Erasmus), versus the First Nations who wanted the original **First Nations-Federal Bilateral Treaty Relationship**—formed during European contact in pre-confederation Treaties, including the Two-Row Wampum/Covenant Chain Relationship—protected from encroachment by the provinces (Ahenakew).

The 1985 election result led to many Treaty Chiefs exiting the Assembly of First Nations to form the **Prairie Treaty Nations Alliance (PTNA)**. However, in 1989, the **PTNA** Chiefs returned to rejoin **AFN** as First Nation members.

As noted above, under the **AFN structure and Charter** there is the **AFN Executive Committee**, which is comprised of the **National Chief** and **Re-**

‘AFN’s Future’ continued from page 2

gional Chiefs, each **Regional Chief** is elected or removed under rules set out by Chiefs from each region. The **National Chief** and each **AFN Regional Chief** also sit on a **Board of Directors** of the **NIB federal corporation**, so the **National Chief** and **Regional Chiefs** have two roles: one under the **AFN Charter** as an **Executive Committee** and one under the **NIB By-Laws** as a **Board of Directors**. The **Head Office of AFN/NIB** is located on the Akwesasne Reserve for **Revenue Canada Tax Policy** purposes, status Indians working at **AFN** are tax exempt from income tax—for now.

Perry Bellegarde’s Legacy

The illegitimate suspension of **AFN National Chief Archibald**, in June by the **AFN Executive Committee**, brought the problems she has been encountering in trying to implement her platform and reform of the **AFN** out into the public through media coverage. **Roseanne Archibald** was elected as **National Chief** in July 2021, following a bitter election that lasted two days and 5 ballots before Saskatchewan region Candidate, **Reginald Bellerose**, conceded, but the shadow of **Perry Bellegarde** remains.

National Chief Archibald has inherited the legacy that her predecessor—also from the Saskatchewan region—**Perry Bellegarde**, following his seven year’s in office left to **National Chief Archibald**. While in office **Perry Bellegarde** led **AFN’s** close cooperation with the **Trudeau government** over the last six years, by signing two **Memorandums of Understanding**: one on creating a **new fiscal relationship** and one on **joint priorities**, committing **AFN** to “co-development” of policy and legislation as one of the Trudeau government’s “*Permanent Indigenous Bilateral Mechanisms*” along with the two other National Indigenous Organizations, the **Metis National Council** and the **Inuit Tapariit Kanatami**.

National Chief Bellegarde also led **AFN’s** strong support for **federal Bills C-91** (Indigenous Languages), **Bill C-92** (Indigenous Chief & Family Services) and **Bill C-15** (UNDRIP Act), which **AFN** is now involved in implementing under federal jurisdiction.

During her illegitimate suspension as **AFN National Chief, Roseanne Archibald** and prior to the **AFN Annual General Assembly** in Vancouver, **Archibald** spoke out about the **AFN’s** “*corruption, collusion and toxic environment at AFN*” and called for an independent investigation and “*forensic audit into salary payouts and contracts at AFN*”.

AFN National Chief Bellegarde’s last few years in office saw the **Trudeau government** flow tens of millions of dollars through **AFN**: 2019/20 F/Y \$46,179,412, 2020/21 F/Y \$34,264,301, and for Fiscal Year 2021/2022 an **NIB Financial Statement** was presented to the **AFN AGA** by AFN/NIB – **Jonathan Thompson**, VPOA, **Matt McLeod**, CFO, and **Ann Marie Ethier**, Deloitte. However, **AFN National Chief Archibald** stated at the Assem-



PM Trudeau & NC Bellegarde

“During her illegitimate suspension as **AFN National Chief, Roseanne Archibald** and prior to the **AFN Annual General Assembly** in Vancouver, **Archibald** spoke out about the **AFN’s** “*corruption, collusion and toxic environment at AFN*” and called for an independent investigation and “*forensic audit into salary payouts and contracts at AFN*””



Ann Marie Ethier, is an accountant. She began her career in **Haute-Gatineau**, in **Maniwaki** to be precise. She is now a partner at **Deloitte**



Paul Prosper, Regional Chief, Nova Scotia/Newfoundland, supported NC suspension & was rebuked by Chiefs-in-Assembly

“The AFN Assembly dealt with Emergency Resolution #3 first, which was to ratify the AFN Executive Committee’s June decision to suspend National Chief Archibald and to extend her suspension. This resolution was defeated with 90% of the Chiefs/Proxies voting against it”



Joanna Bernard, Regional Chief, New Brunswick, also rebuked by Chiefs-in-Assembly

‘AFN’s Future’ continued from page 3

bly, she had no intention of signing onto the **2021/2022 NIB Financial Statement** and subsequently there was no resolution adopting it.

The amount **AFN** received during fiscal year 2021/2022 was also well over \$30 million as I recall. It seems this Financial Statement will also be a matter to be included in the **AFN investigation and audit**, as per **AFN Resolution No. 3/2022** adopted in Vancouver.

Re-Structuring AFN & Federal Relations

The agenda of the **AFN Chiefs’ Assembly** held in Vancouver July 5-7, 2022, focused mainly on the illegitimate suspension by the **AFN Executive Committee** of **AFN National Chief Archibald** and the chaos around re-structuring **AFN**.

There were two emergency resolutions circulated to Chiefs/Proxies during the **AFN Assembly** to address the status of **National Chief Archibald**:

the **AFN Executive Committee** had prepared **Emergency Resolution #3**, which was moved by **Kukpi7/Chief, Roseanne Casimir**, Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc, BC and seconded by **Chief Ira McArthur**, Pheasant Rump First Nation, SK, to ratify the **Executive Committee’s** previous decision to suspend **Roseanne Archibald as National Chief** and to extend her suspension;

Emergency Resolution #2 called for non-confidence in **National Chief Archibald**, her immediate removal, naming of an **interim National Chief** and holding of an election for a new **AFN National Chief** within 6 months, moved by **Chief Rod Travers**, Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation, MB, and seconded by **Chief Harley Chingee**, McLeod Lake, BC.

The **AFN Assembly** dealt with **Emergency Resolution #3** first, which was to ratify the **AFN Executive Committee’s** June decision to suspend **National Chief Archibald** and to extend her suspension. This resolution was defeated with 90% of the Chiefs/Proxies voting against it.

The results of the vote on **Emergency Resolution #3** was a major rebuke to the **AFN Executive Committee’s** illegitimate suspension of **AFN National Chief Archibald**, despite the pleas made to the **AFN Assembly** by Executive Committee members **Paul Prosper**, Regional Chief of Nova Scotia/Newfoundland and **Joanna Bernard**, Regional Chief of New Brunswick.

