



COMMUNIQUE

To: Hiawatha Citizens

From: Hiawatha Council

Date: August 29, 2023

Re: Rally in Ottawa Opposing *Bill C-53: “An Act respecting certain Metis Governments in Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan, to give effect to Treaties with those Governments and to make consequential amendments to other Acts”*

Purpose of Communique:

The Chiefs of Ontario is formally inviting all First Nations Leadership, technicians and grassroots people to attend a demonstration on **Wednesday, September 20, 2023**, in Ottawa, ON, to oppose the passing of Bill C-53. First Nations in Ontario and in other regions across the country, are encouraged to stand in solidarity against Bill C-53 which affirms that all Métis Communities represented by the Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) have the right to self-determination, including the right to self-government under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The legislation will also recognize MNO as a Métis Government and an Indigenous Governing Body.

Background Information:

The Métis Nation of Ontario (“MNO”) and the Government of Canada entered into the MNO-Canada Métis Government Recognition and Self Government Agreement (“Self-Government Agreement”) in 2019. Canada unilaterally and unlawfully recognizes through the Agreement that the Métis communities represented by the MNO hold the inherent rights to self-government and self-determination. The Self-Government Agreement also unilaterally and unlawfully provides a clear path for the MNO to transform into a recognized public Indigenous government that will have recognized law-making powers in the area of citizenship, leadership action and internal operations.

The Government of Canada has breached its fiduciary responsibility, owed to First Nations by the Crown, to act on behalf and in the best interest of Hiawatha First Nation as well as to ensure our rights are protected. HFN did not give permission to the Government of Canada to act on our behalf before the development and signing of the Self-Government Agreement. We support the legitimate claims of Indigenous peoples, including inherent rights that are protected by Treaty but note that recognition of unfounded claims undermine legitimate inherent rights-holders. Hiawatha First Nation vehemently repudiates the existence of a reasonable, factual and legal basis to conclude that all of the communities represented by MNO existed historically or could be entitled to hold section 35 rights or any other awards unlawfully issued by Canada.

Current Information:

Earlier this year, the Government of Canada and the MNO entered into a carefully crafted agreement. The agreement recognizes large areas of territories as the “Historic Metis Nation Homeland”. This “Homeland” ranges from parts of Ontario to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and northern United States. The legislation will affirm the **all** Metis Communities represented by the MNO have the right to self-determination, including the right of self-government under s. 35.

The Government introduced **Bill C-53: “An Act respecting certain Metis Governments in Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan, to give effect to Treaties with those Governments and to make consequential amendments to other Acts”** on June 21, 2023.

The legislation recognizes MNO as a Métis Government and an Indigenous Governing Body. Hiawatha First Nation is not against Métis people and rejects all claims of lateral violence. We respect legitimate rights-holders and have been very clear with government that our central issue is **not** that we reject all Métis or Métis rights. The issue is that the communities represented by MNO did not exist historically and can't be s. 35 rights holders. Granting rights to illegitimate groups in our territories undermines our inherent and Treaty rights.

The Government of Canada needs to take the time to examine all the evidence that has been presented to them by First Nations in Ontario. Creating Métis lands where there have been none historically is not reconciliation. It is modern colonization through comfort politics.

We need your support on September 20 – Please join us in Ottawa for this important event!

If you would like to attend, please call Donna at 705-295-4421 by **Tuesday, September 5, 2023**. Depending on interest/availability for Citizens to attend, we will arrange to either rent a bus or use the Hiawatha Vans to take us to Ottawa for the day of the Rally.

Miigwetch,
HFN Council