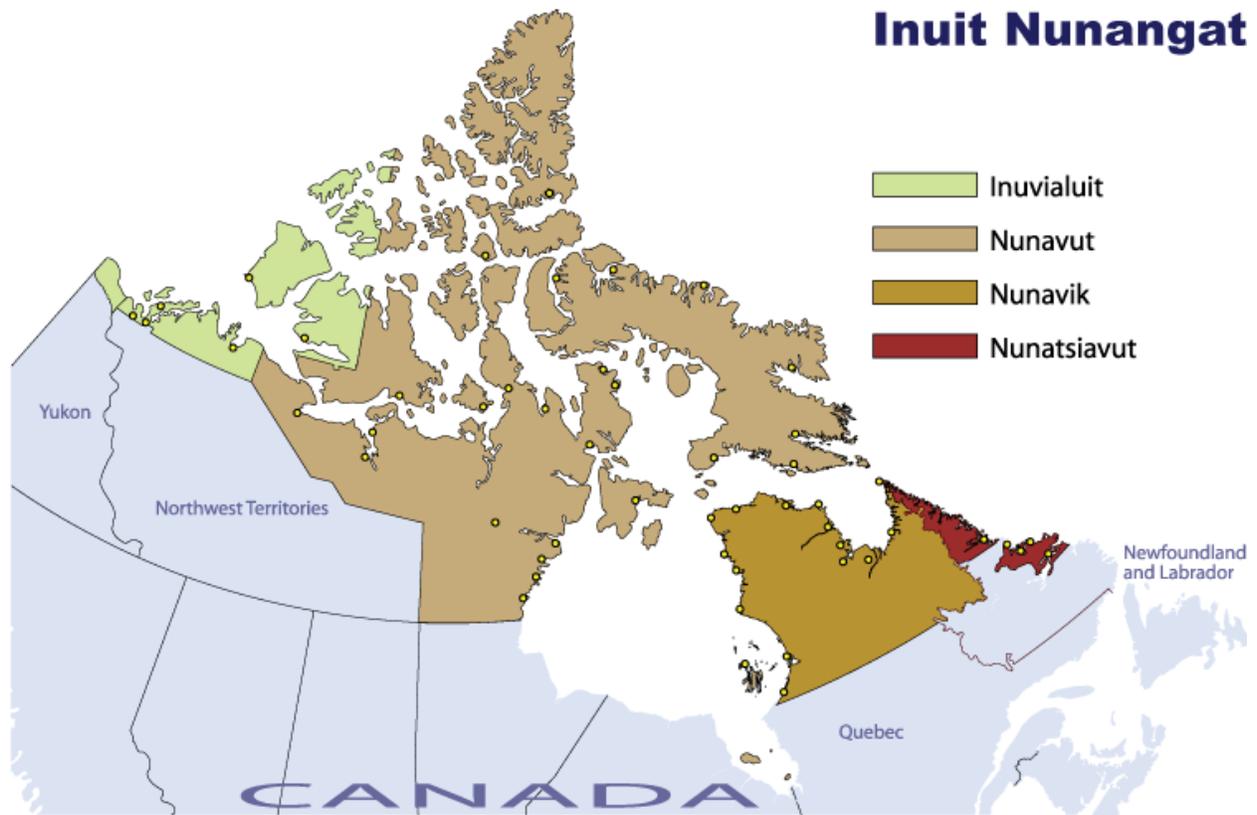


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Inuit Nunangat

Inuit Nunangat is the Inuit homeland in Canada, including land, inland waters, arctic and other offshore areas, air space, and ice-covered lands and waters. It is a distinct geographical, political and cultural area that includes the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, and Nunavut.



Source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Nunatsiavut

Nunatsiavut as noted above is one of the four Inuit regions in Canada that make up Inuit Nunangat – a distinct geographic, political, and cultural region that makes up nearly one-third of Canada’s landmass and half of its coastline. Because Nunatsiavut is a part of northern Canada that falls south of 60° longitude it often doesn’t qualify for Federal programs that other arctic regions take advantage of, although Nunatsiavut is an arctic region i.e. climate, wildlife, and the home of Inuit for thousands of years.

The people of Nunatsiavut are Inuit. We have occupied the circumpolar regions of the world for longer than 5,000 years. We are descendants of the prehistoric Thule, who were hunters that were drawn to

Labrador due to its large amounts of whales and wildlife. We are considered a maritime people, as we are very connected to our environment. We are also one of the founding peoples of Canada.

Our earliest ancestors lived mainly on the north coast of Labrador where they travelled all over to harvest the resources of the land and sea. For thousands of years, we had little or no contact with any European cultures.

