



# Gitksan Treaty Office

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **BCTC recommends Gitksan treaty talks resume**

GITKSAN TERRITORIES -- The Gitksan welcomed release of a B.C. Treaty Commission fact-finding report today recommending the province return to the negotiating table.

The report, reviewing the circumstances which led to B.C. walking away from the Gitksan treaty table Feb. 1, said a meeting between all three parties involved with negotiations needs to take place "to explore the terms and conditions under which negotiations can be resumed."

Chief negotiator Mas Gak said the BCTC main recommendation is supported by Gitksan hereditary chiefs in that they have always favored negotiation over litigation. The hereditary chiefs recently reaffirmed their desire to give the province another chance in a meeting in Gitanmaax, March 6.

The chief negotiator said Gitksan hereditary chiefs reserve the right to protect their territories but will be happy to talk with B.C. about setting terms and conditions on future treaty negotiations. "Recommendation number two which identifies areas that need addressing regarding terms and conditions for resuming negotiations is the key," said Mas Gak.

Gitksan fiscal file negotiator Madeegam Gyamk (Neil J. Sterritt) focused on one of the issues for discussion under the terms and conditions. "We have to help their [the province's] chief negotiator get a mandate," said Madeegam Gyamk.

Gitksan land and resources negotiator Yoobx (Elmer Derrick) was encouraged by the report. "We can make a ballgame out of this now," said Yoobx. "We can talk about terms of reference for proper negotiations."

The Gitksan negotiators want the meeting recommended by BCTC to take place next week (March 19-23).

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