



PRESS RELEASE

June 9, 2020

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN) has received the Yukon Supreme Court's reasons for decision in *Dickson v Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation*, 2020 YKSC 22 concerning the validity of the provision under our Constitution requiring elected Council members to reside on settlement land.

The decision recognizes the role of all VGFN citizens in VGFN self-government by upholding the validity of the residency requirement as enacted under our Constitution by consensus of the General Assembly of our citizens.

As the Court found, 'The residency requirement does not discriminate but ensures a role that respects rather than denigrates the rights of non-resident VGFN citizens.' This is a significant finding that protects the residency requirement as a contemporary exercise of our inherent right to self-government and upholds the sacred relationship between our homelands and community governance that has been maintained under Vuntut Gwitchin law with the guidance of our Elders for millennia.

The decision also raises broader issues about the application of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the exercise of the inherent right to self-government as VGFN did not consent to its application in our negotiations with Canada and Yukon. These issues extend far beyond the scope of our residency requirement and are of regional and national significance.

As acknowledged by the Court, 'This is a complex case with many cultural, political and legal ramifications.' We are carefully reviewing the decision in its entirety and will be thoroughly considering all of our options before determining any next steps.

Dana Tizya-Tramm

Chief