

NEW VICTORY IN THE INNU'S \$900 MILLION LAWSUIT AGAINST RIO TINTO (IOC)

Uashat mak Mani-utenam, November 14, 2017 — The Innu First Nations of Uashat mak Mani-utenam and Matimekush-Lac John scored another legal victory yesterday against the Iron Ore Company of Canada (or “IOC”, majority held by mining giant Rio Tinto) with the Quebec Court of Appeal reaffirming that Quebec Courts do indeed have jurisdiction to hear the Innu’s entire claim for \$900 million against the company. The Court of Appeal thus rejected an appeal by the government of Newfoundland and Labrador seeking to remove the portion of Rio Tinto (IOC)’s operations in Labrador from the Innu’s lawsuit.

“This new victory further fuels our desire and resolve to see this legal process through to the end” declared Mike McKenzie, Chief of Uashat mak Mani-utenam. “The company will soon have to face up to its actions and its systemic violation of our rights since the 1950s.”

The Innu are not alone in their frustration over the attempts that have been made to indefinitely postpone an actual hearing on the merits of the case. At paragraph 119 of yesterday’s judgment, the Honorable Justice Simon Ruel of the Court of Appeal wrote (translation from the French judgment): “In conclusion, it is high time that this lawsuit, filed in 2013, be allowed to proceed smoothly to adjudication, in a reasonable timeframe, by the Quebec Superior Court.”

This is in fact the fifth victory in a row for the Innu in their lawsuit against Rio Tinto (IOC), one of the biggest mining companies in the world. Before trying to remove the portion of Rio Tinto (IOC)’s operations in Labrador from the Innu’s lawsuit, Rio Tinto (IOC) had asked the Courts to dismiss the entire suit against it, claiming that the Innu could only sue governments and not a private company. On that specific question, Rio Tinto (IOC) had lost at every instance and the Supreme Court of Canada on October 15, 2015 refused to hear an appeal by the company.

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