After seeing the results of the vote on **Emergency Resolution #3**, the mover and seconder of **Emergency Resolution #2** to remove **National Chief Archibald** from office, withdrew their resolution and that settled the issue, at least in the short-term, that **Roseanne Archibald** is the legitimate **AFN National Chief**.

‘AFN’s Future’ continued from page 4

National Chief Archibald was in support of several resolutions the **AFN Assembly** passed in Vancouver to re-structure **AFN**:

- For **AFN Executive Committee** and **Chiefs’ Committee on Charter Renewal** to Conduct a **governance review of AFN** to “*Seek input and feedback on the effectiveness and performance of the AFN’s governance structures in achieving the purpose of the AFN*”. **Resolution #2/2022**, moved by **Chairperson Khelselim**, Squamish Nation, BC and seconded by **Chief Andrew Victor**, Cheam First Nation, BC.
- For **AFN** to conduct an **investigation and audit of AFN’s Financial and Management Policies**, including: **National Chief** and the **Executive Committee** to actively cooperate in the ongoing human resources investigation, being led by the independent investigator; for **Chiefs’ Committee on Charter Renewal** to conduct a review of **AFN** financial policies and practices and provide a report with recommendations to the **AFN Executive Committee** with the intent of implementing the recommendations in the 2022/2023 fiscal year; **Chiefs Committee on Charter Renewal** to hire an independent auditor consistent with the recommendations as to nature and scope, and if it is necessary, as determined by the **Chiefs Committee on Charter Renewal**...[to] conduct an independent, third-party forensic audit into the previous ten years of financial activity of the **AFN**, with particular attention to recent **AFN** salary payouts and contracts, moved by **Chief Wendy Jocko**, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, ON and seconded by **Chief Lance Haymond**, Kebaowek, QC. After two days of debate and amendments this resolution passed with 75% support of the Chiefs/Proxies.

National Chief Archibald also supported a resolution that was adopted by the **AFN Assembly** to **re-negotiate Bellegarde’s MOU on Joint Priorities with the Trudeau government**.

- For **AFN** to pursue the **implementation of a renewed Permanent Bilateral Mechanism/Memorandum of Understanding framework entitled the Healing Path Forward Accord**. The reasons for a new agreement with the **Trudeau government** are described in the preamble: The **PBM/MOU’s** processes are not working effectively; as a result, the **AFN** is experiencing challenges and setbacks when working to advance identified priorities through this process; Not all of **PBM/MOU’s** current commitments are being honoured, nor are regional needs recognized this was moved by **Dwight Sutherland**, Proxy, Taykwa Tagamou First Nation, ON and seconded by **Chief Robert Nakogee**, Fort Albany First Nation, ON.

With the adoption of these resolutions the **AFN National Chief Archibald** has some tools to work with in re-structuring **AFN** and negotiating a differ-



Khelsilem is the elected chairperson of the Squamish Nation and sits on the Chiefs Committee on Charter Renewal. (Ka’nehsí:io Deer/CBC)

“With the adoption of these resolutions the **AFN National Chief Archibald** has some tools to work with in re-structuring **AFN** and negotiating a different relationship with the **Trudeau government** other than being a pawn like her predecessor was for the last 6 years”



Lance Haymond, chief of Kebaowek First Nation in Quebec, seconded an emergency resolution calling for a review of the **AFN’s** financial practices. (Ka’nehsí:io Deer/CBC)



L to R: NC Fontaine & PM Paul Martin, circa 2005

“When then AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine stopped the convening of Confederacy meetings from 2004 onwards followed by AFN National Chiefs Shawn Atleo and Perry Bellegarde continuing the practice of leaving the Confederacy body dormant, they created a vacuum that the AFN Executive Committee filled”



NC Atleo honouring PM Harper on Blood Reserve for Bill C-33, First Nations Education Act (FNEA).

‘AFN’s Future’ continued from page 5

ent relationship with the **Trudeau government** other than being a pawn like her predecessor was for the last 6 years.

However, it remains to be seen if a quorum of the **AFN Executive Committee** can work with the **AFN National Chief** on 1) re-structuring **AFN**, 2) conducting and investigation and audit of pay-outs and contracts for the past 10 years and 3) re-negotiating a new more equitable relationship with the **Trudeau government** regarding policy and legislative developments for the remainder of its mandate under the **Liberal-NDP Alliance** (2025), unless the **NDP** pull support or **Trudeau** calls a snap election.

What to do with the AFN Confederacy of Nations?

At the **AFN Assembly** in Vancouver there were two resolutions about the **AFN Confederacy body** that were tabled: one called for the amendment of the **AFN Charter** to remove the **Confederacy body** from the structure of **AFN** and one to maintain the **Confederacy** as part of **AFN structure**.

I believe it was when **Phil Fontaine** was re-elected as **AFN National Chief** in 2003 that **Confederacy meetings** were ended and the annual pattern of every six months holding an **Annual General Assembly** every July and a **Special Assembly** every December, except in 2014, while **Shawn Atleo** was **AFN National Chief**, the **Chiefs of Ontario** pushed for an **AFN Confederacy meeting** to be held to stop the **Harper government’s Bill C-33**, known as the **First Nation Control of First Nation Education Act**, which then **AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo** supported.

When then **AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine** stopped the convening of **Confederacy meetings** from 2004 onwards followed by **AFN National Chiefs Shawn Atleo and Perry Bellegarde** continuing the practice of leaving the **Confederacy body** dormant, they created a vacuum that the **AFN Executive Committee** filled.

When the **AFN structure** (1982) and **Charter** (1985) was adopted by **AFN Assemblies** the **Confederacy** was intended to be a key body in the governance of **AFN** it was to be the body to represent First Nation based on populations, the composition of the **Confederacy** is:

composed of First Nations representatives of each region on the basis of one representative for each region plus one representative for each 10,000 First Nations’ citizens of that region.

Under the **AFN Charter** the **Confederacy** holds a key mandate for holding the **AFN Executive Committee** and **National Chief** accountable, which hasn’t been followed since 2004:

The Confederacy of Nations exists and functions as the governing body between assemblies of the First Nations-in-Assembly, with authority:

‘AFN’s Future’ continued from page 6

- a. *To review and enforce decisions and directions of the First Nations-in-Assembly.*
- b. *To interpret resolutions, decisions and directions of the First Nations-in-Assembly in cases where ambiguity or conflict arises in the interpretation of resolutions, decisions.*
- c. *To ensure that the Secretariat and Executive Committee (including the National Chief) conform to, and implement, the decisions and directions of the First Nations-in-Assembly.*
- d. *To take corrective and remedial disciplinary measures in respect of any member of the Secretariat or Executive Committee (including the National Chief) in instances of willful breach of a national mandate.*

There are a number of other aspects to the **Confederacy’s mandate**, and the **Confederacy** was supposed to meet quarterly in between Assemblies and:

*Special sessions may be convened by the **National Chief** on his own initiative, or at the request of a quorum for the duly selected members of the Confederacy of Nations or at the request of the Executive Committee. [emphasis added]*

A **Confederacy quorum** is “Fifty percent of participating representatives and fifty percent of the participating regions shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Confederacy of Nations.”