In the 1760s, Moravian missionaries became the first Europeans to make a presence north of Hamilton Inlet. With the Missionaries present, the Inuit began to change their way of life. Our nomadic and communal lifestyle was not encouraged, and the missionaries unfortunately brought disease that slowly began to wipe out our population. Over time, the Inuit life became more connected to the emerging trade economy of Newfoundland and Labrador.

However, the demise of trade in the 1920s brought further social and economic upheaval. The Hudson's Bay Company and the Commission of Government took control of the Moravian stores with little success. After Confederation, the Moravian Church, the Grenfell Mission, and the provincial government of Newfoundland suspended services to the northern communities of Hebron, Okak, and Nutak. Residents were abruptly resettled throughout the region that is now known as Nunatsiavut, and the trauma of that move continues to resonate in the present day.

Nunatsiavut is home to some breathtaking wild spaces. Comprising 72,520 square kilometers (roughly the same size as the entire province of New Brunswick), the majority of Nunatsiavut is pristine, wild space. Rivers are fed by glaciers and animals can be found in abundance. Mainland Canada's highest mountains east of the Rockies are found in the Torngat Mountains, in the northern section of Nunatsiavut.

Nunatsiavut is home to five communities, all found along the Northern Labrador coastline. From north to south, they are: Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville and Rigolet. The communities of Nunatsiavut best represent our living Inuit heritage. Our population as of 2016 was 2,350.¹ Our communities share many similarities that bind them together, but are also unique based on their particular geographies and town histories. Each community offers a slightly different perspective on where we come from and where we are going. From prehistory to modern government, the epic story of Labrador Inuit is one of resilience in the face of great change. We are proud of our past. And now, more than ever, we are focused on our future.

¹ Statistics Canada, Census Population: 2016 Census data for Aboriginal people (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) in private households in Nunatsiavut.

Nunatsiavut Government

In the 1970s, the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) was formed, and filed a claim with the Government of Canada. For the next 30 years, we worked hard to promote our culture, our health and well-being, and our Constitutional, democratic, and human rights. Eventually, we finally began our long road to establishing a self-government. On Dec. 1, 2005, Labrador Inuit celebrated the signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and the establishment of the Nunatsiavut Government (NG).

At the heart of governance is the power to make laws. In Nunatsiavut, the Labrador Inuit Constitution is the fundamental law of Labrador Inuit. All other laws made by the Nunatsiavut Government will be driven by the principles and guidelines of the Constitution.

The Nunatsiavut Government is driven by a set of fundamental principles that arise from the Labrador Inuit Constitution. These fundamental principles express our core beliefs in:

- Democracy and equality;
- Preservation of our culture and language;
- Pursuit of a healthy society;
- Pursuit of a sustainable economy;
- Preservation of the lands, waters, animals, and plants of our ancestral territory.

The NG is an Inuit self-government and is organized into seven departments:

- Nunatsiavut Secretariat;
- Nunatsiavut Affairs;
- Health and Social Development;
- Education and Economic Development;
- Lands and Natural Resources;
- Culture, Recreation and Tourism; and
- Finance and Human Resources and Information Technology.

Nunatsiavut is a consensus form of parliamentary democracy designed to ensure a separation of power between the political and operational levels of government.

At the political level, the democratically elected representatives of the Nunatsiavut Assembly make laws and provide broad policy direction for the government. The community of Hopedale is the legislative capital of Nunatsiavut.

At the operational level, the departments of the Nunatsiavut Government must enforce the laws of Nunatsiavut and turn policy direction from the Nunatsiavut Assembly into programs and services

tailored to serve Labrador Inuit and our residents. The community of Nain is the administrative capital of Nunatsiavut.

[Nunatsiavut Government Involvement in Federal Language Legislation](#)

Language falls under the Nunatsiavut Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. The department has been a part of the national Inuit working group on national indigenous languages legislation that has been facilitated by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) since 2017. The Nunatsiavut Government was very supportive of this initiative from the beginning and felt it was the right step forward by the federal government in regards to reconciliation.

While 84 per cent of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat report an ability to speak Inuktitut, making our language the most resilient Indigenous language in Canada in Nunatsiavut we are in crisis. In Nunatsiavut only 21 per cent of Inuit report an ability to speak Inuktitut and only five per cent say that Inuktitut is used in the home.

