

PRESS RELEASE

ASSEMBLY OF
NOVA SCOTIA
MI'KMAQ CHIEFS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mi'kmaq & Métis Nation Leaders Come Together to Discuss Nationhood

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs (Assembly) and the Métis National Council (MNC) have recently come together to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) respecting each other's Nationhood, agreeing to work collaboratively on the issue of individuals claiming Métis ancestry in Nova Scotia, and establishing cultural awareness initiatives to educate the public.

There is a growing trend across Canada of people self-identifying as Métis and research shows that the highest increase has been in Nova Scotia. Both the Assembly and the MNC have concerns about these individuals claiming Métis ancestry, declaring the presence of a Métis Nation in Nova Scotia, and using these claims to try to access Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

"The only rights holders in Nova Scotia are the Mi'kmaq," said Chief Terrance Paul, Co-Chair for the Assembly. "We are the original peoples of these lands, and we have spent decades establishing our Treaty and Aboriginal Rights and then working on the implementation of these rights."

In this time of reconciliation, the Assembly and the MNC feel that it is important for the public and governments to be educated on Rights and Nationhood.

The MNC and its Governing Members across western Canada have a clear process of identifying and registering citizens of the Métis Nation who are s.35 rights holders under the Constitution Act, 1982.

"The right to determine our own identity and citizenship is at the heart of our self-determination and self-government in our historical homeland," said MNC President Clément Chartier. "It took decades of struggle for this right to be recognized by the federal government and Supreme Court of Canada and we defend it vigilantly."

The MNC and the Assembly see this MOU as a positive step forward in Nation building and to best represent their respective Nation.

"While the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia continue to share our lands with others, both the Mi'kmaq and the Métis Nation have territorial homelands and their Rights are recognized within the confines of their respective territories," said Chief Paul.

About the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs:

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs is comprised of all 13 Mi'kmaq Chiefs in Nova Scotia and is the highest level of collective governance for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

About the Métis National Council:

The Métis National Council is the national government of the Métis Nation which is mandated to represent Canada's 350,000 Métis people at the national and international levels.

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Chief Sidney Peters (left) and Président Clement Chartier sign MOU in Halifax, Nova Scotia