According to **AFN Resolution #2/2022** it falls to the **AFN Chiefs’ Committee on Charter Renewal** to review the future of the **AFN Confederacy body** in its study. However, it seems a broader political forum is needed to discuss the **future of the AFN Confederacy** and its mandate to represent First Nation regions with the larger populations with one representative per every 10,000 people.

In a recent census most of the First Nations population are located within **Ontario**, the **Prairies** and **BC** regions. The **one Chief, one vote system**, doesn’t take into account the large bands versus the small bands issue. It is the **Confederacy body** that includes a weighted voting system by population.

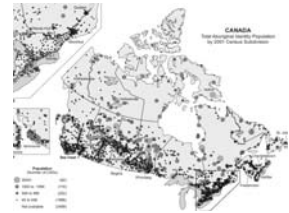
Canada & AFN have changed Definition of a “First Nation”

Then there is the matter of the **AFN Charter’s** definition of a “First Nation”:

MEMBERSHIP

ARTICLE 4

All First Nations in Canada have the right to be Members of the Assembly of First Nations.



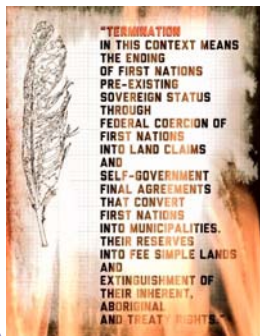
“In a recent census most of the First Nations population are located within Ontario, the Prairies and BC regions. The one Chief, one vote system, doesn’t take into account the large bands versus the small bands issue. It is the Confederacy body that includes a weighted voting system by population”



Qualipu Chief & Council
-2021-2024, Canada &
AFN have changed definition of “First Nation”



“As a result of Canada’s implementation of its comprehensive land claims and self-government policies over the past 47 years, starting with the 1975 James Bay Agreement and the 1986 Sechelt Self-Government Act and related federal legislation, such as the First Nations Land Management Act and the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, there are now different classes, or categories of First Nations across Canada with different legal and political capacity and status”



‘AFN’s Future’ continued from page 7

As a result of Canada’s implementation of its **comprehensive land claims and self-government policies** over the past 47 years, starting with the **1975 James Bay Agreement** and the **1986 Sechelt Self-Government Act** and related federal legislation, such as the **First Nations Land Management Act** and the **First Nations Fiscal Management Act**, there are now different classes, or categories of First Nations across Canada with different legal and political capacity and status:

First Nations who have exited the **Indian Act** by signing **Comprehensive Land Claims Settlement Agreements** (Modern Treaties) and/or **Self-Government Agreements**.

First Nations who are actively negotiating their way out of the **Indian Act** at federal “*recognition and self-determination*” tables; or “*Modern Treaty*” or “*Self-Government*” negotiation tables; or **alternatives to the Indian Act** federal legislation like the **First Nations Land Management Act** or the **First Nations Fiscal Management Act**.

First Nations who remain under the **Indian Act**, but who have unresolved issues related to **Aboriginal Title** or **historic Treaty rights** and do not agree with the **federal policy framework** (land claims & self-government) and who are resisting the compromise of their **Inherent and Treaty rights**.

Susan Collis, from Queens’ University describes the legal and political differences that now exist among First Nations in her excellent article entitled “*W(h)ither the Indian Act? How Statutory Law Is Rewriting Canada’s Settler Colonial Formation*”:

the Indian Act, the historic legal regime structuring settler colonialism in Canada, is being displaced by new statutory law, as nearly fifty federal statutes passed by successive governments between 2005 and 2020 rewrite First Nations land, taxation, resource, and governance regimes.

Another academic, **Dr. Jeremy Schmidt**, from Durham University, in his article entitled “*Dispossession by municipalization: Property, pipelines, and divisions of power in settler colonial Canada*” describes the different legal and political fact situation in Canada among First Nations, as a result of the process of municipalizing First Nations (Indian Bands):

Canada pursues the “municipalization” of First Nations through state mechanisms that subvert Indigenous authority to the state, then delegate forms of state authority to Indigenous peoples, and conclude by asserting that delegated authority satisfies demands for Indigenous self-determination.

‘AFN’s Future’ continued from page 8

The federal government confirms there are already:

25 self-government agreements across Canada involving 43 Indigenous communities. There are also 2 education agreements involving 35 Indigenous communities.

Currently there are about 50 self-government negotiation tables across the country. These tables are at various stages of the negotiation process and in many cases are being negotiated in conjunction with modern treaties.

The **2022-2023 Departmental Plan of Crown-Indigenous Relations** also describes the current discussions/negotiations taking place across Canada with First Nations, Metis and Inuit:

*CIRNAC will hold innovative discussions at over 169 negotiations tables based on the affirmation of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership. Through these discussion tables, **representing over 469 First Nations**, 22 Inuit communities and 8 Métis organizations, with a total population of over 1 million people, CIRNAC will increase the number of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.* [emphasis added]

Conclusion

As the **AFN National Chief, Executive Committee** and the **Chiefs’ Committee on Charter Renewal** focus on re-structuring **AFN** and reporting to the December **AFN Special Chiefs’ Assembly**, Canada has already bypassed **AFN** by creating two new Indigenous Departments (**ISC & CIRNAC**) whose mandates are to facilitate the process of transitioning First Nations (Indian Bands) into Indigenous governments to be a “legal entity with the rights, powers, and privileges of a natural person at law”.

What are Natural Person Powers in the Context of Self-Government?

As a province, the government of Ontario uses this definition:

*Natural person powers give municipalities similar flexibility to that of individuals and corporations in managing their organizational and administrative affairs without the need for more specific legislative authority. **SOURCE:** Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing*

The **Crown-Indigenous Relations** website on “Self-Government” de-



Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada at AFN-AGA in Vancouver.

“As the AFN National Chief, Executive Committee and the Chiefs’ Committee on Charter Renewal focus on re-structuring AFN and reporting to the December AFN Special Chiefs’ Assembly, Canada has already bypassed AFN by creating two new Indigenous Departments (ISC & CIRNAC) whose mandates are to facilitate the process of transitioning First Nations (Indian Bands) into Indigenous governments to be a “legal entity with the rights, powers, and privileges of a natural person at law””



Marc Miller, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations at AFN-AGA in Vancouver.



