

The First Métis Government Meetings

FAQs

Métis people are and have always been Otipemisiwak—people who own themselves—and finally Canada recognizes this right to self-government. In early 2020, the three Métis Nation governments who signed Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreements (MGRSAs. *See MGRSA FAQs for details*) came together in a spirit of collaboration to advance their shared vision of self-government.

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S), and Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) met at Métis Crossing and Edmonton January 14-15 where they signed a [joint declaration](#) highlighting their continued collaboration. They also passed a [resolution](#) seeking more transparency and accountability from Métis National Council (MNC). They met again in Gatineau, Quebec at *Otipemisiwak: A National Conference on Métis-Government* March 9-10, along with Métis citizens from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario to learn and discuss Métis history, the trials and triumphs of self-governance, and the strides made in recent years.

1. Why did the three Métis Governments meet?

The meetings were held to discuss how the three governments could collaborate to advance their goal of self-government and self-determination for the Métis Nation in their respective provinces.

2. What is the declaration and why was it signed?

The joint declaration is a formal agreement signed by the three government's presidents to continue working together at the national level. The declaration clarified any misunderstandings about the MGRSAs, which do not limit or change any Métis rights or the Métis people's inherent right to self-government. We have always and will continue to be self-governing.

It also emphasized signing the MGRSAs has given each Métis government a clear path forward to create a citizen-driven constitution containing all the pieces needed to govern the Métis Nation within their respective provinces.

3. What was the joint resolution about MNC?

At the first meeting in January, the three governments passed a joint resolution to work together to reform and seek greater accountability of MNC. The resolution states the three governments are the modern-day versions of self-government, created by their citizens, whose voices are heard through democratic elections at the local, regional, and provincial levels.

MNC was created in 1983 to act as a unified, national voice for Métis governments across Canada. The resolution makes clear that MNC is not a government, but a representative of governments, and its power comes from its governing members—Métis Nation British Columbia, Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, Manitoba Métis Federation, and Métis Nation of Ontario—

who are elected by their citizens. It also says MNC cannot interfere with matters falling under the powers of the three governments.

Specifically, the resolution adds that MNC has become increasingly dysfunctional and unaccountable to its governing members and the Métis citizens who elect these Métis governments, including failing to hold a Board of Governors meeting for at least 14 months.

4. Does this mean the MNA is pulling out from MNC?

No. The MNA, MN-S, and MNO will continue to work through MNC, but will be pursuing either reform, improvement, or change to the structure of the Permanent Bilateral Mechanism, which is an agreement between MNC and the Government of Canada to work together through a nation-to-nation relationship.

5. What happened in Gatineau, Quebec?

Otipemisiwak: A National Conference on Métis Self-Government was hosted by MNO and was an opportunity for attendees to learn about the sorry legacy of Métis scrip, hear from different First Nations on their journeys toward self-government, listen to a youth panel on their visions for the future, and hear from employees from the Government of Canada on their role and goals going forward with Métis Nation governments.

It was also decided the next Tri-Council meeting would be held in Saskatchewan to discuss details of drafting a constitution.

6. What happens now?

The MNA is setting its sights on drafting a constitution. A constitution commission has been appointed and will be going out into Métis communities across Alberta to gather feedback from citizens on its development. The constitution will enshrine the Métis Nation within Alberta's inherent right to govern itself, the responsibilities of the Métis government and its citizens, and protect Métis people for generations to come.