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## Assembly of First Nations

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## Assemblée des Premières Nations

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**SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY**  
**December 5, 6 & 7, 2017, Ottawa, ON**

**Resolution no. 106/2017**

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**TITLE:** Support For International Repatriation of Sacred Items

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**SUBJECT:** Repatriation, history, culture, reconciliation

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**MOVED BY:** Ernie Daniels, Proxy, Long Plain First Nation, Manitoba

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**SECONDED BY:** Chief Lance Haymond, Kebaowek First Nation, QC

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**DECISION:** Carried by Consensus

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**WHEREAS:**

- A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 12 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.
  - ii. Article 12 (2): States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned.
- B. First Nations communities across Canada have had their human rights violated when ancestral remains, sacred objects, funerary objects, and objects of cultural significance have been disturbed, stolen excavated, exchanged, taken under duress, studied, exhumed, moved beyond the boundaries of their First Nation territories and Canada without the free, prior, and informed consent of First Nations.
- C. This human rights disruption is extended through the sustained display, possession, profit, or study, from their ancestral remains, sacred objects, funerary objects, and objects of cultural significance.
- D. First Nations communities across Canada should be able to maintain, protect, and have access to their religious and cultural sites and should have the collective right to repatriation of their ancestral remains, sacred objects, funerary objects, and objects of cultural significance.
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**Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2017 in Ottawa, ON**

**PERRY BELLEGARDE, NATIONAL CHIEF**

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- E. First Nations communities across Canada have expressed their need for the creation and implementation of legal protections to ensure the repatriation of all ancestral remains, sacred objects, funerary objects, and objects of cultural significance, which were taken, exhumed, excavated, exchanged, studied, and are residing in repositories worldwide.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:**

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to support First Nations across Canada in their efforts to repatriate stolen ancestral remains, sacred objects, funerary objects, and objects of cultural significance from international repositories.
2. Direct the AFN to call upon the federal, provincial and territorial governments to acknowledge their moral and fiduciary responsibilities to assist First Nations across Canada in their repatriation efforts.
3. Direct the AFN to advocate on behalf of First Nations across Canada to ensure that the issue of international repatriation is addressed nationally and internationally.
4. Direct the AFN to call upon the Government of Canada to stop using the provisions of the *Heritage Act* to prevent the repatriation of sacred items.

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