“Over the past six years the Trudeau government has taken a top-down, secretive approach to Indigenous “Reconciliation”, so most First Nation grassroots peoples are not aware of the federal intentions of transitioning First Nations into Indigenous Municipal Corporations—even many Band Councils are focused on the Department of Indigenous Services Canada and programs. Many are not making the connection that ISC’s mandate is to prepare First Nations for signing onto “full self-government status” as defined under federal policy and legislation”



Stefan Matiation,
Crown-Indigenous Re-
lations and Northern
Affairs, formerly with
Department of Justice.

‘AFN’s Future’ continued from page 9

scribes the federal parallel process to creating Indigenous Municipalities:

*Self-government is negotiated **within the Canadian constitutional framework** and **federal legislation is passed before the negotiated agreement takes effect.***

Under self-government, Indigenous laws operate in harmony with federal and provincial laws. Indigenous laws protecting culture and language generally take priority if there is a conflict among laws

*However, the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act and other general laws such as the Criminal Code continue to apply.** [emphasis added]*

Stefan Matiation from the **Department of Justice** explains in the context of the **Cannabis Act** how colonialism remains, whether a First Nation is under the **Indian Act** or is a “self-governing First Nation” under federal legislation:

*The bylaw-making authority under the **Indian Act** is subject to the **Criminal Code** and the **Controlled Drugs and Substances Act**, as well as the **cannabis act**. To the extent there is an inconsistency between the bylaws and those pieces of legislation, the criminal law related legislation would prevail and a bylaw could be reviewed by the courts on that basis...in the self-government context, self-governing agreements vary across the country. There are around 30 of them. The provisions of each of those agreements would be reviewed by the First Nations with that self-governing authority. They would make their determination as to what laws they can pass within their communities... the typical approach to self-government agreements is that **criminal law, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and the cannabis act** would prevail over the self-government agreements as well. – Stefan Matiation, Director and General Counsel, Department of Justice Canada, February 27, 2018, to the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples [emphasis added]*

Over the past six years the **Trudeau government** has taken a top-down, secretive approach to Indigenous “Reconciliation”, so most First Nation grassroots peoples are not aware of the federal intentions of transitioning First Nations into **Indigenous Municipal Corporations**—even many **Band Councils** are focused on the **Department of Indigenous Services Canada** and programs. Many are not making the connection that **ISC’s mandate** is to prepare First Nations for signing onto “full self-government

‘AFN’s Future’ conclusion from page 10

status” as defined under federal policy and legislation.

At some point—maybe even the next federal election—the Canadian public will vote to replace the **Liberals** with a **Conservative government**, and history has shown under the **Mulroney and Harper federal administrations**, that **Conservatives** use **Liberal Indigenous policies and legislation** to accelerate negotiations to **final termination agreements** to facilitate resource extraction, remember **Idle No More**?

Before its too late, First Nation families, Elders, Women, Youth and communities need to focus on internal capacity building, by doing **cultural and historical research, GIS mapping and territorial land and resource strategic planning**. Use outside monies coming into the community to develop **self-determination plans** as an alternative to **Canada’s national “reconciliation” plan** of transitioning First Nations into municipalities.

STEP 3: Participatory Mapping and Impact Assessments

- STEP 3: Indigenous Peoples’ Organization Role in Mapping and Impact Assessments



• Elements of step 3:

- Conduct a Needs Assessment and Develop a Work-Plan and Budget
- Learn from experiences of others, find and connect with peer networks
- Mapping is to support decision-making in all areas of land competition
- Establishing and Coordinating a Mapping/Assessment Project Team
- Use and Develop Confidentiality and Usage Protocols for Cultural Data
- Use an Incremental Approach and purchase hardware and software only needed for tasks and within budgets that can be maintained
- Identify and Groom GIS Champions where possible and practical to develop in-house mapping capacity within the Indigenous Peoples’ Organization

Indigenous Cultural/Territorial Landscapes Baseline Data/Evidence Collection

1. Use and Occupancy Study
2. Harvest Study
3. Toponym or Place-Name Study
4. Indigenous Knowledge (IK) or Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Studies
5. Documentation of Customary/Traditional Laws (and Treaties)
6. Archaeology, written history and ethnography
7. Genealogy
8. Alienation Study and State of the Territory Report

SOURCE: David Carruthers, PlanLab



“Before its too late, First Nation families, Elders, Women, Youth and communities need to focus on internal capacity building, by doing cultural and historical research, GIS mapping and territorial land and resource strategic planning. Use outside monies coming into the community to develop self-determination plans as an alternative to Canada’s national “reconciliation” plan of transitioning First Nations into municipalities”

TRANSITIONAL PROCESS FOR INDIAN BANDS INTO FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED SELF-GOVERNMENT





“TVO.org has assembled a timeline of the events leading up to and including the AFN’s annual assembly, where chiefs and their proxies voted on resolutions related to Archibald’s suspension and other governance issues, including a proposed forensic audit of the AFN’s financial practices — something Archibald has been calling for since her suspension”



The Assembly of First Nations vs. RoseAnne Archibald: A Brief History



AFN National Chief Archibald, July 5, 2022, Vancouver, BC

Written by Charnel Anderson, July 13, 2022, TVO

Over the past month, a clash with the national chief has plunged the AFN into turmoil. Here’s the story so far

In the period leading up to the Assembly of First Nations’ Annual General Assembly last week, it was unclear whether the organization’s head, RoseAnne Archibald, would remain in her role as national chief.

Archibald, the first woman elected to lead the organization, which represents some 900,000 First Nations people across the country, was suspended in June after AFN staff levelled four human-resources complaints against her. The AFN’s executive committee initially said Archibald would be prohibited from attending the AGA but

then reversed course: it allowed her to make her case to delegates, who had the opportunity to weigh in on her suspension.

TVO.org has assembled a timeline of the events leading up to and including the AFN’s annual assembly, where chiefs and their proxies voted on resolutions related to Archibald’s suspension and other governance issues, including a proposed forensic audit of the AFN’s financial practices — something Archibald has been calling for since her suspension.

June 16 — AFN staff allege they were bullied and harassed by National Chief RoseAnne Archibald

On June 16, CBC News reports that the AFN has launched an external investigation after four staff members levelled bullying and harassment allegations against National Chief RoseAnne Archibald. The complaints include allegations that Archibald introduced a Hawaiian cultural practice during weekly meetings and asked staff to share their childhood traumas, a move that some staff members say retraumatized them. Archibald’s legal counsel, Aaron Detlor, says he is unaware of Archibald’s instituting Hawaiian cultural practices or asking employees to reveal their childhood traumas.

