



Dene National / Assembly of First Nations Office (NWT)

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DENE NATION LEADERSHIP MEETING CONCLUDES WITH RESOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

[YELLOWKNIFE, DENENDEH – MAY 8, 2025] The Dene Nation Leadership Meeting, held from May 6-8, 2025, in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, has concluded with the passing of several key resolutions aimed at addressing pressing public safety concerns and enhancing the well-being of Dene communities across Denendeh. The meeting, a testament to our unity and collaborative spirit, brought together Dene leaders, community representatives, and stakeholders to engage in meaningful dialogue and develop strategies to tackle the challenges faced by our communities.

Resolutions focusing on critical areas such as policing, community safety, and harm reduction were unanimously passed at the Dene Nation Leadership Meeting. These resolutions reflect our commitment to fostering safer, healthier communities while upholding the rights and interests of the Dene Nation.

One of the central discussions at the meeting revolved around examining policing contracts with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in the Northwest Territories. These contracts, which govern the relationship between the territorial government and the RCMP, significantly affect how policing services are delivered in our communities.

Concerns were raised about the limitations imposed by these contractual obligations, which often hinder the RCMP's ability to respond effectively to the unique needs of our communities. Police inaction on known drug houses and inadequate searches at road checkpoints were highlighted as significant threats to community safety. The potential for community banishment as a form of accountability underscores the urgency for decisive action to reclaim safety and ensure accountability.

“As we gather for this crucial leadership meeting, we are reminded that the strength of our Dene communities lies in our unity and commitment to the wellness of our peoples. Together, we will explore innovative solutions to combat the challenges of drugs, alcohol, and crime, fostering environments where our families can live in safe, healthy, and vibrant communities. Our shared vision is one of action, resilience, and healing, ensuring that the voices of our Elders, youth, and all community members are at the forefront of this critical matter.” — Dene National Chief George Mackenzie



The meeting emphasized the need for a more effective, responsive, and community-oriented approach to policing that addresses the root causes of these pressing issues while respecting the voices and sovereignty of our communities. It was noted that these contracts are frequently renewed without adequate consultation with Indigenous leaders, denying us the opportunity to voice our experiences and expectations surrounding law enforcement.

The loss of community-focused and Indigenous policing initiatives was also a point of concern. These programs, which fostered collaboration between police and community members, have been dismantled or neglected over the years. This has deprived us of local engagement in policing, which is essential for building trust and understanding. The absence of these initiatives has significantly impacted our ability to address community safety and well-being.

As we examine these contracts and their implications, we must listen to the voices of our communities and advocate for change. We must work together to ensure these agreements acknowledge our communities historically and culturally. We have the right to demand a policing framework that reflects our needs, values, and priorities.

The Dene Nation Leadership Meeting has set the stage for ongoing dialogue and collaboration to develop a policing model that is responsive and accountable to our communities. We are committed to ensuring our voices remain loud and clear when advocating for a safer and more just future for all Dene people, instilling a sense of reassurance and hope in our collective efforts.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'George Mackenzie', is written over a horizontal line.

George Mackenzie,
Dene National Chief, Regional Chief AFN-NT Region

For more information, please contact:

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Resolutions List Dene Nation Leadership Public Safety Forum, May 6-8, 2025

- **Resolution #24/25-003:** Explore the Development of a Dene-led Indigenous Policing Program in the NWT, a crucial step towards empowering our community and ensuring our active involvement in the decision-making process.
- **Resolution #24/25-004:** Establishment of a Dene Nation Taskforce on Drugs, Alcohol, and Community Crime Prevention
- **Resolution #24/25-005:** Examination and Analysis of RCMP Contracts with the Government of the Northwest Territories
- **Resolution #24/25-006:** Dene Analysis of the Government of Canada's 2025 Indigenous Justice Strategy
- **Resolution #24/25-007:** Call for Enhanced RCMP Action against Drug Trafficking and Criminal Activities in Dene Communities
- **Resolution #24/25-008:** Call for Enhanced Resources for Addiction and Mental Health Support
- **Resolution #24/25-009:** Development of Improved Programs for Youth to Promote Wellness & Resiliency
- **Resolution #24/25-010:** Collaborative Partnerships in Harm Reduction and Crime Prevention
- **Resolution #24/25-011:** Opposition to Tariffs Imposed by the United States Government
- **Resolution #24/25-012:** Addressing Alcohol Sales, Distribution, and Access in the Northwest Territories
- **Resolution #24/25-013:** Rapid Access to Detox and Substance Abuse Programs
- **Resolution #24/25-014:** Community Engagement and Regional Task List Development Resolution
- **Resolution #24/25-015:** Call for Federal and Territorial Government Strategy on Ongoing Aftercare Services

