



**YUKON
REGION**

A Yukon that Leads

For Immediate Release

February 14, 2023

Regional Chief Adamek Calls for Enhanced Collaboration with Yukon First Nations on Northern Defence

Whitehorse, Yukon – Assembly of First Nations Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek urges the Department of National Defence to formalize communications and collaboration with Yukon First Nations, following the news that an unidentified object was shot down in the region over the weekend.

“I am pleased to hear that Minister Anand contacted the affected Yukon First Nations about the ongoing military actions on their traditional territories,” Regional Chief Adamek says. “I was, however, disappointed that these conversations did not happen sooner – in response to several requests from Yukon First Nations to discuss Arctic sovereignty and northern defence concerns with the minister – and only after a critical military situation.”

“At the direction of our leadership, we at AFN Yukon have pressed for Yukon First Nations to be actively involved in northern security matters. These recent events clearly show the need for the Department of National Defence to formalize relationships and communications protocols with Yukon First Nations.”

Last June, Defence Minister Anita Anand announced a \$4.9 billion funding package for modernizing the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), which includes upgrades to military infrastructure in the North. In this announcement, the government said they “will deliver these initiatives working closely with provinces, territories and Indigenous communities.”

“Now more than ever, Yukon First Nations must be formally engaged on this announcement,” Regional Chief Adamek says. “While Minister Anand’s parliamentary secretary, MP Bryan May, briefly met with Yukon First Nation Chiefs in December, we require an immediate meeting with the Minister to discuss regional priorities and approaches.”

“Yukon First Nations set the path for working collaboratively with Canada through *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this document, I urge the federal government to heed its message when it comes to matters of national security: ‘there must be two-way communications between us.’”

Regional Chief Adamek and Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Chief Roberta Joseph testified before the Senate committee on national security last November. During their appearance, they both emphasized the current pattern of Yukon First Nations being left out of national security discussion involving the North, and called for meaningful collaboration.

“Our lack of inclusion to date has been an oversight, and we ask for this to be rectified,” Chief Joseph testified. “It is not acceptable that we may face military and/or other security forces coming into our communities without input from us as First Nation governments.”

– 30 –

Media Contact

AFN Yukon Region Communications
communications@afnyukon.ca
executive.assistant@afnyukon.ca