The same day, Archibald issues a statement in which she says she has been “undermined, discredited, and attacked” as a result of her “efforts to clean up the corruption within the AFN,” adding that she welcomes an investigation “that has been launched by the four staff who have tried to secure over a million dollars in contract payouts.” Archibald also calls for

‘AFN v. Archibald’ continued from page 12

a forensic audit and an independent inquiry of the AFN’s conduct over the past eight years. (TVO.org reached out to the AFN for comment but did not receive a response by publication time.)

June 17 — AFN suspends Archibald

The day after Archibald responds to allegations of bullying and harassment, the AFN’s national board of directors and its executive committee vote to suspend her — a move the AFN says was “prompted by her public statement” on June 16. The statement, the AFN says, “breached her obligations” to the organization and was “contrary” to her oath of office, the AFN’s code of conduct, and its whistleblower policy. In a statement, the AFN says that “Archibald is suspended with pay pending the outcome of a current investigation into four complaints against her” and that “the National Chief has been ordered not to discuss the on-going investigation publicly and is prohibited from attending the Annual General Assembly ... in early July.”

June 22 — Archibald pursues legal action

Archibald announces she is bringing “legal proceedings to obtain a court order” to have the actions of the AFN’s executive committee — including its decision to suspend her and bar her from attending the annual general assembly — “declared null and void.”

June 30 — AFN reverses course on its decision to bar Archibald from the AGA

The AFN, noting that its executive committee had “previously said it would bar” Archibald from the AGA, says in a statement that it’s “since offered to allow her to attend the meeting and to address the Chiefs in Assembly regarding a proposed resolution related to her continued suspension and further participation in the AGA.” The organization also says that the Ontario Superior Court “declined to take action” on Archibald’s request for a hearing to overturn her suspension, adding that members of the executive committee reject her allegations “that her suspension was unlawful.”

In a statement also published on June 30, Archibald’s legal counsel says she sought and received a court appearance to “ensure that she is able to legally attend” the AGA, “despite Regional Chiefs’ attempt to unlawfully bar her” from attending it. He also states that the regional chiefs “had no authority to attempt to suspend [Archibald] from the role she was elected to fulfill.”

July 5 — Archibald addresses AGA attendees

Speaking to the crowd on the opening day of the AGA, Archibald says she was suspended for telling the truth “about the corruption at the AFN,” calls the move to suspend her “lateral violence,” and repeats her call for reform within the AFN.



“Speaking to the crowd on the opening day of the AGA, Archibald says she was suspended for telling the truth “about the corruption at the AFN,” calls the move to suspend her “lateral violence,” and repeats her call for reform within the AFN”



AFN National Chief Archibald addressing AFN Assembly Vancouver, BC, July 5, 2022.

Assembly of First Nations Assemblée des Premières Nations July 6, 6, 2022 Vancouver, BC Resolution no. 2022021	
TITLE: Investigation and Audit of AFN's Financial and Management Practices	
SUBJECT: Governance & Management Review of AFN	
MOVED BY: Chief Wendy Jones, Agagwanish First Nation, ON	
SECONDED BY: Chief Lorne Hargrave, Kootenai, BC	
DECISION: Motion passed, 78% for, 22% opposed, 0% abstained	

“On the AGA’s last day, 75 per cent of delegates vote in favour of an emergency draft resolution calling for a forensic audit of the AFN’s financial and management practices over the past 10 years. The resolution, which was amended multiple times, asks the Chiefs Committee on Charter Renewal to review financial policies and practices and provide a report with recommendations to the executive committee”

‘AFN v. Archibald’ conclusion from page 13

The same day, delegates vote against an emergency resolution brought by Kukpi7 (Chief) Roseanne Casimir of Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc that would have seen Archibald temporarily suspended with pay pending the outcome of the investigation into complaints against her.

July 6 — Non-confidence resolution withdrawn

During the AGA’s second day, an emergency resolution to remove Archibald and appoint an interim national chief, brought by Chief Rod Travers of Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation, is withdrawn without a vote. According to the Globe and Mail, it’s unclear whether the executive committee considers Archibald’s suspension lifted.

July 7 — Delegates vote in favour of a forensic audit

On the AGA’s last day, 75 per cent of delegates vote in favour of an emergency draft resolution calling for a forensic audit of the AFN’s financial and management practices over the past 10 years. The resolution, which was amended multiple times, asks the Chiefs Committee on Charter Renewal to review financial policies and practices and provide a report with recommendations to the executive committee.

Ontario Hubs are made possible by the Barry and Laurie Green Family Charitable Trust & Goldie Feldman.

[Reprinted courtesy of TVO Today]



Members of AFN Executive Committee at AFN AGA. L to R: NC RoseAnne Archibald, Manitoba Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse, Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare, B.C. Regional Chief Terry Teegee and Quebec/Labrador Regional Chief Ghislain Picard. (Ben Nelms/CBC)



Chiefs Want to Renew Relationship as Canada/AFN MOU Found Ineffective on Regional Issues

Monday, July 11th, 2022

By Shari Narine, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, Windspeaker.com

“This resolution is very much about empowering you as chiefs...and you need to take back the AFN and every resolution that I’m presenting to you is about you taking back your power and authority to drive these processes of the AFN.” — National Chief RoseAnne Archibald

A bilateral mechanism with the federal government that was lauded as a breakthrough by the Assembly of First Nations in 2017 has now been abandoned as something that no longer works.

Chiefs-in-assembly voted to replace the Permanent Bilateral Mechanism/AFN-Canada Memorandum of Understanding framework with something “that includes input and feedback from each region.” The resolution was one of only five regular resolutions dealt with at the Assembly of First Nations annual general meeting held July 5 to July 7 in Vancouver.

“This resolution is about updating that process and making it more regionally based so that each region can actually put forward their own priorities,” said National Chief RoseAnne Archibald, who holds the intergovernmental relations portfolio for the AFN.

The 2017 bilateral mechanism resulted in the AFN co-developing a number of legislative pieces with the federal government, including the Indigenous Languages Act and distinctions-based Indigenous health legislation.

“This co-development issue is a hot button issue,” said Archibald. “We don’t want to co-develop necessarily. We want our rights and title, our inherent and treaty rights, to be respected by this country.”

The bilateral mechanism is no longer meeting its current commitments and not recognizing regional needs, the resolution said.

And, the AFN is not a rights holder, pointed out proxy Doreen Cardinal of Chapeau Cree First Nation.

“It is (the AFN’s) job to facilitate that meeting between me and the Prime Minister and other ministers. I speak for my nation. I speak for my people. I speak for my territory, what happens there,” said Pimicikamak Cree Nation Chief David Monias.

