

Indigeneity & Canadian Democracy

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Virtual North American Student Congress

August 15, 2026

Precautionary Principle

- Democracy is multi-dimensional
 - Nuance is necessary: not optional
- Karl Popper's Open Society and Its Enemies
 - Utopian vs piecemeal social engineering
- Political science IS a science
 - It is much harder than we tend to give it credit for



Source: BioNinja

Historically

- Who are the Inuit?
 - Anything but an easy question!
- Supreme Court: *Reference Re Eskimos*, 1939
 - Eskimo/Eskimo-Indians
- Challenge of federalism (division of powers)
 - Who has a fiduciary duty to Indigenous Peoples?

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Recognition of existing aboriginal and treaty rights

Constitution Act, 1982, Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982, 1982, c. 11 (U.K.)

(1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

Definition of "aboriginal peoples of Canada"

(2) In this Act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

Land claims agreements

(3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

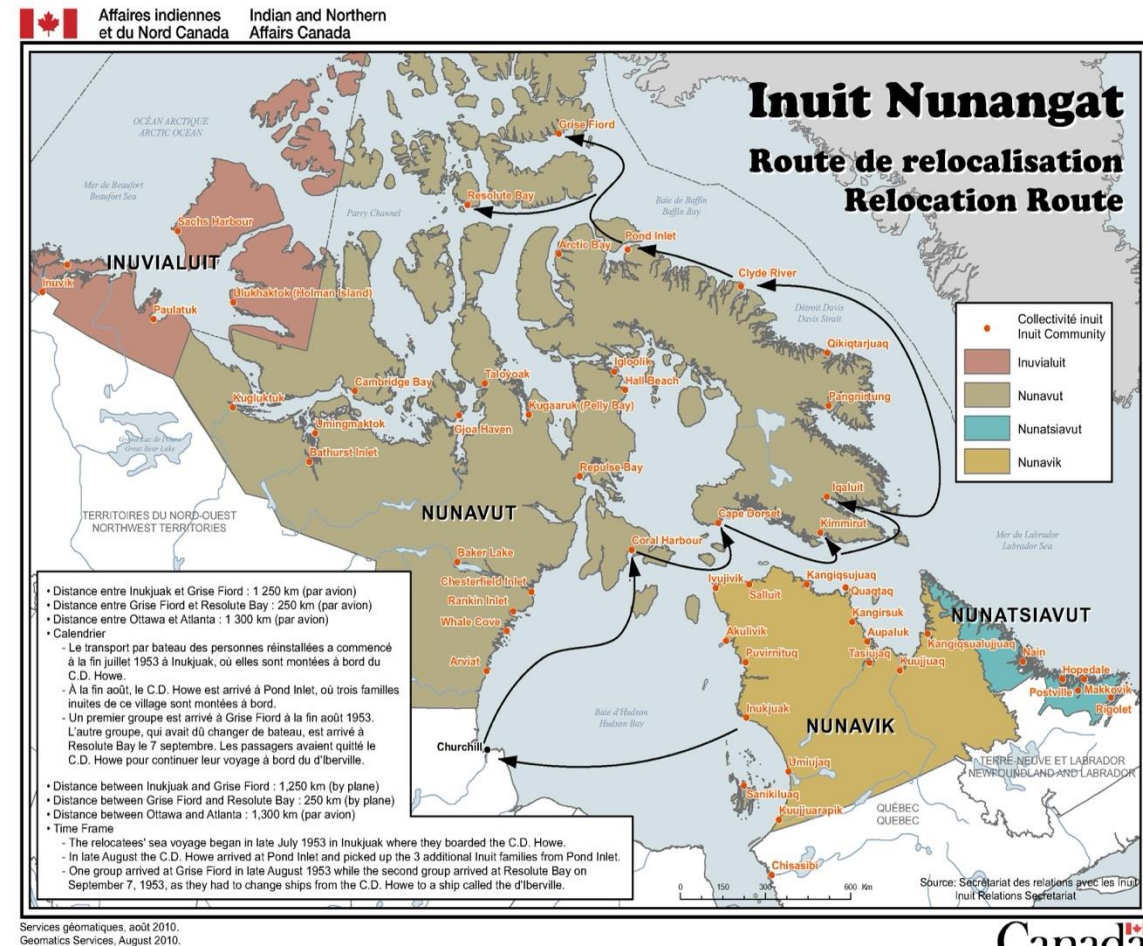
Aboriginal and treaty rights are guaranteed equally to both sexes

