

The Crown and the Indigenous Peoples in Canada

The relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the monarchy is enshrined in Canada’s Constitution. The reigning British monarch is recognized as Canada’s head of state. “The Crown” is the legal term used in treaties when referring to the British or Canadian governments.



In 1763, King George III

issued the Royal Proclamation acknowledging the existence of Indigenous title to all the lands in North America, stating that only the Crown could buy land from First Nations. This formed the basis for the treaty-making process.

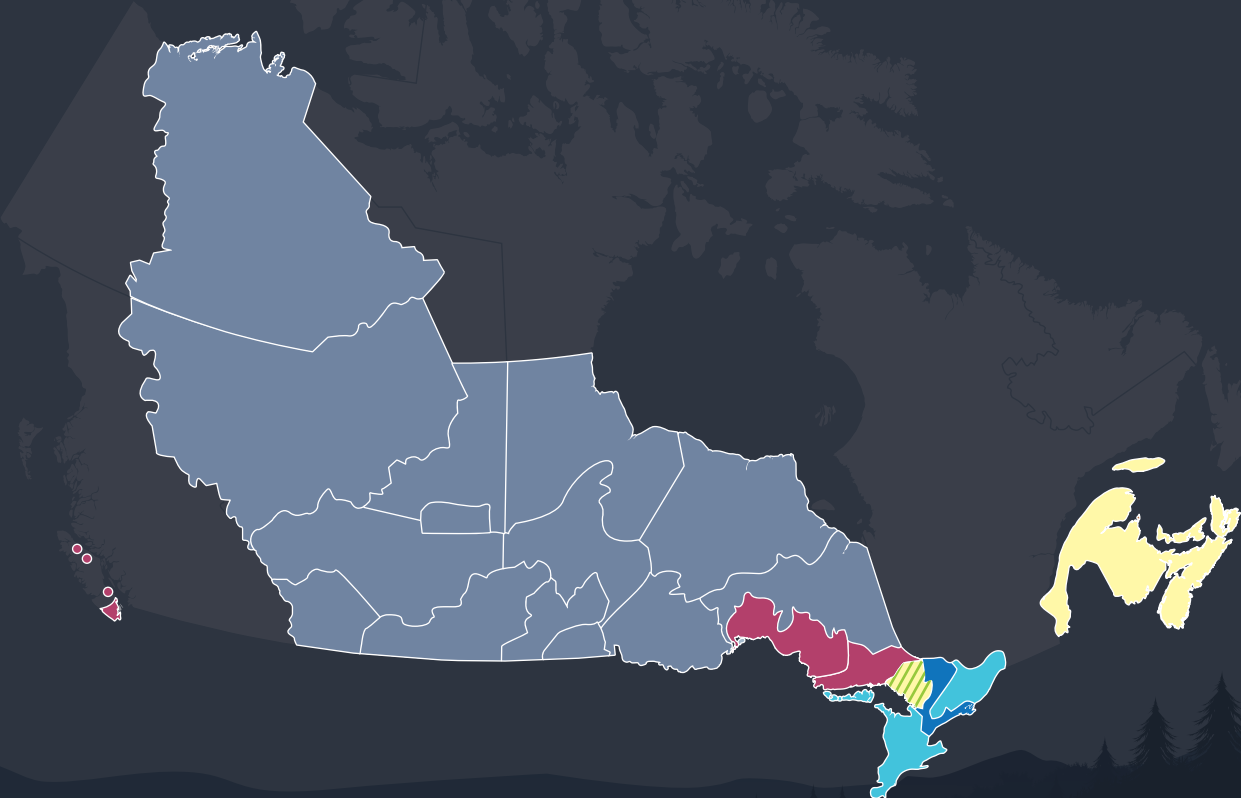
What Indigenous rights are recognized in the Constitution Act?

- Aboriginal title (rights to land)
- Rights to occupy and use lands and resources
- Self-determination and self-government
- Right to cultural and social practices



70 historic treaties exist between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples, including **364 First Nations**.

In exchange for use of lands and access to resources, treaties outline specific rights and obligations, such as land set aside for First Nations’ use, hunting and fishing rights, and schools on reserves.



1701-1760

Treaties of Peace and Neutrality

1725-1779

Peace and Friendship Treaties

1764-1862

Upper Canada Land Surrenders

1850-1854

Robinson Treaties and Douglas Treaties

1871-1921

Numbered Treaties

1923

Williams Treaties



“Indigenous Peoples have been denied control over our own lives. We do not have a sufficient, healthy land base for our traditional economies to thrive. Rights protected by treaties, the Constitution and international law are routinely swept aside. We face systemic discrimination regarding access to services that other people in Canada take for granted. The point I want to emphasize is that none of this was meant to be. None of these things would have happened if the treaty relationship had been honoured.”

– Perry Bellegarde, Honorary President of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society



“We must listen to the truth of the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples, and we should work to understand better their pain and suffering.”

–King Charles III

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