

# DECLARATION

## Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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### DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY AND PUBLIC SAFETY CRISIS OVER ILLEGAL DRUGS AND DRUG-RELATED VIOLENCE IN NAN FIRST NATIONS

The Chiefs assembled in Thunder Bay on October 9, 2025, at the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Justice Forum and declared that effective, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October 2025, our communities are in a state of emergency and public safety crisis over illegal drugs and drug-related violence.

In the early morning of October 8, 2025, a tragic shooting has endangered community members of Ginoogaming First Nation, located in Treaty 9 territory, stemming from illegal drug activity.

NAN First Nations, including Ginoogaming, have stated that illegal drugs and drug trafficking have historically been the number one problem facing our communities, which are experiencing a crisis due to opiate and drug addiction, in turn destroying our people, our families, and our communities.

Over the years, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly have adopted numerous resolutions with respect to the flow of illegal drugs into communities, resulting in addictions, and the negative impact on mental health and violent crime, including:

- Resolution 11/59: Prescription Drug Abuse State of Emergency (November 24, 2011);
- Resolution 09/92: Prescription Drug Abuse State of Emergency (November 26, 2009);
- Resolution 11/20: Restoring Our Nation, Action Plan for Community Recovery from Opioid Addiction (March 24, 2011);
- Resolution 16/04: Call for Declaration of Public Health Emergency (January 21, 2016);
- Resolution 16/05: NAN Suicide Crisis Response and Need for Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Funding (January 21, 2016);
- Resolution 16/40: Strategies on Youth Suicide (May 18, 2016); and
- Resolution 21/11: Declaration of Mental Health and Addictions Crisis in NAN Territory (October 28, 2021).

The prevalence of violent criminal offences related to cocaine, methamphetamine, fentanyl, and other toxic drugs has increased at an alarming rate in NAN First Nations, significantly increasing the Crime Severity Index in NAN First Nations. Illegal drugs and drug trafficking represent a national epidemic that is further intensified within NAN First Nations. There are different challenges for remote and road-connected communities, requiring different measures.

The evidence of a drug crisis is clear, including but not limited to:

- Historic and recent NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly Resolutions passed;
- Numerous health, mental health, and social health reports outlining the challenges faced, prevention measures, and proposed solutions;
- Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS) has reported increases in illegal drug seizures, including a 300 percent increase in cocaine and fentanyl seizures between 2023 and 2024; and
- Significant increase in the Crime Severity Index in NAN First Nations.



Nishnawbe Aski Nation  
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Compounding issues that leave NAN First Nations in crisis, including but not limited to:

- Systemic oppression and exploitation by government, including the push for resource development that has led to increased vulnerability for outsiders entering First Nations in NAN;
- NAN First Nations are more susceptible to human trafficking, domestic violence, and gang-related crime, as a result of the flow of illegal drugs into their communities;
- Overcrowding in homes and homelessness;
- A state of near-constant crisis, demonstrated by alarming rates of youth suicide and other preventable deaths;
- Repeated demands to all levels of government for funding and resources to implement community-led solutions have been ignored;
- Lack of appropriate screening and security procedures for land and air entry points, including mail carriers;
- Inadequate equipment or infrastructure to allow for the protection of borders, including airports; and
- Lack of assistance from MTO in terms of funding and proper resources to address the drug epidemic.

To address the increasing drug crisis, in August 2022, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 22-16: Support for NAPS Border Control Strategy, which directs NAPS to assist communities in the protection of their borders.

The existing Canadian justice system has been inadequate to deal with the drug crisis and resulting violence. NAN Chiefs have mandated Justice Transformation, significant reforms to the Canadian system, and the revitalization of their own laws.

NAN First Nations have the inherent right and jurisdiction to adopt measures to address public health and safety crises of their communities. The NAN leadership, in their capacity as representatives of NAN communities, reaffirm their commitment to eliminating illegal drug activity and its associated impacts.

The NAN Chiefs hereby recognize a state of emergency across Treaty 5 and 9 territory due to complex social and economic factors and unprotected borders resulting in illegal drugs and violence.

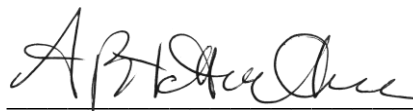
The NAN Chiefs call upon all levels of Canadian government to properly resource NAN First Nations to deal in a holistic manner at the community level with all aspects of the drug crisis. Resourcing must include justice transformation, health, mental health, and social responses.

In the spirit of the Treaty relationship, NAN Chiefs demand immediate meetings with federal and provincial ministers to develop and implement an effective action plan.

**DATED AT THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO, THIS 9<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER 2025.**



Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler



Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty  
Achneepineskum



Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin



Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse



