



INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE

A CHANGING WORLD ORDER REQUIRES INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO STAND FIRM

February 2, 2026—The past year, Inuit and the people of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), have experienced massive pressure from geopolitical interests to our region. The attention to Greenland reflects a broader change affecting all Indigenous Peoples.

Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) repeats its call for all states, including the US, to uphold international law and rules-based order. This is particularly important in the Arctic region, where states have long worked collaboratively to maintain peace and cooperation.

The Arctic must remain a zone of peace—a region of cooperation through diplomacy

“The Arctic is our homeland. We continue to reject the premise that our lands or peoples are commodities that can be bought or sold. We call on cooperation based on dialogue, with respect for Inuit rights. The Arctic is our home since time immemorial. Indigenous Peoples across the Arctic and the world must stand firm on our rights, particularly on our right of self-determination.”, says **Chair of Inuit Circumpolar Council Sara Olsvig**.

“Inuit are witnessing a change in the world order firsthand. A change that requires all Arctic leaders to carefully consider the safety and wellbeing of the peoples of our region. It is about standing firm on human rights, on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and on international cooperation based on international law. It is about standing firm on a world order meant to prevent—not repeat, wrongdoings, especially against Indigenous Peoples”, Olsvig reiterates.

Inuit continue to stand united for a peaceful Arctic

ICC and Inuit continue to stand united, defending the right of Inuit to self-determination wherever they live.

“We express our solidarity with the Inuit of Greenland and support their exclusive right to determine their political status. Any discussions on this matter should be conducted with the full participation of the legitimate government and representatives of its people, and with respect for existing sovereignty. We call for the maintenance of the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation”, says **ICC Vice Chair from Chukotka Valentina Leonova**.

“ICC was founded to promote Inuit rights and interests at the international level. That responsibility is especially

important today. Inuit have an inherent right to decide our own political future. For us, the Arctic is not just a strategic asset. It is our homeland where we have survived and governed for generations. Inuit human rights and self-determination should not be compromised to address shifts in geopolitics.” says **ICC Vice Chair from Alaska, Marie Greene**. Greene continues: “We call on the United States of America to respect and uphold international law and rules-based order, that honors diplomacy and Inuit rights”.

ICC Vice Chair from Canada Herb Nakimayak says: “Our future, the future generations of Inuit, depend on Arctic cooperation, and on our region to remain peaceful. All Indigenous Peoples, including Inuit in Greenland have the right to self-determination and thus the right to determine their own future”.

Support from fellow Inuit important for Kalaallit

ICC Vice Chair from Greenland Hjalmar Dahl repeats the message of the people of Greenland:

“Kalaallit have said very clearly, through the government and parliament of our nation, that we do not want to become part of the US. Protests with record-numbers of citizens have reiterated this message. Our right of self-determination is not up for negotiation. We strongly welcome the support we have received from fellow Inuit, and many other Indigenous Peoples from all over the world. Our situation is a reflection of the changes in the world, and we have become a symbol of the importance of standing united in protecting and defending the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The time to stand shoulder by shoulder for our rights is now”.

Inuit Circumpolar Council welcomes the statement by UN Experts, who have urged the United States of America to respect international law and right to self-determination. The statement underscores the obligation to respect sovereignty, as a fundamental principle of the UN Charter: https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/01/greenland-un-experts-urge-united-states-respect-international-law-and-right?_cf_chl_tk=15uLY0CgpNDETY6s2jmRTPYvcJbfKP68Lp8SuewiV3c-1769089934-1.0.1.1-8_OZaxUqj22cYTfJf4.fK0rlhxQL8UHYSj6KuSfkHEc

Throughout the past year, ICC has actively delivered the messages of Inuit to the international arena, including at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. ICC continues to bring the voice of Inuit across to international institutions and advocate for the Arctic to be a region of peaceful cooperation, in the face of growing interest in Inuit homelands.

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Founded in 1977, Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is an international Indigenous Peoples' Organization representing Inuit from Alaska, Canada, Kalaallit Nunaat, and Chukotka. ICC is dedicated to strengthening Inuit unity, advancing Inuit rights and interests internationally, and formulating long-term policies to protect the Arctic environment. It also strives for full and effective participation and meaningful engagement for Inuit in the political, economic, and social development of the Arctic.

ICC is a co-founder and a Permanent Participant of the Arctic Council and holds a range of international roles, including Consultative Status II at the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Observer status at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and holds Permanent Consultative Status at the International Maritime Organization alongside other advisory and consultative roles across numerous international fora.