“We are sovereign. We have treaties with the Crown...We are the rights holders. We speak when it comes to our treaties and our land entitlements and anything that relates to that,” he said

Archibald agreed that it was the AFN’s role to serve as “space creator” for discussions.



“This resolution is very much about empowering you as chiefs...and you need to take back the AFN and every resolution that I’m presenting to you is about you taking back your power and authority to drive these processes of the AFN”





“It requires an update that includes a formal process for including each of our region’s input in order to advance our own national priorities to the Prime Minister and his Cabinet and most importantly hold them accountable outside our current one-size-fits-all approach”



‘Renew Canada-AFN MOU’ continued from page 15

“Those kinds of discussions around inherent and treaty rights belong in the community. It’s the community that must drive those processes and they’re driving those processes on behalf of the rights holders so...the discussions and the negotiations are very much driven by First Nation communities,” she said.

The resolution called for replacing the bilateral mechanism with a new framework entitled the Healing Path Forward, which is an accord that Archibald promoted during her campaign to become national chief. She also pitched an updated version of it at the AFN’s special chiefs assembly (SCA) last December, where it was defeated.

At that SCA, Archibald was called out for presenting the accord to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in October when she spoke to him at Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc as he met with Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir and residential school survivors. The accord had not been given the go-ahead by regional chiefs nor by the chiefs-in-assembly at that point.

Archibald was reminded of that last week.

“I saw an opportunity to tell the Prime Minister, ‘Your MOU is not working and here is a first draft.’ And that did cause some problems. At the same time, it was an opportunity to let the Prime Minister know that the MOU is not working and we need it to evolve,” she said.

“This resolution is very much about empowering you as chiefs...and you need to take back the AFN and every resolution that I’m presenting to you is about you taking back your power and authority to drive these processes of the AFN,” added Archibald.

Dwight Southerland spoke as proxy for Taykwa Tagamou First Nation Chief Bruce Archibald, who moved the resolution.

Southerland said a new accord had to reflect both the current priorities and the current political circumstances.

“It requires an update that includes a formal process for including each of our region’s input in order to advance our own national priorities to the Prime Minister and his Cabinet and most importantly hold them accountable outside our current one-size-fits-all approach,” said Southerland.

The resolution proposes to have regional chiefs take the accord back to their respective regions to get input from chiefs.

However, Alberta does not have a regional chief, pointed out Regena Crowchild, proxy for the Tsuut’ina Nation. Marlene Poitras, who held that position, saw her mandate end June 30, 2021. A new election was not called upon the completion of her term, and she was removed from office by Alberta chiefs.

The Assembly of Treaty Chiefs—which represents 49 First Nations in Al-

'Renew Canada-AFN MOU' conclusion from page 16

berta—is revisiting its relationship with the AFN.

Treaty 8, which has 25 Alberta First Nations, announced earlier this year that it was officially withdrawing from the AFN.

As the AFN was discussing doing away with the bilateral mechanism, Treaty 8 Grand Chief Arthur Noskey stood outside the meeting, and characterized the AFN as an “administrative organization that has gone rogue and is aiding Canada in the devolution of our treaties. The organization are not right holders and they cannot speak about our treaties...Canada continues to dishonour the Crown and treaty.”

Noskey said the numbered treaties 1 to 11 were international treaties and not signed with Canada.

“We continue to serve notice to Canada that they must deal directly with the sovereign nations and peoples of those international treaties on all legislation and policy that impacts their inherent and treaty rights,” he said.



Treaty #8 Grand Chief Noskey and Chief Lynn Acoose.

“As the AFN was discussing doing away with the bilateral mechanism, Treaty 8 Grand Chief Arthur Noskey stood outside the meeting, and characterized the AFN as an “administrative organization that has gone rogue and is aiding Canada in the devolution of our treaties. The organization are not right holders and they cannot speak about our treaties...Canada continues to dishonour the Crown and treaty.””



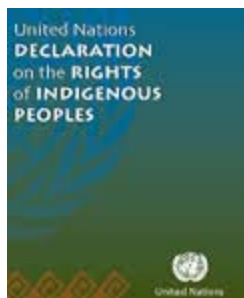
EXECUTIVE BRANCH—GOVERNMENT OF CANADA





David Lametti, Minister of Justice & Attorney-General of Canada, at AFN-AGA in Vancouver.

“Tight deadlines and lack of sufficient funding to develop a national action plan to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should lead to an extension of the two-year timeframe set out in legislation, says Terry Teegee, regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations British Columbia”



AFN Executive will Lobby Feds on UNDRIP Resolutions Left Unaddressed at AGA



Premier John Horgan speaks to reporters in front of Esquimalt Nation Chief Rob Thomas, left, Terry Teegee, of the Assembly of First Nations, and Cassidy Caron, of the Métis National Council, at the Songhees Wellness Centre on Monday, July 11, 2022, as it hosted a meeting of Canada’s premiers and the National Indigenous Organizations. ADRIAN LAM, TIMES COLONIST

Wednesday, July 13th, 2022

By Shari Narine, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, Windspeaker.com

“...40-plus resolutions will be brought forward to the executive for approval and we’ll move from there.” — Terry Teegee, regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations British Columbia

Tight deadlines and lack of sufficient funding to develop a national action plan to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should lead to an extension

of the two-year timeframe set out in legislation, says Terry Teegee, regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations British Columbia.

“In the end with an action plan, there’s a lot of give and take between the two parties. If it requires more time, I don’t see why they wouldn’t want to give it more time. Unless they agree to everything we say, which is highly unlikely,” said Teegee, who holds the UNDRIP portfolio for the AFN.

However, when Justice Minister and Attorney General David Lametti gave his presentation to chiefs-in-assembly on the final day of the AFN’s annual general assembly July 7, it wasn’t to offer an extension.

“As you know, there was a legislative requirement put in the act to give it a two-year time frame to complete the action plan by 2023. So there’s a lot of work ahead of us over the next year,” said Lametti.

Teegee spoke to Windspeaker.com on July 12 to address the situation that faced chiefs last week when three resolutions concerning UNDRIP and the national action plan didn’t make it to the assembly floor because of lack of time.

In fact, Teegee himself didn’t make it to a special session to speak with chiefs about moving forward on UNDRIP scheduled for the day before the formal start of the AGA. Instead, Teegee, like all other regional chiefs, were meeting to discuss the future of National Chief RoseAnne Archibald, who had been purportedly suspended by the AFN executive committee

‘AFN UNDRIP Lobby’ continued from page 18

on June 17 for allegedly breaching confidentiality in respect to a workplace bullying investigation against her.

Teegee says that missing that meeting with chiefs and not having the resolutions voted on by chiefs doesn’t mean chiefs’ concerns are not being addressed.

