

Bill C-53: Métis Self-Government Legislation Fact Sheet

ISSUE: Bill C-53 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UNDRIP”)

BACKGROUND:

- The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (“UNDRIP”) is an international human rights document.
- UNDRIP outlines the minimum standards for the survival and dignity of all Indigenous peoples around the world – including Métis – and provides that Indigenous peoples “have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that is based on their Indigenous origin or identity” (Article 2).
- UNDRIP recognizes, among other things, that Indigenous peoples have:
 - “the right to self-determination” (Article 3)
 - “the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs” (Article 4)
 - “the right to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions” (Article 18)
 - “the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions” (Article 33)
 - “the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures” (Article 34).
- UNDRIP also recognizes that nation-states like Canada have obligations to support Indigenous rights, including that “States, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, shall take the appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to achieve the ends of this Declaration” (Article 38).
- Bill C-53 is about Canada – through legislative measures – recognizing our Métis governments’ self-determination and self-government over our internal affairs. This is exactly what UNDRIP calls on Canada to do.
- With respect to UNDRIP, Bill C-53 states part of its purpose is to “contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (section 4(d)). The Métis Self-Government Agreements also state that part of their purpose is to “contribute to the implementation of the Declaration as it relates to the Métis . . . inherent right to self-determination, including the right of self-government” (section 3.01(a)).

- In 2021, Parliament passed the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (the “UNDRIP Act”) that included that Canada must “take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the Declaration.” The UNDRIP Act also required that Canada prepare an Action Plan “to achieve the objectives of the Declaration.”
- In June 2023, Canada tabled the Action Plan, which included the following commitment “ Consistent with the commitment to co-develop approaches for the implementation of the right to self-determination, Canada will introduce federal legislation to implement the co-developed Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreements with the Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation of Ontario and Métis Nation-Saskatchewan.” Bill C-53 fulfills this commitment.

RELATED QUESTIONS

Why do Canada and the Métis governments say that Bill C-53 contributes towards implementing UNDRIP in Canada?

With Bill C-53, Canada is taking steps to introduce legislation that recognizes and affirms the Métis right to self-determination and self-government, including recognizing the jurisdiction of Métis governments over their internal matters — like their citizenship, elections, and internal operations.

UNDRIP specifically recognizes that all Indigenous peoples – including Métis – have these rights over their internal affairs, as fundamental human rights, and calls on states like Canada to take steps to recognize these rights, including in their own laws.

By introducing Bill C-53, Canada is supporting the implementation of UNDRIP by taking legislative steps to recognize Métis self-government – within the constitutional framework of Canada – consistent with the direction in UNDRIP. This is how Bill C-53 “contributes” to UNDRIP implementation.

Doesn’t UNDRIP recognize Indigenous rights in relation to lands, resources, consultation, etc.? Is Bill C-53 implementing those rights for the Métis?

While UNDRIP covers a wide variety of Indigenous rights, Bill C-53 is not implementing all of UNDRIP for our Métis governments. Bill C-53 and our Métis Self-Government Agreements do not deal with Métis land related rights and interests in any way.

Bill C-53 is only about recognizing our Métis governments’ as Indigenous governments within Canada, which has been historically denied. It is only about recognizing our authorities and jurisdiction with respect to our internal governance – such as our



citizenship, our elections, our government operations, and our child and family services. It is only implementing the aspects of UNDRIP included in our Self-Government Agreements.

Will the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) element of UNDRIP give Métis communities a veto against resource development projects?

No. Bill C-53 will not change current consultation requirements with respect free, prior and informed consent (“FPIC”) when working with Métis communities or our Métis governments on resource development or other projects.

FPIC is about working together in respectful partnership with industry and Crown governments to reach consent-based agreements founded on recognition and respect for Indigenous rights. Our Métis governments have already been exercising this principle with industry for years and Bill C-53 cannot—and will not—change these processes or alter existing constitutional or legal requirements related to consultation owing to Métis.