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

Source: Canadian Constitution Act of 1982, Statutes.ca

Historically cont'd

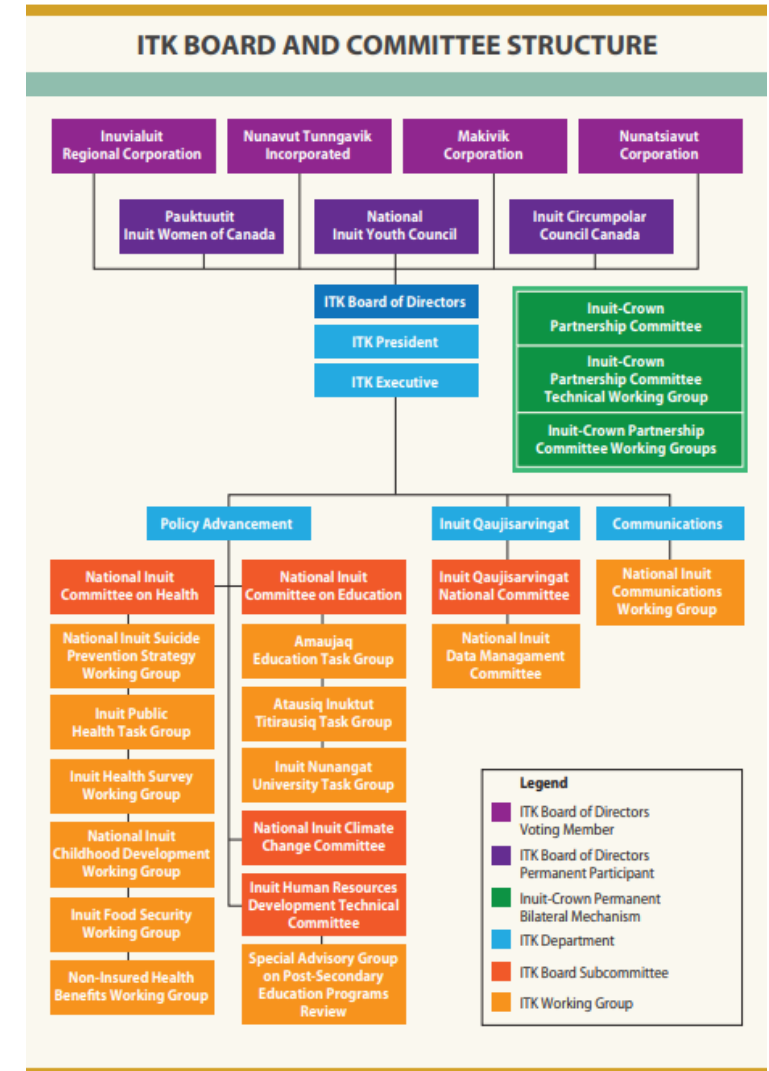
- High Arctic Relocations
 - Resolute and Grise Fiord
 - Promises of game and government support
 - Official apology in August 2010
- All things considered: Inuit are not passive victims of injustices
- 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement led to the creation of Nunavut in 1999



Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)

Presently

- National Inuit Organization: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
 - Sophisticated governance structure
- Lobbying and Advocacy
 - Policy advancement
 - Data sovereignty
 - Communications
- Represents Inuit Nunangat (Inuit Homeland of Canada)
 - Inuvialuit (Northwest Territories), Nunavut (the Territory), Nunavik (northern Quebec) and Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador)



Source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)

Article | [Open access](#) | Published: 11 August 2022

The Arctic has warmed nearly four times faster than the globe since 1979

[Mika Rantanen](#) , [Alexey Yu. Karpechko](#), [Antti Lipponen](#), [Kalle Nordling](#), [Otto Hyvärinen](#), [Kimmo Ruosteenoja](#), [Timo Vihma](#) & [Ari Laaksonen](#)

[Communications Earth & Environment](#) **3**, Article number: 168 (2022) | [Cite this article](#)

Presently cont'd

- Climate change as a catalyst for real change
 - Geopolitics and economy
 - Opportunity for increased democratic representation
- Social determinants of Inuit health



Future

- Canadian democracy: members of parliament and legislative assembly
 - Current Nunavut MP: 1 (one)
 - Current Nunavut MLA's: 12 (twelve)
- What about the other three Inuit treaty organizations that make up ITK?
- Two-tiered political system
 - Peguis First Nation, MB: asserts authority over child welfare
 - MMF, MB: asserts self-governance following historic agreement with Federal government



Source: Legislative Assembly of Nunavut Crest from Wikipedia

Future cont'd

- “Inuit are First Canadians, and Canadians First”
 - The late and great, Inuk leader, Jose Kusugak
- Atausiq: “one” & “becoming-one”: democracy
- A National Indigenous Party of Canada?
 - Improved, equitable representation of Indigenous Peoples
 - Improved, equitable representation for Canadians-at-large: social programming and environmental causes



Source: Pee Ashevak - Peter Pitseolak
Ajjiluriji (Peter Pitseolak Taking Pictures)
from Nanooq Inuit Art