With only five of 48 resolutions dealt with during the three-day AGA, Teegee says the three UNDRIP and national action plan resolutions will be part of the “40-plus resolutions (that) will be brought forward to the executive for approval and we’ll move from there.”

Draft resolution 25 Call for Full First Nations Participation in Implementation of the UN Declaration directs the AFN to “immediately and on an ongoing basis advocate for a meaningful and fully resourced co-development process with the rights holders ...”

Funding has been an issue, says Teegee.

The federal government’s first annual report on the progress of the implementation of UNDRIP, released this past June, indicates that 147 proposals of 208 applications were approved for funding.

This funding, Lametti told chiefs, is to “support you in developing your priorities for inclusion in the action plan.”

Budget 2021 allocated \$26.3 million to support “Indigenous-led” consultations.

However, the AFN released figures indicating the federal government had received applications asking for more than \$98 million.

Teegee says the AFN wants to see the federal government ante-up immediately with the UNDRIP funds promised in the 2022 budget. Those funds total \$89 million over five years and are split into three categories: general UNDRIP implementation, the Justice department, and the National Defense department.

“If we want an action plan sooner than later that’s what we require, is more resources,” said Teegee.

Draft resolution 26 First Nations Priorities to Guide the Crown’s Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples called for the AFN “to establish an ad-hoc National Expert Panel on the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples Act National Action Plan to support research and analysis for First Nations interested in contributing to the National Action Plan creation and implementation over the next two years.”

Draft resolution 27 deals with First Nations Self-Determination over Citizenship to “affirm and assert First Nations’ inherent right to exercise jurisdiction over citizenship.”



“Teegee says the AFN wants to see the federal government ante-up immediately with the UNDRIP funds promised in the 2022 budget. Those funds total \$89 million over five years and are split into three categories: general UNDRIP implementation, the Justice department, and the National Defense department”



“Teegee also noted that he raised UNDRIP at the Council of Federation meeting with premiers on July 11 in Victoria.

Also in attendance were leaders for the Métis National Council, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, and the Native Women's Association of Canada”



AFN-BC Regional Chief Terry Teegee honouring BC Premier John Horgan for adoption of Bill 41, DRIPA, in 2019.

‘AFN UNDRIP Lobby’ conclusion from page 19

Teegee says the AFN will lobby Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other ministers to assure more resources are brought forward.

Teegee also points to the situation in British Columbia, the only province to have UNDRIP legislation.

“We wanted an action plan here in BC the first year, but it didn’t occur until the second year. I think we all have the aspiration to have a national action plan in the tight timeline but always know that things do happen, time-lines can be extended,” he said.

Teegee also noted that he raised UNDRIP at the Council of Federation meeting with premiers on July 11 in Victoria. Also in attendance were leaders for the Métis National Council, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, and the Native Women’s Association of Canada.

“I met with them and I implored other regions and provinces to start working on adopting in their region UNDRIP like we did in British Columbia. Moreover, it’s going to contribute to the national action plan. We’ll have a number of various perspectives on the national action plan,” he said.



Premiers (back row L-R), Sandy Silver (Yukon), P.J. Akeeagok, (Nunavut), Scott Moe (SK), Doug Ford (Ont),Francois Legault (Que), Dennis King (PEI), Tim Houston (NS), Blaine Higgs (NB), Andrew Furey (NL and Labrador) and (front row L-R), President of Institute for the advancement of Aboriginal Women Lisa Weber, National Chief of Congress of Aboriginal Peoples Elmer St. Pierre, Heather Stefanson (MB), Songhees Nation Chief Ron Sam, John Horgan (BC), Esquimalt Nation Chief Rob Thomas, Caroline Cochrane (NWT), Cassidy Caron (Metis National Council) and Terry Teegee (Assembly of First Nations) gather for a family photo during the summer meeting of the Canada's Premiers at the Songhees Wellness Centre in Victoria, B.C., on Monday, July 11, 2022

THE CANADIAN PRESS/Chad Hipolito

Pope Francis Says Genocide Took Place in Canada's Residential Schools



Pope Francis speaks during a news conference aboard the papal plane on his flight back after visiting Canada on July 29. (PHOTO COURTESY OF GUGLIELMO MANGIAPANE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES)

his overnight flight back to Rome from Iqaluit, Francis was asked by a Canadian reporter whether the horrors perpetuated at the schools could be considered "genocide."

Francis had not used the term at any time during his Canadian visit, which included stops in and near Edmonton, Quebec City and Iqaluit. But early in the trip, he did speak of "cultural destruction," disappointing many residential school survivors and their descendants.

"It's true that I did not use the word because I didn't think of it," he said. "Yes, genocide is a technical word, but I did not use it because I did not think of it. But ... yes, it was a genocide, yes, yes, clearly. You can say that I said it was a genocide."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission called the schools the sites of "cultural genocide" after it interviewed some 7,000 survivors and witnesses of the abuses that ran rampant in the institutions. The commission heard horror stories of Indigenous children ripped out of their homes, deprived of their language, religion and culture. They were often beaten and sexually molested; some died.

The term "genocide" – minus the "cultural" modifier – gained currency in 2021, when the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation announced it had found about 200 possible unmarked graves at the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C. Since then, several other Indigenous communities have used ground-penetrating radar to conduct searches and have found probable graves near other former residential schools, which operated from the late 1800s to the 1970s. The last residential school in the country did not close until 1996.

The discovery of suspected graves of children triggered international at-

ERIC REGULY, EUROPEAN BUREAU CHIEF, GLOBE & MAIL, ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT

PUBLISHED JULY 30, 2022, UPDATED JULY 31, 2022

Pope Francis started his six-day tour of Canada with a deep apology for the role of many Catholics in turning the country's residential schools into crime scenes. He ended the tour by saying those crimes amounted to genocide.

During a press conference Friday night, held at the start of



Willie Littlechild gifted Pope Francis a head-dress at Maskwacis encounter.

"It's true that I did not use the word because I didn't think of it," he said.

"Yes, genocide is a technical word, but I did not use it because I did not think of it. But ... yes, it was a genocide, yes, yes, clearly. You can say that I said it was a genocide"



Protesting Doctrine of Discovery while Pope held Mass at St. Anne du Beupre in Quebec,

‘Pope says Genocide took place’ conclusion from page 21

tention, putting the Catholic Church in Canada (which operated 60 per cent of the schools with the backing of the federal government) and the Vatican itself under a dark cloud. Before then, Francis had declined to apologize for the horrors perpetuated at the schools.

That changed in April, when he apologized to First Nations, Métis and Inuit representatives in Rome, and vowed to visit Canada to expand the apology.

