

Timeline: Aboriginal Justice and Self-Determination

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| <i>October 1763</i> | A Royal Proclamation issued by King George III recognizes that the consent of First Nations is required in any negotiations for their lands. |
| <i>1750s to 1923</i> | A number of treaties are signed between the Crown and First Nations, many of which involved the claiming of land by the Crown in exchange for payment or other benefits. The obligations of these treaties were not always honoured by the Crown and many resulting issues remain in dispute in modern Canada. |
| <i>1913</i> | The first Nisga'a petition to the government related to their land claim in British Columbia. |
| <i>September 1924</i> | The Canadian government refuses to allow the Six Nations Confederacy to remain as the traditional government of the Iroquois people on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. |
| <i>March 1959</i> | The government sends the RCMP to evict traditional Iroquois chiefs and clan mothers from their meeting place on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. |
| <i>December 1969</i> | The Canadian government sets up an Indian Claims Commission to deal with land claims. |
| <i>1969</i> | The federal government's White Paper calls for the assimilation of First Nations peoples into Canadian society. |
| <i>1970</i> | The Red Paper by Harold Cardinal is drafted in response to the 1969 White Paper. |
| <i>May 1972</i> | The Québec Indian Association files legal action aimed at stopping the James Bay hydro-electric power project on northern land acquired from First Nations. |
| <i>January 1973</i> | A ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada states that the Nisga'a First Nation in British Columbia retains no Aboriginal rights over the Nass River Valley. |
| <i>February 1973</i> | Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, agrees to First Nations' local control of their own education. |
| <i>February 1973</i> | Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau meets with Yukon Chiefs and agrees to negotiate Aboriginal land claims. |
| <i>March 1973</i> | First Nations in Alberta receive a settlement of \$190,000 in fulfillment of a financial agreement made, but never honoured, under the terms of an 1877 treaty. |
| <i>July 1973</i> | Queen Elizabeth II is given a sacred pipe and a scroll by chiefs from Saskatchewan to remind her of treaties and promises Britain made to Aboriginal people. |
| <i>November 1973</i> | A Québec court rules that work on the James Bay Hydro Project must stop after hearing protests by Cree leaders. |
| <i>September 1974</i> | The United States rules that Aboriginal people born in Canada have a right to travel freely between Canada and the United States without registering at the U.S. border or using visas. |
| <i>March 1975</i> | The Northwest Territories elects an Aboriginal majority in its Legislative Assembly for the first time. |

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| <i>July 1979</i> | Chiefs travel to Britain to oppose the repatriation of the Constitution and to call for Canada to honour commitments made to Aboriginal people. |
| <i>March 1980</i> | Mohawk people from the Bay of Quinte in Ontario apply to the Canadian government to keep their traditional government. |
| <i>March 1981</i> | Aboriginal people in Ontario gain the right to establish their own community police forces. |
| <i>April 1982</i> | Canada repatriates its constitution from Britain. The Canadian Constitution recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights. |
| <i>1982</i> | The Constitution recognizes Métis as Aboriginal people. |
| <i>September 1984</i> | The Pope says that Canada's Aboriginal people have a right to self-government, their own resources, and their own economy. |
| <i>1984</i> | Yukon First Nations and the federal government reach an agreement on land claims. |
| <i>June 28, 1985</i> | Sections of the Indian Act are declared to be in violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Bill C-31 amends the Act to allow Indians who had been "enfranchised" or lost their status as band members (e.g., women who married non-Indians, Indians who served in the Armed Forces) to regain their status as Indians. The bill is controversial because it retains the federal government's right to decide who is and who is not a band member. |
| <i>February 1987</i> | The Whitebear Nation in Saskatchewan receives \$19 million in a land claim settlement for land that was sold in 1890. |
| <i>July 1990</i> | Québec provincial police try to dismantle a roadblock set up by a group of Mohawks from the community of Kanasahtake near Montreal. The Mohawks had set up the roadblock to prevent the nearby town of Oka from expanding a golf course onto land the Mohawks considered their own. This resulted in a 78-day armed stand-off involving Mohawks, the Québec provincial police, and later the Canadian Forces. |
| <i>1990</i> | Grand Chief of the Québec Cree, Matthew Coon Come, moves to protect the traditional Cree way of life by filing an injunction to stop the billion-dollar Great Whale hydro-electric project in the James Bay area. The Cree maintain that flooding over 5,000 square kilometres of their lands will result in irreversible damage to the environment. |
| <i>1990</i> | Yukon First Nations and the federal government sign a final agreement on land claims that will provide the First Nations with \$232 million in cash, mineral rights, and the surface title to 41,000 square kilometres of land. |
| <i>1990</i> | Canada's Supreme Court rules that the Métis Federation in Manitoba may proceed with its legal challenge to claim areas of the Red River Valley promised to them in the 1870s. |
| <i>1990</i> | The Nova Scotia Court of Appeal affirms that Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia have a constitutional right to hunt and fish for food provided they observe conservation laws. |

