

August 19, 2024

For Immediate Release: NEW CO-CHAIR AT GWICH'IN COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL

[YELLOWKNIFE, CANADA] Gwich'in Council International (GCI) is pleased to announce the appointment of Kris Statnyk as Co-Chair. We offer our gratitude to Sharla Greenland, who served as the previous Canadian Co-Chair and will remain on the Board.

Kris Statnyk is a citizen of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. He is the son of Marie Statnyk (Bruce) and grandson of the late Dr. Reverend Ellen Bruce, Robert Bruce Sr. and Agnes Mills of Old Crow, Yukon. Kris is an Indigenous rights lawyer who works with Indigenous communities in support of their rights to self-determination. Prior to becoming a lawyer, he completed a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science at University of Alberta and a Juris Doctor at the University of Victoria, Faculty of Law. He currently lives within the Gitksan Nation territory in New Hazelton, BC, together with his wife and son who are Gitksan.

Kris says he is “inspired by the history of my ancestors and the Gwich'in Nation, and am honoured to continue their legacy of working together ‘in a good way’ for the survival, dignity and well-being of all our relations.” He has served on the Gwich'in Council International Board since 2022.

“We welcome Kris' leadership and contributions”, says Edward Alexander, who will continue to serve as Co-Chair from Alaska and brings multiple terms on the Board in a variety of leadership positions. Edward was recently reappointed as Co-Chair by the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments.

Gwich'in Council International's membership consists of two representative bodies in Canada and one in the United States: Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC); the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN); and the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments. GCI is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, composed of four members from Canada and four from Alaska. Canada and Alaska each appoint a co-chair from its members, with GTC and VGFN rotating the co-chair role biennially.

Gwich'in Council International represents 9,000 Gwich'in in the Northwest Territories (NWT), Yukon, and Alaska as a Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council, the only international organization where there is a seat for Indigenous Peoples at the decision-making table alongside national governments. GCI supports Gwich'in by amplifying our voice on sustainable development and the environment at the international level to support resilient and healthy communities.

If you would like more information, please contact:

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Photo: Co-Chairs Edward Alexander and Kris Statnyk attend the Biennial Gwich'in Gathering in Circle, Alaska July 2024

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