

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

Is Nunavut education criminally inadequate?

An analysis of current policies for Inuktitut and English in education, international and national law, linguistic and cultural genocide and crimes against humanity

(April 22, 2019 – New York, New York) 2019 is the International Year of Indigenous Languages. It also marks 20 years since the establishment of the Nunavut territorial public government. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) President Aluki Kotierk reflects back on what benchmarks shape the reality of Inuktitut today, "Language was a motivating factor for Inuit to work towards achieving a land claim agreement. Inuit envisioned better services and programs, in our language and reflecting Inuit ways of understanding and being."

In Nunavut where Inuktitut constitutes a public language majority, its use is declining. The goals for protecting and promoting Inuktitut are not being achieved.

NTI commissioned a study to better understand some of the underlying issues related to the decline of Inuktitut use and the role of the formal education system.

"Education in Nunavut has a history of cultural genocide, linguicide, econocide and historicide, and this continues today" said Kotierk. "Inuit children receive the majority of their education in the dominant languages instead of their mother tongue. This constitutes cultural genocide."

This research report unpacks the barriers which prohibit Inuit from enjoying their linguistic, economic, historical, cultural and human rights within Nunavut and Canada.

The education system has been used to produce many of the negative social effects listed in this report. It is necessary that the education system be used to redress those effects. A strong program of bilingual education must be adopted. President Kotierk adds, "We continue to advocate for Inuit rights and recognize that governments have a responsibility. Urgent, coordinated action is needed now. NTI reaffirms our ongoing commitment to work with relevant governments and other partners."

President Kotierk is in New York, United States of America to attend the 18th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues where she will present the report.

The report is available on the NTI's website, www.tunngavik.com

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