



ᐱᐸᐸᐸᐸ  
ᐃᐸᐃᐸ ᐃᐸᐸᐸ ᐸᐸᐸᐸ  
**PAUKTUUTIT**  
**INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA**

# Inuit Justice Revitalization

## KEY MESSAGES

- **Funding must move from talk to action and reach communities directly.** Multi-year funding must shift from engagement to implementation consistent with obligations under the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP)<sup>1</sup> and the justice-related Calls to Action in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's \(TRC\) Final Report](#).<sup>2</sup> Smaller community organizations across Inuit Nunangat must be able to access resources without disproportionate administrative burden, enabling community-level delivery and innovation.
- **Inuit-led justice is key to ending overincarceration.** Inuit-led justice initiatives, informed by traditional knowledge and restorative principles, are essential to reducing overincarceration and strengthening community wellbeing. Inuit-led approaches must be resourced and prioritized.
- **Reconciliation requires accountability, not just acknowledgement.** Meeting Canada's obligations under UNDRIP and the TRC Calls to Action means structural change in how justice funding is designed and delivered - not consultation cycles that substitute for implementation.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations. (2007). [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). United Nations.

<sup>2</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). [Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Legislative and policy gaps continue to withhold the tools, resources, and support needed to help break cycles of violence and support healthy families and communities. However, Inuit-led solutions exist that can do just that by breaking cycles of violence while complementing and building upon existing programs, interventions, and initiatives to drive meaningful change from within.

Historical and continuing systemic discrimination and human rights violations by governments are among the key factors that contribute to the high level of gendered violence and overcriminalization experienced by many Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit. Compounding factors include long-lasting social and economic inequities between Inuit and most other Canadians, such as overcrowding and lack of housing, limited access to public services, and poverty.

Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit face a disproportionate burden of traumatic experiences, compounded by significant gaps in access to the supports they need to heal. Victims' services, rehabilitative programs, alternative justice mechanisms, and mental health and substance use treatment remain largely out of reach — leaving communities without the tools necessary to foster healthy relationships and long-term recovery.

In 2023/24, Indigenous adults constituted 33.2% of the custodial population in several Canadian jurisdictions, despite comprising only 4.3% of the adult population.<sup>3</sup> This means that Indigenous people are incarcerated at roughly 10 times the rate of non-Indigenous adults.

The most recent Indigenous [Corrections Accountability Framework](#)<sup>4</sup> indicates that 128 Inuit offenders are incarcerated federally, with additional numbers under

community supervision. While this number may seem small in comparison to broader correctional statistics, it represents a significant proportion of Inuit, given the overall population size and geographic distribution of Inuit.

National commissions and inquiries have repeatedly identified systemic inequities and the need for proposed reforms in the justice system. The [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report](#)<sup>5</sup> specifically highlights justice-related Calls to Action (including 30–42, and 50–52).

These calls to action emphasize the need to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system, improve Indigenous-led data collection, support alternatives to incarceration, and enhance culturally appropriate services. The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) further establishes rights to self-determination, participation in decision-making, and culturally appropriate institutions (Articles 3, 4, and 18).<sup>6</sup>

Despite legislative/policy reform and report findings, implementation has been uneven and underfunded. Engagement processes have generated valuable knowledge, but operational investment and accountability mechanisms are required to achieve measurable outcomes.

[Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada's](#) work, linked to the [Indigenous Justice Strategy](#)<sup>7</sup> and Call to Action 50 (Revitalizing Indigenous Legal Traditions), has advanced understanding of Inuit-specific justice principles and community priorities. However, without sustained resources for program delivery, policy reform, and systems change, reductions in incarceration rates and expansion of restorative alternatives remain limited.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. (2026, January 14). *Overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black adults in provincial and federal custody*. The Daily. Government of Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/260114/dq260114b-eng.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Government of Canada. (2024). [Indigenous Corrections Accountability Framework: Annual Report 2023–2024](#). Public Safety Canada.

<sup>5</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). [Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

<sup>6</sup> United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. New York: United Nations, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Justice Canada. *Indigenous Justice Strategy*. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2025. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/ijr-dja/ijr-sja/index.html>. Accessed March 17, 2026

## Inuit Justice Revitalization

Broader justice-related recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and [Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#)<sup>8</sup> also underscore the need for systemic reform, including culturally grounded alternatives, improved data, and community governance in justice matters. These recommendations align with our recommendations from Pauktuutit's report *Intersecting Realities: Indigenous Women, Decarceration, and Inuit Justice in Canada*.<sup>9</sup>

In line with Inuit culture and practices, Pauktuutit is committed to fundamentally transforming the relationship Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit have with the justice system to one based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and equitable partnership.

---

<sup>8</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Government of Canada.

<sup>9</sup> Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. (n.d.). *Intersecting Realities: Indigenous Women, Decarceration, and Inuit Justice in Canada*.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Tied to Measurable Outcomes, Shift Funding from Engagement to Implementation.** Federal, provincial, and territorial governments must fund operational and program delivery models, with multi-year agreements tied to measurable outcomes aligned with UNDRIP<sup>10</sup> and the justice-related Calls to Action in the TRC's Final Report.<sup>11</sup> Annual reporting requirements should track progress against specific obligations – not consultation activity – with independent oversight that includes Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit.
- **Resource and Recognize Inuit-Led Justice as Restorative Alternatives.** All levels of government must dedicate sustained, flexible funding to Inuit-designed and Inuit-led justice programs rooted in traditional knowledge and restorative principles. Restorative alternatives to incarceration must be explicitly prioritized and adequately resourced. Program and policy design, evaluation criteria, and success metrics must be determined by Inuit.
- **Develop Evaluation Frameworks Centered on Community Wellbeing and Decarceration.** Governments must work with Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit to co-develop evaluation frameworks that measure success by reductions in incarceration rates and tangible improvements in community wellbeing. This is rather than outputs like program participation or dollars spent. These frameworks should inform future funding decisions and serve as the basis for public accountability.
- **Simplify Funding Access for Smaller and Non-Treaty Organizations.** Smaller, community-based, and non-treaty organizations must be able to participate within distinctions-based funding mechanisms without disproportionate compliance burdens. Dedicated capacity funding should support grant-writing, reporting, and financial administration, so resources reach community-level delivery and innovation.
- **Prioritize Long-Term Partnerships that Build Capacity and Enable System Transformation.** Governments must move away from short-term, project-based funding cycles toward long-term partnerships with Inuit and Indigenous Women's Organizations that build institutional capacity and enable genuine systems transformation. Multi-year funding commitments should be structured to support organizational stability, leadership development, and the sustained community relationships required to shift justice outcomes over time.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations. (2007). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*. United Nations.

<sup>11</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

## REFERENCE LIST

- Correctional Service Canada. (n.d.). *Annual reports on corrections and conditional release*.
- Government of Canada, Department of Justice Canada. (2025). *Indigenous Justice Strategy*. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/ijr-dja/ijs-sja/index.html>
- Government of Canada, Public Safety Canada. (2024). *Indigenous corrections accountability framework: Annual report 2023-2024*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/corporate/library/offenders/indigenous/indigenous-accountability-report/accountability-report-2023-2024.html>
- Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. (2026, January 14). *Overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black adults in custody, 2023/24*. The Daily. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/260114/dq260114b-eng.htm>
- Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. (n.d.). *Intersecting Realities: Indigenous Women, Decarceration, and Inuit Justice in Canada*.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Government of Canada.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- United Nations. (2007). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. United Nations.