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| <i>1990</i> | Donald Marshall Jr., a Mi'kmaq from Nova Scotia, receives an apology from the Nova Scotia government after spending 11 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. He is exonerated of the 1971 murder charge by a Royal Commission. |
| <i>1990</i> | The Supreme Court of Canada rules on a landmark case that reaffirms First Nations' constitutional rights to fish for food for social and ceremonial purposes, restricted only by conservation regulations. The case originated when Ronald Sparrow, a member of the Musqueam First Nation in British Columbia, was charged while fishing in the Fraser River. |
| <i>1991</i> | Prime Minister Brian Mulroney calls for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) with the objective of settling all Aboriginal land claims by the year 2000. |
| <i>Fall 1991</i> | The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba issued a report on the state of Aboriginal justice in Manitoba, in response to concerns about the quality of policing and of investigations into matters concerning Aboriginal people. |
| <i>May 1993</i> | The Council of Yukon Indians and the Canadian government sign the Umbrella Final Agreement for land claims and other issues. |
| <i>August 1993</i> | The United Nations develops a <i>Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i> , recognizing the right to self-determination and independent government in matters related to internal and local affairs. The General Assembly of the United Nations also declares 1995 to 2004 as the <i>International Decade of the World's Indigenous People</i> . |
| <i>1994</i> | The 15,000 members of Sahtu Dene and Métis of the Mackenzie Valley and the federal government sign a final agreement on land claims and mineral rights. |
| <i>November 1995</i> | Elijah Harper, a Cree Member of Canada's Parliament from Manitoba, organizes the first Sacred Assembly for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal spiritual leaders. |
| <i>March 1996</i> | Canada, Newfoundland, Labrador, and the Innu Nation sign a major land claim agreement. Negotiations on this land claim started five years earlier. |
| <i>1996</i> | The Nisga'a of British Columbia are successful in striking an agreement in principle with the federal government over land claims. The proposed comprehensive claim includes title to an area of 1,930 square kilometres and \$190 million in compensation. |
| <i>November 1996</i> | After five years of hearings and research, the final report of the <i>Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)</i> is tabled in Canada's Parliament. The federal government recognizes that First Nations people must have a significant input into how the Indian Act will be changed. |
| <i>April 1996</i> | The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development agrees to give administrative responsibility for the Cultural Educational Centres to First Nations. |
| <i>August 1997</i> | The village of Oka and the Canadian government reach an agreement about land for the Mohawk cemetery at Oka. |

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| <i>January 7, 1998</i> | The Government of Canada announces an action plan to restructure its relationship with Aboriginal peoples (<i>Gathering Strength – Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan</i>), and affirms that both historic and modern-day treaties will continue to be key elements in the future relationship between Aboriginal people and the Crown. Since that time, the Government of Canada has begun negotiating agreements with treaty First Nations to put self-government in place. These agreements will build on the relationship already established by their treaties. |
| <i>August 4, 1998</i> | A ceremony is held celebrating the signing of the Nisga'a Final Treaty Agreement. Once ratified, this will be British Columbia's first treaty since 1899 and will end the Nisga'a's 112-year effort to regain some traditional lands. The Agreement will provide the Nisga'a with land and control of natural resources, as well as the right to establish their own central government. |
| <i>April 1, 1999</i> | The Government of Nunavut comes into being as a self-governing territory of the Inuit people. |
| <i>November 29, 1999</i> | The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission is established in Manitoba to develop an action plan to improve Aboriginal justice as recommended by the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. |
| <i>June 2002</i> | Bill C-7, the First Nations Governance Act, is proposed to replace the Indian Act. After much debate, the bill was abandoned. One of the reasons for this failure was insufficient partnership with First Nations in the design of the Act. Discussions are ongoing as to the best way to amend the Indian Act to suit the future needs of Aboriginal people in Canada. |
| <i>2003</i> | The Powley case sets a precedent by establishing Métis hunter Steve Powley's right to hunt out of season. |
| <i>April 19, 2004</i> | Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Round Table is held in Ottawa to discuss future directions in economic development, education, health, and well-being of First Nations peoples and communities in Canada. |
| <i>2006</i> | The Métis land claims case begins in Manitoba. |

Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Kids' Stop, Dates in History:
<www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/4000_e.html>

