



BC Métis Federation Files Case Against Crown, Claims Infringement Upon Members' Freedom of Association

MEDIA RELEASE

Vancouver, British Columbia, September 22, 2023 — The BC Métis Federation (BCMF), alongside four of its members, has filed a Notice of Civil Claim in the Supreme Court of British Columbia against the Government of Canada, in response to the Government's discriminatory and adverse determinations taken against the BCMF and its members.

Currently, the federal government of Canada does not officially recognize BCMF as a legitimate Métis government, and by extension, does not recognize Métis identity based on BCMF membership. By not recognizing BCMF's governing and jurisdictional legitimacy in representing more than 6,000 Métis people in BC, the Crown is effectively continuing its oppressive practices and discriminating against Métis people simply based on their association.

"Self-determining Pacific Northwest Métis communities have existed in modern-day British Columbia before any declaration of sovereignty by the Crown," says Keith Henry, BCMF President. "Despite the Crown's effort to erase Métis identity throughout history, traditional Métis communities have endured and continue to exist into the present day. By denying their Métis identity based on association with BCMF, the Crown is continuing to cause demonstrable harm."

The recognition of Métis people as self-determining is protected by Section 35, subsection 2, of the Constitution Act. It specifically identifies Métis as an "aboriginal people of Canada" with existing aboriginal rights.

BCMF and the other four plaintiffs in this case are requesting that the Supreme Court of BC direct the federal government to officially declare that BCMF is an organization that legitimately represents Métis people in BC and that the Crown infringed upon the BCMF and its members' right to freedom of association as guaranteed under section 2(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"While there has been marginal progress with some specific federal government programs, the fact remains that BCMF members face systemic discrimination and limited access to Métis child and family services, Métis health services, Métis employment and training

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programs, and other opportunities.” says Keith Henry. “This action will address specific and ongoing discriminatory incidents and must put the matter to rest once and for all that BCMF members are Section 35 Métis people. We as Métis people have every right to choose who represents our interests.”

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ABOUT BCMF

The BC Métis Federation (BCMF) is a non-profit association that works with Métis communities to ensure the well being of BCMF members. Through grassroots efforts, BCMF advocates on behalf of its many members, living all across the province.

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