Percent of Inuit reporting being able to converse in Inuktitut², using Inuktitut at home and with Inuktitut as their mother tongue, 2016

	Able to converse in Inuktitut [%]	Inuktitut used most at home [%]	Inuktitut mother tongue [%]
Language by age group			
Inuit of all ages in Canada	64%	45%	57%
0-14 years	65%	48%	56%
15-24 years	64%	46%	57%
25-64 years	64%	42%	58%
65 years and over	61%	46%	61%
Language by Inuit region			
Nunatsiavut	21%	5%	17%
Nunavik	99%	95%	98%
Nunavut	89%	58%	77%
Inuvialuit region	22%	1%	16%
Outside Inuit Nunangat	11%	2%	10%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

The Labrador Inuit Constitution, which is the fundamental law of Labrador Inuit, notes Inuktitut and English as the official languages of the Nunatsiavut Government and the Inuit Community Governments. But we are losing our language and it is becoming more difficult to find Inuktitut speakers that are able to translate our Government documents.

We have lost our language due to residential schools, pressures put on parents to teach their children English, and through government relocations of our people, to name a few causes. The need for

reconciliation by the Government of Canada is much needed and National legislation is required to build on existing rights for our language and to complement initiatives advanced by the Nunatsiavut Government.

We have been working closely with ITK and the working group on the language legislation file. We have attended numerous face-to-face meetings, teleconferences and have provided feedback and input into various documents. We have done this because language is a priority of our government and we feel that if we are united we'd have a stronger voice. We have been working on the premise of what was stated in the June 15, 2019 joint statement released by national representatives of indigenous peoples and governments and the department of Canadian Heritage, which states that:

“Canadian Heritage, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Metis Nation state that they will:

Work collaboratively, transparently and on a distinctions-basis to co-develop national First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation languages legislation whose content will reflect the distinct geographic, political, legislative, and cultural contexts impacting language revitalization, recovery, preservation, protection, maintenance, and promotion.

Being a working group member on the ITK committee I have seen first hand the lack of transparency and unclear mandate of the Government of Canada on this file. We have been asked for feedback on documents with unacceptable turnaround periods and have felt that our concerns and ideas were never seriously considered by the department of Canadian Heritage.

The Committee has always taken the opportunity to meet with officials to discuss the legislation, have provided feedback and comments and have written official letters with no official response to our positions until recently. We continue to sit at the table to discuss our concerns and to put forward possible solutions and ideas because language is so important to us. However, we fear that all this is in vain.

Specifically to Bill C-91 this is what we would say:

- As currently drafted it falls far short of fulfilling the Government of Canada's own commitment to develop distinctions-based legislation.
- As currently drafted it completely overlooks the unique status of Inuktitut and the practical needs of its speakers.

In the absence of Inuktitut-specific provisions within Bill C-91, we would like to reiterate the proposed amendments that ITK put forward when they presented to you on March 20, 2019 (Appendix: A) that would help ensure that our longstanding priorities for our language are reflected in the bill. The

proposed amendments would obligate the Minister to develop a separate annex to this Act in relation to Inuktitut. One particular piece that the NG would like to see implemented is in regards to funding. Within

the Annex number 7 notes, *the Government of Canada must pursue the negotiation, conclusion, and maintenance of a separate funding agreement, with relevant Inuit governing bodies...*

The Government of Nunavut and Government of the Northwest Territories receive federal funding for the revitalization, maintenance and enhancement of Inuktitut through agreements funded by the Department of Official Language Communities Program and the Aboriginal Peoples Program. Nunatsiavut does not receive similar dedicated federal funding for Inuktitut revitalization, maintenance and enhancement. Furthermore, in the absence of formal recognition, legislation or Indigenous languages policy, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador do not provide dedicated funding for the revitalization, maintenance and enhancement of Inuktitut in our jurisdiction.

In order for the federal government to fulfill its commitment as stated in June 2017 to develop distinctions-based legislation the Nunatsiavut Government notes that a separate annex is necessary. This annex would ensure that we are truly on a path of reconciliation.

Appendix A: March 20, 2019 Submission by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

INUIT TAPIRIIT KANATAMI'S PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-91 (INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ACT)

The text of Bill C-91 is amended by inserting the following provisions immediately after section 11:

X1. *The Minister must pursue, in close consultation with relevant Indigenous governing bodies, the development of a separate Annex to this Act in relation to Inuktut.*

X2. *The Annex referred to in section X1 may address the following:*

- (a) status of Inuktut in a specified community, region, or other geographic area;*
- (b) collaboration with one or more indigenous governing bodies or organizations;*
- (c) use of Inuktut in the delivery of federal programs and services;*
- (d) in a manner consistent with the powers and jurisdictions of the provinces, measures to support the provision of Inuktut language programs and services in relation to education, health, and the administration of justice;*
- (e) use of Inuktut in the federal public service in a specified community, region or other geographic area;*
- (f) standards to govern federal financial support for Inuktut, and specified levels of support;*
- (g) the role of an indigenous governing body or organization in the negotiation of intergovernmental agreements in relation to Inuktut;*
- (h) timelines and schedules for implementation measures; and*
- (i) any other similar matters consistent with the purposes of the Act.*

X3. The Minister may, by order, amend the Inuktut Annex, with the consent of the relevant Indigenous governing body.