Last Monday, at Maskwacis, Alta., once the site of a residential school, he told Indigenous groups that “the overall effects of the policies linked to the residential schools were catastrophic.”

He asked for forgiveness for the “cultural destruction and forced assimilation promoted by the governments at the time, which culminated in the system of residential schools.”

On the flight, Francis was also asked about the Doctrine of Discovery – the legal concept that allowed the colonial-era seizure of Indigenous lands – and when the Vatican would officially rescind it.

The doctrine has its roots in 15th century papal decrees, known as bulls, that gave European kingdoms the backing to take new territories so they could be turned into Christian lands. The decrees underpinned the doctrine, which was used in an 1823 U.S. Supreme Court decision that said sovereignty could be passed to Europeans because they had “discovered” those lands.

Francis did not directly answer the question and launched into a discussion about the harms and traumas of colonization.

But church officials, including Neil MacCarthy, head of communications for the papal visit, which was organized by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, have said that the doctrine has no legal or moral authority in the church.

Still, the Vatican has confirmed that it is working on a statement – release date to be determined – to repudiate formally the concepts associated with the doctrine.

Francis was also asked about his health. The 85-year-old pontiff was visibly struggling – and in some pain – during much of his Canadian trip, largely because of a bad knee. Once he left his car, he was taken to his speaking stops at churches, stadiums and pilgrimage sites in a wheelchair. Sometimes he took a few hesitant steps with the help of a cane.

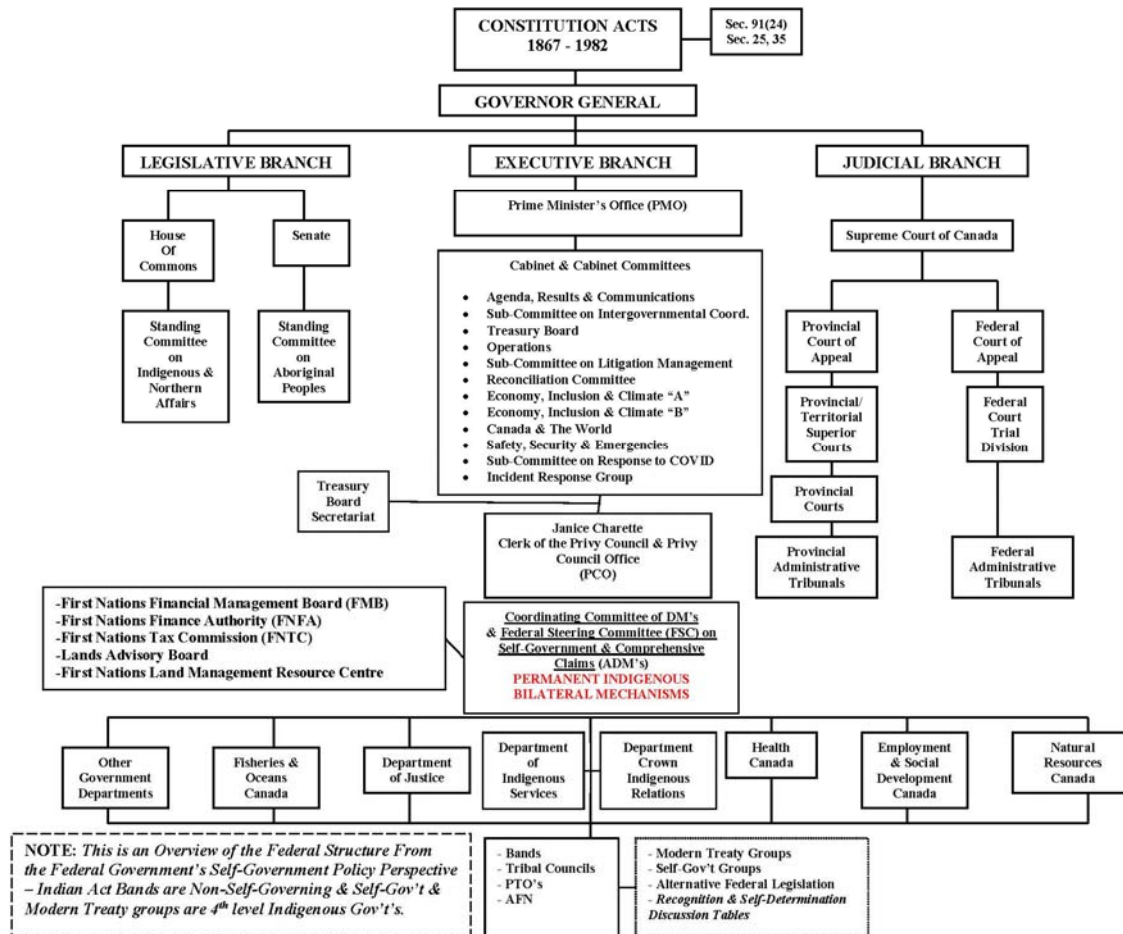
The Pope admitted that he was slowing down but said he was still capable making trips. He hopes to visit Ukraine soon, though that journey has yet to be organized and comes with enormous logistical challenges, which might include arranging the use of armored railcars.

“I don’t think I can continue doing trips with the same rhythm as before,” he said. “I think that at my age, and with this limitation, I have to save myself a bit in order to be able to serve the church or decide to step aside.”

He does not want to have surgery on his knee for fear of the anesthesia. “But I will continue to try to travel,” he said.

[Article reprinted courtesy of Globe & Mail]

Overview Federal Chart—2022



AFN Bilateral Mechanism—2017

Advancing the Right of First Nations to Information

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The First Nations Strategic Policy Counsel is a collection of individuals who are practitioners in either First Nations policy or law. We are not a formal organization, just a network of concerned individuals.

This publication is a volunteer non-profit effort and is part of a series. Please don't take it for granted that everyone has the information in this newsletter, see that it is as widely distributed as you can, and encourage those that receive it to also distribute it.

Feedback is welcome. Let us know what you think of the Bulletin—Russell Diabo, Publisher and Editor, First Nations Strategic Bulletin.

For Back Issues Go To: http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/first_nations_strategic_bulletin/index.html

Klabona Keepers Film—<http://beyondboardingcollective.com/contact>

Synopsis

The Klabona Keepers is an intimate portrait of the dynamic Indigenous community that succeeded in protecting the remote Sacred Headwaters, known as the Klabona, in northwest British Columbia from industrial activities. Spanning 15 years of matriarch-led resistance, the film follows a small group of determined elders in the village of Iskut as they heal from the wounds of colonization to push back against law enforcement, the government, and some of the world's largest multinational companies. Nestled between scenes of stand-offs and blockades, land defenders reflect on how their history of forced displacement, residential schools, and trauma strengthened their resolve to protect the very land that was so essential to their healing journey.

