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## Assembly of First Nations

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## Assemblée des Premières Nations

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**ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**July 23, 24 & 25, 2019, FREDERICTON, NB**

**Resolution no. 26/2019**

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**TITLE:** Elders' Statement on Rights to Protect Nationhood

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**SUBJECT:** Inherent Rights, Jurisdiction and Treaties

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**MOVED BY:** Ron Lameman, Proxy, Beaver Lake Cree Nation, AB

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**SECONDED BY:** Chief Vernon Watchmaker, Kehewin Cree Nation, AB

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**DECISION:** Carried; 1 abstention

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### WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations inherent right to self-determination pre-exists contact with settler governments', including Canada and the provinces. First Nations sovereign jurisdiction has existed since time immemorial as we are the original peoples to our lands and territories.
- B. *The Royal Proclamation of 1763* establishes the Treaty process between Indian Nations or Tribes and the Crown which represents a Nation-to-Nation covenant or agreement, entered into according to our laws as Indian Nations and those of the Crown.
- C. The Crown wanted to access our territories for his subjects and as the original people, we agreed to only share our territory, the Crown undertook certain obligations and responsibilities.
- D. Treaty and inherent rights must be upheld through the Honour of the Crown for "as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the waters flow".
- E. Elders from Treaty and sovereign Nations met in Edmonton, Alberta (April 29, 2019), Onion Lake Cree Nation (June 14, 2019) and Kehewin Cree Nation (June 26 and 27, 2019) to discuss the current government agenda that impacts First Nations inherent and Treaty rights, title and jurisdiction.

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**Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of July 2019 in Fredericton, New Brunswick**

  
**PERRY BELLEGARDE, NATIONAL CHIEF**

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**ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
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- F. The Elders directed the drafting of a document entitled 'Statement of Rights' which has been translated into the Cree language in response to the current government agenda that attacks and undermines our inherent and Treaty rights, title and jurisdiction. The Elders direct leadership to take immediate action to protect our Nations Treaty rights and Inherent Rights sovereign jurisdiction to ensure decisions are made for our people, children and future generations.
- G. Treaty and Sovereign Title holders of our Nations gathered to maintain the sacred fire of our ancestors for all future generations where they stated that:
- i. Our Treaty laws are based on Creator's laws.
  - ii. In affirming the spirit and intent of our Treaties, since the beginning will last 'as long as the sun shines, waters flow, grass grows and as long as there are original peoples', as understood and consented to by both parties to co-exist as families.
  - iii. In affirming our Treaties, we firmly reject the federal government's colonial agenda that violates our international Treaty relationship.
  - iv. We, the original peoples of Turtle Island uphold our truth, our languages and sacred responsibilities (protection, prevention, intervention, direction, and connection) to our peoples and our lands.
  - v. We continue to carry the responsibility to protect and live our sovereignty, jurisdiction, laws and legal orders of our governance lodges so that they are transferred into the hands of the next generations for the circle of life to continue.
  - vi. We hold in reverence all that Mother Earth gives to us, including our responsibility to maintain balanced and harmonious relationships with all forms of life, now and continually.
  - vii. We direct all our leaders to make decisions protecting our Nations, people, children and future generations now and continually.
  - viii. We agree and commit ourselves to respectfully work together sustaining our jurisdiction through:
    - i. Speaking the truth about our inherent connection to our land and our Treaties.
    - ii. Carrying on our ceremonies, our laws and speaking our languages.
    - iii. Living in good relationship with our families, clans, Nations, our Treaties with the Crown and all of creation.

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- iv. Upholding our international Treaty relations that were confirmed for.
- v. Upholding the inherent and Treaty responsibilities for our future generations.

H. Confirming our right of self-determination.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:**

1. Support the Elders 'Statement of Rights' that rejects the current government's termination agenda that is federally drafted and controlled through legislation and policy changes and associated processes.
2. Support First Nations to develop their own self-determination plans to protect our Treaty and inherent rights and sovereign jurisdiction.
3. Acknowledge that the signatories to the Elders' Statement of Rights.

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