X4. The Governor in Council may make regulations to assist in the implementation of the Inuktut Annex.

[Note: Annex to be adopted as Part of the Act.]

ANNEX: INUKTUT

Introduction

1. *In addition to the provisions of all other parts of this Act, the provisions of this Annex shall apply to Inuit and Inuit Nunangat.*

Principles

2. *Interpretation and implementation of this Annex are guided by the following principles:*
 - (a) *Inuit Nunangat is the Inuit homeland in Canada;*
 - (b) *Inuktitut is an original language of Canada, and is spoken as the first language of the majority of Inuit Nunangat residents; and,*
 - (c) *effective public administration in Inuit Nunangat is optimized by delivery of programs and services in the first language of recipients.*

Definitions

3. *In this Annex,*

“Inuit Nunangat” means the Inuit homeland in Canada. It is a distinct cultural, political, and geographical area composed of the four Inuit regions whose boundaries have been defined in treaty and statute;

“Inuit region” means the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Nunavut Settlement Area, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut;

“Inuktitut” means the Indigenous language spoken by Inuit in Canada, including Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuttut, Inuvialuktun, and associated dialects and subdialects.

Status of Inuktitut

4. (1) *Parliament hereby recognizes the status of Inuktitut as an original language of Canada, the original language of Inuit Nunangat, and the first language of the majority of Inuit Nunangat residents.*

(2) *The Government of Canada is committed to taking such initiatives, and to applying such resources, as to sustain and enrich that status.*

(3) *As part of those initiatives, the Government of Canada commits, consistent with regulations relating to the commencement, scope, priority and timing of delivery, to the delivery of federal programs and services in Inuktitut in Inuit Nunangat to the extent that demand requires and capacity allows.*

(4) *The reference to limitations of capacity in subsection 4(3) does not detract from the federal commitment to build such capacity.*

(5) *The Government of Canada must apply the provisions of this Annex with respect to the use of Inuktitut outside Inuit Nunangat where numbers of Inuktitut speakers warrant.*

Close Collaboration

5. *The Government of Canada must pursue the objectives, and meet its commitments, in relation to this Annex in close collaboration with Inuit governing bodies.*

Funding

6. *In providing funding resources that are adequate, sustainable, and long-term in relation to Inuktitut, the Government of Canada must also ensure that such resources:*

- (a) are culturally appropriate;*
- (b) meet the actual and specific needs of Inuit;*
- (c) aim to advance Inuktitut as the primary language spoken by every sector of society in Inuit Nunangat;*
- (d) are comparable in terms of quality and accessibility to the services offered to other Canadians; and*
- (e) are equitable, on a per capita basis, with funding support provided for minority English and French language education in Inuit Nunangat and other parts of Canada.*

7. *The Government of Canada must pursue the negotiation, conclusion, and maintenance of a separate funding agreement, with relevant Inuit governing bodies indicating specific levels of funding for*

a term of five years or more, with a view to completing such an agreement within twelve months of the coming into force of the Act.

Education, Health, and Justice

8. (1) *The Government of Canada must take effective measures to support the advancement and implementation of education in Inuktitut within Inuit Nunangat.*

(2) *The Government of Canada must take effective measures to support the advancement and implementation of health services in Inuktitut.*

(3) *The Government of Canada must take effective measures to support the advancement and implementation of justice in Inuktitut within Inuit Nunangat.*

Language of Work in Federal Departments and Agencies

9. (1) *The Government of Canada must ensure that its workforce in Inuit Nunangat reflects, at all levels, the Inuktitut speaking proportion of the residents of Inuit regions and communities.*

(2) *Every federal department and agency has the duty to ensure a workplace environment in Inuit Nunangat that supports, accommodates and encourages the use of Inuktitut by its officers and employees, giving appropriate priority and weight to Inuktitut language skills and making effective use of Inuktitut language training and upgrading.*

Intergovernmental Agreements

10. *The Government of Canada must include an Inuit representative organization as a party to any new or renewed intergovernmental agreement with a provincial or territorial government department or agency in relation to Inuktitut, including any intergovernmental funding agreement in relation to Inuktitut.*