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CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

For immediate release

Liberals oust urban Indigenous voices from Reconciliation Council

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In a dramatic move away from reconciliation, the Liberal government has made the unprecedented decision to exclude the voices of urban Indigenous Peoples from a vital National Council for Reconciliation. Bill C-29 will create a council meant to measure the success of reconciliation efforts across the country.

“With the vast majority of Indigenous Peoples living in urban and rural areas this extraordinary move by the Liberals is a slap in the face to thousands of Survivors who live off-reserve,” says CAP National Chief Elmer St. Pierre. “For seven years now, the Liberals have trumpeted the importance of reconciliation, but this exclusion reveals their true colours.”

The oversight body is a “Call to Action” from the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions’ 2015 report. The National Council for Reconciliation is a product of Bill C-29 which the Liberals introduced last year. Under the proposed legislation, the Council would be considered a not-for-profit corporation comprised of nine to 13 directors, which will have guaranteed membership for 4 of the 5 National Indigenous Organizations.

“The Liberals even used misinformation in their arguments stating the constitution recognizes three National Indigenous Organizations – that’s completely false,” says National Vice-Chief Kim Beaudin. “That lack of understanding, or worse - manipulation of the facts, shows the Liberals are simply playing reconciliation politics. This coordinated effort to exclude urban Indigenous voices will severely hamper reconciliation efforts and outcomes for our communities. Reconciliation begins with inclusion, not exclusion”

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 80% of Indigenous people live off-reserve.